

ESCAPE FROM THE STREET

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INTRODUCTION

According to the general overview of the context of this book which is subject for analysis. It is inferred to be a complex subject with lots of meanings to any individual viewing the title as the name implies. Some people might as well be thinking that before you must be talking about escaping from the street, then you must have acquired a huge sum of money which is not actually the contention of this book--But rather the book will be sharing a deeper view to the context.

The street has different classes, but I will be subjecting my analysis mostly on the lower class street individuals with little insights and reference to the higher class street individuals. The higher class street individuals are the wealthy class, but always indebted to something more powerful than them which cannot be compromised in most cases. The lower

class individuals are mostly the tools used by the higher class ones for different negative perpetrations, hence making their vulnerability status very high.

This book will be emphasizing on disclosing the basic principles and insights with respect to the different chapter subjects for analysis with different flexible ethics, and the depth knowledge of the street and it affairs.

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CHAPTER ONE

MEANING OF STREET IN THIS CONTEXT





Based on the context, Street is an unfavorable geographical zone filled with different sets of people with unstable mindsets, both young and old irrespective of their genders and age with a particular pursuits of trying to survive with the unfavorable conditions around. Everybody on the street has diverse motive that is particular to individual entity, in other words, they have different mindsets and orientations that is based on how deep they were on the street, because that word “street” is quite deep with different levels of inclinations. Personally I would classify street to peripheral, middle and high level based on how deep the individual entity had gotten soaked into it.

I personally believed also that no matter the class or level any individual might have falling into, he or she could still be saved, but would depend critically on the measures to adopt for recovery considering the level the individual must have falling into after general scrutiny or assertion.

Street has its own life style or behavioral pattern. The life style of every individual on the street is always subjected to their individual levels on the street. One person can have more than one street attributes e.g smoking, drinking, homeless, rapist, thief, troublesome etc. Via some personal inferences on the street, I have come to some notice, that many folks on the high street level or the deeper street folks have a particular mentality of doing anything for daily survival unremorsefully as they grow older with the street life style.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE LIFE ON THE STREET



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CHAPTER THREE

THE TYPES OF PEOPLE YOU FIND ON THE STREET



Various groups use different definitions to identify orphans. Orphans are relatively rare in developed countries. Because most children can expect both of their parents to survive their childhood. Much higher numbers of orphans exist in war-torn nations and some under-developed nations.

Orphan characters are extremely common as literary protagonists, especially in children's literature. The lack of parents leaves the lives, by freeing them familial obligations and controls, and depriving them of more prosaic lives. It creates characters that are self-contained and introspective and who strive for affection. Orphans can metaphorically search for self-understanding through attempting to know their roots.

Furthermore, if one parent-child relationship is important, removing the other parent prevents complicating the necessary relationship.

All these characteristics makes up orphan attractive character.

Many religious texts, including the Bible and the Quran, contain the idea that helping and defending orphans is

Nobody likes or prefers to be homeless, but looking deeply we would see the different reasons that rendered several people homeless. Homelessness with gender inequality is another case on its own, However, Men tended to be homeless for longer periods and were more likely than women to sleep on the streets.

Men were also more likely than women to have a drinking problem and to have been convicted of a crime. The most striking gender differences occurred on service utilization variables; women were much more likely than men to have received social services. Taking homelessness as living in housing that is below the minimum standard or lacks secure tenure. People can be categorized as homeless if they are: living on the streets (primary homelessness); moving between temporary shelters, including houses of friends, family and emergency accommodation (secondary homelessness); living in private boarding houses without a private bathroom or security of tenure (tertiary homelessness).

The legal definition of homeless varies from country to country, or among different jurisdictions in the same country

all kinds of seductive social tools. It would take a discipline and well trained individuals morally to resist those social seductive tools. Parents should be held responsible for these because they are in the best position to curtail such. Street people These are people who live a public life on the street of a city. Street people are frequently homeless, sometimes mentally ill, and often have a transient lifestyle. Certain neighborhoods, especially those in neighborhoods close to commercial districts have familiar figures to the entire community.

We have some contemporary street people, some of whom may be beggars who often ask for spare change on the streets; bag ladies who often have all their possessions in a shopping cart which accompanies them. They also may include street performers, and people with chronic mental illness.

The term street people is used somewhat loosely and may be used simply to refer to eccentric people who lives in bohemian neighborhoods. However, the defining characteristic is time spent in the street, wandering the streets for a substantial portion of their day or night. This

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CHAPTER FOUR

INSIDE LIFE



Street life comprises of risks always, where every individual seem to feel unsafe at every point in time:

The environment on the street is filled with different activities that poses a threat to human life and comfortability. Life on the street is Unhealthy and projects unstable feeding timings depending on the class the individual falls into. At this stage, individuals just want to while away each day with a particular activity that could help them forget their troubles and live on to the next day and so on, for example, smoking themselves out, long time sex with drugs, vigorous drinking and other excessive activity that would help them get high to while each day away as they live on. The life on the street is always vulnerable to different types of attack. Different types of attacks always pops-up on the street, sometimes it might be the state security intrusions, for example, SARS which is particular in Nigeria or other privacy violating intrusions.

Life inside the street is filled with every day tension:

Individuals tends to have unstable mind dispositions as a result of fear due to environmental threats.

Life inside the street is always disorder and random. Every individual at this stage is under one duress or the other at a particular point in time when the street tends to get rough with increasing vulnerabilities stakes or tendencies and keeping individuals in a nervous state.

You can never determine what would happen next on the street because everything seems vague always. Sometimes it might go rosy and suddenly changes otherwise.

Most times it is quite hard for unfit female individuals based on the wayward life style exposed to, or might go well for fitful female individuals who could easily get flexible to adopting any life style irrespective of it effect.

for further schooling. When he reached the finals, he was required to bring passport photographs, which he didn't have money to buy. So Tad took some of his stepmother's money that she had left on top of the TV. But when his friend needed photos too, Tad spent more than he had planned – the equivalent of \$1.00. "I knew I was going to suffer for it," Tad says. "She would tell me to count, 'How many 5 [naira] is in 350 [naira]?'"

That's the beating I will take." He reveals a mark on his hand from one of the beatings. "Look at my hand," he says. "This is a natural tattoo." His stepmother stormed his school to confront him about the money. "She came to embarrass me in front of my teachers," he says. While the teachers were arguing, he left. Tad calculated the beating he would take. "I will hang on fan," he says he told himself.

“She will hang me by my hand. She will call her brothers to help. I calculated it: hanging, pepper on my buttocks.” He says he also recalled another technique she had used that involved putting him in a large metal container and pouring water on him for about 10 minutes, creating a drowning effect. He opted to flee.

“I took my sandals and ran,” he says. Tad was at Kuramo Beach, a popular beach on Lagos Island, when a representative from Street Child Care and Welfare Initiative, a home for former street children, found him. He lives there today. Children live on the streets in Nigeria because of varying problems at home, including poverty, abuse and lack of emotional attachment with family. But they face other hazards on the street ranging from sexual violence to drug exposure.

Rehabilitation centers assist street children with their basic needs, promote education and reconnect them with their families. But workers say the children will return to the streets unless the community changes its mentality about street children and strengthens the institution of family.

There are no official statistics available on how many street children in Lagos state, said Sunday J. Ichedi, head of the public affairs and international relation unit of the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria, in a phone interview.

Oyeyemi Oyewale, the in-house counselor at the Street Child Care and Welfare Initiative, says that many children

But Ondato says his father is a polygamist and does not have the time to care for all his children. “When I am on the street, I can hustle and take care of myself,” Ondato says.

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job during her early days on the streets attempted to take advantage of her sexually. She has been on the streets for six years now. She says she can't return home yet because she has no skills to show for her time on the street. Ondato and Iyawo Ibo, who both spend time at Child Life-line, talk about hard drugs on the street and their prices as if they are reeling through their mother's grocery list.

"We run errands for the adults on the streets, so we know," Ondato says of their involvement in drug trafficking. Girls are forced to use sex to survive, says Olajide Festus, an outreach officer at Child Lifeline, a local child welfare association. Earning little profit selling local gin, they accept that they must take up boyfriends, many who work as bus conductors, to receive enough money to live. "We give them sexuality training here on how they know and understand their bodies," Festus says of the association's drop-in center.

He draws a chart on a piece of paper to show how he explains sexually transmitted diseases to the children. "If A sleeps with B without a condom, B will end up sleeping with C, maybe also without a condom,"

Festus says. "If C sleeps with either A or B or even D without a condom, then diseases spread faster among them. But once girls are on the streets, it is tougher for them to say no to sex, he says. Sometimes they have to exchange sex for food or protection. "It is even much tougher for the girls to ask the men to use condoms, especially if the men are the older street touts," he says. "In such cases, they do not have choices. "Tee, 16 years old, has been living on the streets of Lagos for three years. She is eight months pregnant. "But the father of the child has denied responsibility," she says. "He says that he is in school and does not want a child. So, I have to keep managing.

“Swan says she tells girls who live on the streets that they must gain an education. “I tell them: ‘You cannot just continue to live like this because you are a street child,’ she says. “You have to change this mentality. Swan says the community also needs to change its mentality, explaining that the neighbors of the center are afraid of the children. “People have this perspective that they are troublemakers,” Swan says. On days when more than 50 children come to the center, Swan must ask the additional children to wait

until the next day. “They stand outside the gate, bang the gate and they will make a lot of noise,” she says. . “And when people pass, they will think that it is a terror zone. “This fear has prevented the staff from securing apprenticeship opportunities for several girls staying at the center. “I went out on the streets once and asked a woman who had a salon if she could take some of our girls,” Swan says.

When the woman refused, Swan invited her to visit the center so she could see for herself the warm welcome the children would give her. But the woman again refused. Children come to the Child Life-line drop-in center in the mornings to rest, wash their clothes and eat before returning to the streets in the evenings. The center doesn’t have the facilities to take the children in from the streets permanently, Festus says. Rather, it aims to assess them during a three-month period and to rehabilitate them. “What matters is the state of their minds,” he says.

“There is this stigma that we are trying to correct. The center looks for nongovernmental organizations or homes where the children can stay permanently. But Festus says the ultimate goal is to reunite the children with their families. But many families don’t accept their children after

they have been living on the streets. “Many times, parents misunderstand their children because they don’t really communicate with their children,” Swan says. She gives the example of a boy who keeps returning to the center because his father won’t stop calling him a street child even after he returns home. “There is this boy who came to Lagos from Ekiti,” she says. “We have reunited him with his family three times.” Festus says that this will continue to happen until more people recognize the importance of a child’s connection to his or her family.

This section comprises of different happenings inside the street in different continents of the world, with distinctive moral insights based on their differences; First to be disclosed is a story of a 17 years old boy, named Vikas Kumar who has been through more than what other teenagers could imagine according to him while narrating his story.

When he was nine, he ran away from his abusive parents and worked as a rag picker for a couple of years at a local train station, battled drugs addiction and came out clean.

About eight months ago, he was begging, and the police kept coming over to him and asking him to move. According

to him, he said, they didn't tell him anywhere to go and get help. They just moved him. He got moved a couple of times and then they issued him a letter with a court date. He missed the first date because he was still on the streets and not thinking straight. Then he was asleep in a doorway one day, and they came and arrested him at two o'clock in the morning. He was in court the next day. The court fined him £150. The term they used in court was, 'Gathering money for alms.' According to him.

Afterwards he was just sent on my merry way. The courts didn't tell him anywhere to go to try and get support. Nothing like that.

The fine comes out of my benefits. That just makes it even harder. I had about £90 to last me a month. It's not right. It didn't deter me from begging. I was straight back out again. The same place. I was just trying to survive without being a criminal. It's either that (begging) or go out and rob because you're desperate. He nearly died on the streets after that according to how he narrated his story. His legs were rotten. After some months, he went to the hospital and they told him, he nearly had septicemia, but they also released him straight back onto the streets with no fixed

inside jail or outside, always under the supervision of some guard, police, probation officer, parole officer, correction officer, etc.”? So, to whom do we owe our loyalty? Where do we draw the line between what’s going to benefit us to create a life with real meaning or a life spent completely without control inside a prison where almost every moment of the day our lives are monitored? This is a question only each of us can answer, because no matter what others may tell us, we alone make a difference in our own lives. We can choose to take our power back to wake up to maturity, and start taking the hard road ahead outside our affiliations, or we can surrender and continue to let others do the thinking for us.

It’s our own life, our own story. Who writes it?? That is our decision to make. With much love, and hopes of clarity for all.

This is the story of an 11 years old boy named Aaron Who became a street child. His brother & sister were both killed on the street. Here are their stories as told by Aaron:

life was good when I was young. I lived with my parents in Tanzania my country and our home was relaxed, but then

Eventually I was caught and in keeping with our custom the village forced me to leave. They would have killed me if I'd tried to stay; that's what happens to thieves. The only place I could go was to my maternal land (my Mum's family), but when I arrived my Uncle refused to take me in. He said that he had no wife and was struggling to find food for his own family. Uncle told me to go back where I had come from, to my Dad's land, but I don't think he knew that I'd been expatriated for stealing.

With nowhere to go I followed the roads to a small trading center. I found a coffin workshop which closed overnight and figured out how to sneak inside to sleep in their coffins. I was the only person inside that building at night. I used to wake myself up before dawn so that the owner wouldn't find me, then walk to the main city to find food and water. I got to know many of the street children but they thought I had a home to go to; I didn't tell them that I slept in a coffin. I was eleven years old when I arrived on the street and I lived there for two years. Eventually I started sleeping with my new friends in the city, underneath the market stalls. Most of the other street kids had jobs so they helped me find work in an abattoir.

I gave my best effort to not return to stealing, but as my hunger grew my resolve faded and eventually I joined in one of my friends' endeavors. We stole from a woman and made 13,000 shillings (USD \$3.60), of which my share was USD \$0.80. I used half of it to buy plastic bags and with the other half I bought myself dinner.

When I was twelve years old I found my sister on the street. She was doing prostitution and had given birth to three children. She was only fifteen years old.

One of the kids was still with her, so I started sleeping beside them and helping with the child. One day the other prostitutes sent us away, but that turned out to be a good thing because my sister ended up with a hotel job washing dishes.

The owner paid her with leftover food which we always gave to the child.

In the cold season we often built fires to keep warm. If anyone had water we would boil it to drink, and occasionally someone would have meat to roast. One evening a stranger approached us while we were talking around the flames.

Shortly after I moved here I snuck out to visit her in town. When I arrived on the streets I couldn't find my sister anywhere. I wondered if she was back in prostitution or if she had found a home, but when I asked around the news was the worst imaginable: apparently my sister had been killed. I didn't know whether to believe it, no-one was able to give me any details or tell me where she was buried.

The Hope Street staff really wanted to know where my home village was. I didn't tell them because I knew that they would take me there – all the other kids had been home for background checks, and I was scared at the thought of going back to Dad's land. The neighbors had threatened to kill me when they caught me stealing. So for six months I kept my secret, until I trusted Uncle Tom enough to let him take me home. When we arrived at the village all the neighbors ran away! They assumed Uncle Tom had come to collect a debt, that I had stolen something and he was there for retribution. Tom & Lillian waited for three hours but not a single person came out of hiding. Eventually Tom came up with a different strategy; he spoke to the village leaders, who listened to our story and asked the community to come. That's when I received confirmation

Tom & Lillian (Hope Street's social workers) have been working to reconnect me to my father's land. The only relative of mine who still lives there is an uncle but he wouldn't co-operate with Tom, he wouldn't even give out his phone number. My uncle told Tom that if I try to move home he'll kill me for being a thief. Tom has been back to visit him three times; apparently he's warming up and has now given Tom his number, but he still won't visit me at Hope Street.

My uncle is correct: I was once a thief, but what he doesn't understand yet is that I've changed. When I first came to Hope I often misbehaved. Sometimes I wagged school to sneak to town, and once I stole a phone which Tom had to pay for. But now I'm enjoying life at Hope and my behavior is good.

I've been here for three years now and the staff say I'm a good role-model for the younger children. Hmm, quite a story to learn from. Inside Life there are many things happening at the same time, so don't sleep too deep to forget yourself.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUDDENLY ON THE STREET





It's hard to imagine how someone can go from having a home one day to being out on the street the next. Many homeless people start out with jobs and stable residences, but then social and economic factors intervene, causing a rapid change in their living situation. The two biggest factors driving homelessness are poverty and the lack of affordable housing. Many of these people just live their lives to survive each day as it surfaces with nothing saved in the bank. The loss of a job, an illness, or another catastrophic event can quickly lead to missed rent or mortgage payments and ultimately, to eviction or foreclosure.

For nearly two years, Paul slept on steam grates, park benches—wherever he could avoid getting picked up by the police. He was assaulted five times, mostly by teenagers. They threw rocks at him, beat him with a bat, urinated on him, and even covered him with spray paint— just for living on the street.

Eventually, Paul was caught shoplifting, and his probation officer told him that if he was to avoid jail time, he had to take medication for his schizophrenia and stay in a shelter which he later agreed and continue his life.

Charles Story

In 2016 Charles had a car accident she was driving dangerously and didn't have a license from Lagos to Ibadan road. His girlfriend 'Cynthia' died from the accident. Charles right arm was severed below the elbow, then amputated. He served two years in prison and developed PTSD, depression and anxiety.

This happened three months into a relationship. It lasted six years, but there was an incident when Charles was violent. He stopped drinking to make sure it didn't happen again, but Charles new girlfriend wasn't willing to follow his lead.

One day both friends went into a combat which made folake end up in a hospital with two black eyes, a broken arm and an eyebrow that had to be glued back together. Still black and blue – to the local police station, and after three days they said they couldn't do anything as there wasn't enough evidence. against the friend which made folake flee to the street.

Being on the street wore folake down. She slept in car parks, where boy racers threw rubbish at her. Waking up, with no public toilets open. Folake lost weight and lost all communication with friends. She had a nervous breakdown. When Folake came to the Doorway drop in Centre, she was wearing trainers with the soles falling off.

I have noticed homelessness rate going up, people are losing their flats because of universal credit, domestic violence, not being able to afford the rent; it could be anything.

I talk to them because I've been in that situation. Most days you wake up with nobody to talk to apart from the pigeons. streets. You've got to pick yourself up and do the best you can. Life's too short to sit around being miserable.

father didn't allow her work nor go out as he provides everything because he was rich and well to do. After he died, we couldn't get hold of any of his properties, but only the house he built in his hometown. We were very young and weren't prepared to handle such incident, but it did happen suddenly. Am sure my dad didn't know it was going to be as sudden as that, if not, perhaps he would have prepared us for it.

My mom had no education at all, just innocently pretty. She had to raise 7 children all by herself. Moving from eviction to eviction with lots of stress.

I'm not surprised homelessness has gone up so much, because there isn't enough to help people. The government doesn't fund the support. If I could tell people anything about being homeless, it would be that it doesn't matter what someone looks like: you can be in a suit and still be homeless.

When someone ignores you when you ask for change, it is hurtful.

I can tell the experience of a much older friend. who married a woman who was multi-millionaire since birth,

She received a monthly allowance from her family that I believe was around 700K to 1M per year so they would probably not bother to work 9 to 6 to make \$100K more. They lived this life for around 10 years. Then, they had some disagreement with their family and they stopped receiving the allowance.

They lived by their savings for around 3 years. During those years they lived a very good life, but not so lavish as before. After 3 years, when they were about to start selling everything so they could have some money, her uncle died. He didn't have any kids so she received a good sum of money that was sufficient for around 3 more years.

When their bank accounts were about to run dry again her mother passed away and she inherited, along with her brothers, around 4M each. For most people, it would be sufficient for a lifetime, but they made very bad investments along with some poor decisions and I don't know how, but they ended up losing everything in around 3 more years.

After losing all their money they started living with the money of a trust her parents left to her, Something around 5K per month. But they are on their 50s, they never worked

I would not dare to say that this experience was humbling to them because they were always nice people, the difference is that they were nice people with lots of money. The only positive thing I believe this experience brought to them is that they are no longer superficial. They used to see everything like poverty, sorrow, and problems from a different perspective, and I used to see them through a mask that looked like they were using all the time. Now, for the first time, I was able to see who they really were. Their emotions, fears, desires, and regret, for the first time in their lives they desire things, they no longer pull their credit card and immediately satisfy their desires and in that sense, they look like real people for me.

Now they are learning to value every small good thing that life gives to them. In 2007, I know of a man Named Michael who was hired by a medium size tech company. The company had around 150 employees and they were growing fast. When he was hired they told him they would be moving to better offices in two months and they really did it. The new office was really impressive. Huge, very modern to the point it made the cover of a magazine.

His boss and her husband were the owners of the company. They were simply amazing. She was sweet, very polite and it was a pleasure to work for them. They were also very rich. In fact, she was so down to earth that it took the man two months to realize that she was one of the owners of the company. It happened one day that the man had a meeting with a client and the boss told him if he was OK to be squeezed on the back seat of her car, as another person was coming with them. Imagined that she had one of those very small cars, but she showed up on a brand new convertible Porsche.

Little by little, Michael became acquainted. They invited him to have dinner one night and he was impressed by how rich they really were, they lived on a mansion, the land was so big that they had a tennis court, swimming pool and a stable with 5 horses on their land.

He also was a motor enthusiast and had 9 cars. They owned a farm and a beach house in another city, even though we lived in one of the most beautiful beach cities in the world.

They made money fast because Michael was hired in 2007 and the company was founded in 2002 and it looked like they had a good lifestyle for some years.

They were amazing people, very humble, very calm and you would never say they had so much money just by talking to them. Michael left the company by the end of 2007 because he received an offer to work in another place. He talked to them before accepting the offer and explained his reasons and they were really supportive and told him that if he changed his mind the doors would be open.

By the end of 2008, Michael's former colleague contacted him asking for a reference as he was leaving the company.

He asked why he was leaving the company and he told Michael that the company had gone into receivership. Basically, they were impacted by the GFC.

They were so rich that I imagined that although the company had bankrupted they probably had a lot of savings.

With that, they lost everything, not only the company but literally everything.

Their kids moved from private to public schools, they had all their cars, properties and assets confiscated and ended moving to a small apartment near the city. Her husband was able to get a new job (at nearly 60 years of age) and she had to go back to work to complement their income.

It was a huge surprise for after hearing this story because you always expect that these things will happen to bad people, but never to nice people like them according to Michael's narration. They were honest, decent, hardworking, family oriented, and everybody in the office liked them. Coincidentally Michael bumped into them again 3 months later in the mall.

What surprised him the most was that they were able to go from a very rich to a very modest lifestyle without changing who they were. Michael sat together with them to have lunch in the food court and they were living like that was the life they always had. They were exactly the same people Michael met 10 years before according to Michael's narration. They were happy, making jokes with

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CHAPTER SIX

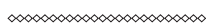
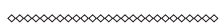
WHAT TO FACE OR EXPECT FROM THE STREET



There is always one fear in every individual's mind which keeps the state of mind in a random disorder always. There is always struggle to get what you want or need. It is always a survival of the fittest quest. At this stage the weak tends to suffer more because majorly, the street always favors the strong. So for that, everybody on the street tends to develop their strength level to make them survive through every street tussle.

There is always a noisy environment on the street. The life on the street is always noisy and rowdy. The environmental conditions on the street is always unfavorable. It is advisable for every individual to device a way to adapt through, because nothing can be done to evade the noisy disclosures on the street.

There is this feeling of being helpless always. Nobody to help anybody, every individual can only help themselves and perhaps their family if possible, but most times there is less family considerations on the street because every individual is of the mindset of self-survival.



Always in need. You are always in need of one thing or the other on the street, basically all survival needs.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE I DON'T CARE SYNDROME



The I don't give a **** attitude is the leading cause for our young people committing violent crimes. Their minds completely shut down to any rational way of thinking while believing that this certain attitude represents a sign of superiority.

Our young people become temporarily insane. The I don't care syndrome is prevented and reversed by simply talking to our young people, by showing our young people, the people who made a career out of the I don't give a **** attitude; prison yards and graveyards are full of them.

Showing the young folks-- the people on these prison yards and in those graveyards is equivalent to the approach medical doctors take against the seasonal flu. They inject a rare strain of the flu into your body which builds up a tolerance in your body to make you immune to the flu.

I am a rare strain of the I don't care syndrome and I share with you the ingredient to prevent and reverse the I don't give a **** attitude in our young people. Talk to them; they will listen. Love them; they need that love. My name is Gabriel and sharing is caring!!!

older, he started smoking pot by the time he was a teenager. The teenager got in trouble at school when he was caught smoking pot. The father and uncle became very upset with him saying, "Where did you learn to smoke pot?"

The teenager answered, "I don't know." And they never realized that it was them who exposed him to smoking pot when he was just a young child.

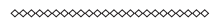
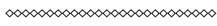
In low income neighborhoods there is a virus which attacks the minds of people. This virus is called "A Lie." This virus is so strong and powerful that it has people thinking they're winning when they're losing. It was designed to cause anyone affected with it to self-destruct by way of gangs, drugs, crime, prison, and ultimately death.

This virus enters the human mind through the ears and eyes. Children are at high risk because their minds are open the most while they are young. In these low income areas, the predominant thought process is negative because of the virus referred to as "A Lie." They believe that the only way out is crime of some kind. Nobody is there to remind them that "Positive thoughts attract positive people; positive people attract positive situations; and positive situations

But look at the princes who gained their royalty by fortune alone. (Machiavelli said that “They do so with little effort but maintain their position only with a great deal.

All their problems arise when they have arrived.”) They got it in the blink of an eye, no work or major effort, but what about once they arrive? Is that when the problems may arise? Isn't there an opposite to each and every thing in life? For the good, there's the bad, and your ups must have a down and vice versa. We young ones of the last and present generation tend to have a thing for the “Easy Life,” whether it be fast money, gang banging, or doing that dope. But we fail to realize the “opposites” of life.

Now from the situation at hand, one may think there's no good coming from its opposite, but hear me now: “What don't kill you only makes you stronger.” A person can come to the conclusion that, that which is worked for can be more respected than that which is taken, stolen, or given out of pity. Be one who has gained royalty and power through knowledge and hard hardy work, not through foolishness and lazy spoiled upbringing, in which everything is given to you and placed in your lap.



To those who truly care and would like to gain royalty with hard work, begin working for your life instead of accepting hand-outs. It's hard climbing that ladder to success, but easy as heck to fall off.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

OVERCOMING THE STREET



You must be very careful. Being careful in the sense that, you must talk less, be observant and be fast in thoughts in critical conditions. you don't rush to do things on the street especially when you are not fully sure of your tendencies because it might get out of hand and go dangerous.

You must be psychological in your tendencies, in other words always weigh and consider the negative and positive effect of what you want to do on yourself and your immediate environment before you finally do them to ensure safety in all areas.

You must always keep your thoughts within yourself to ensure a safe life to a very reasonable extent. Don't relate your ideas with just anybody because street is a very strict zone with lots of violations. Your colleagues on the street wouldn't like to see you out and living them behind, which makes them try to cover you from seeing anything that might change your thinking to the extent of living the street.

Majority of people that has gone deep on the street has a mindset of no going out of the street, but to live and die on the street.

belong on the street very well, in other words you must know and understand your limits and keep yourself within your terrane for safety reasons.

You must be steadfastly prayerful in all endeavors, because with prayers everything can be made possible and easy. With reference to the third law of motion which states that, "To every action, there is always an equal proportion of reaction, "in other words, there would always be a repulsive force that would not want a swift progression for your tendencies. It might be a spiritual or physical barrier in whichever way it surfaces.

You must be ready in the areas of prayers to fight every opposing force to your targets.

You must study, know and understand your weaknesses and consistently work on how to overcome those weaknesses with all seriousness and determination. Most times women and money tends to be the weakness of majority and that can be very serious. Every individual need to be very discipline to handle and tackle such weaknesses. I will advise every individual to guide their minds jealously with strict measures to avoid lusting over any seductive physical

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CHAPTER NINE

A TRUE FRIEND ON THE STREET



completely dead because hope is all a prisoner has. I hope for all the things any other prisoner hopes for, but my hope also extends to all the young people outside these walls. To those that are lured in by the gangs and their promise of popularity, acceptance, partying, sex, and drugs. To these young people, there is no tomorrow, only today... the now. My hope is that they will realize that tomorrow will eventually come and with it come death, prison, diseases, and who knows what else.

My tomorrow suddenly became my today and brought me a long prison term. Life in prison is nothing compared to living with the knowledge of being responsible for bringing suffering upon my family and upon a family that I don't even know and never did nothing to me. That was the inheritance the gang had in store for me and my family and the family I just mentioned. A gang member involves his/her family with the gang. If you are in a gang or plan on joining one, you can be assured that you will end up the same way I did or worse.

I am constantly frustrated because there is little I can do to help a kid! I feel helpless! I get angry at the world for not

Though the faces constantly change, the stories somehow remain the same. Hopes and dreams passed without thought from the lips of the insane. Survival skills, cheap thrills, street hustle of muscle, extortions and schemes, jailhouse gangsters who stay lean and mean. Cold, dark hungry and alone, you got to be strong to survive through.

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CHAPTER TEN

HOW TO AVOID ENDING UP ON THE STREET





Be conscious of your progression as you tend to grow older. Understand your family status and the class you belong to, either rich, poor or middle class and determine what you want for yourself and your family, to know where to channel your strength resourcefully with prayers most importantly.

Try to get a job no matter what the job looks like and save up some money for subsequent progressions. Most times you see things happen slowly, whereby your pursuits seems and looks unrealizable because of the condition of your country perhaps.

or things not to get worse suddenly and for you not to get caught-up with anything unexpectedly. In every decision you would be making in the journey of your life, try to be mindful of the future effect and be slow to taking your final decision. Try not to make any important decision concerning your life in a rush, but always take your time until you find a cogent conviction before any final decision.

Endeavor to understand and acknowledge your current status as you may find it to be, either being very poor or fairly poor and positively work your way out for good.

For you to be able to work your way out of your poor position as it may be to avoid finding yourself on the street suddenly perhaps due to any tragedy of life, then you need admit your status to enable you to be able to device a well means of breakthrough successfully.

Make sure you understand and know anybody you tend to associate with in the journey of your life as you grow older each day. Be mindful of the friends, partners or relationships you keep, because of the influence it would have on you. Don't stay long with evil associates for you not to share

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

HISTORY OF STREET LIFE AND CITY SPACE EMANATION



majestic cathedrals, imposing city halls, and banks, to factories, residences, hospitals, and asylums. Streets and other open spaces also reflect the history of transportation (from walking to the use of horses, carriages, cars, and in-line skates) and communication (from the gossip of neighbors to television and other electronic media).

For most of history, streets and their places of commerce, their squares, and their parks have comprised a large part of any city, often one-third of a city's area. Why has it taken social historians so long to focus on these central urban spaces? The anthropologist Gloria Nkoli offers one of the best explanations, quoting the French philosopher.

Auguste Comte (1798–1857): “We reserve till last research into subjects closest to our social selves.” Another probable cause is that face-to-face interaction on streets or in cafes and bars, once a given in all societies, has become rare, fascinating, and exotic in the contemporary developed world and endangered in developing countries. Telephones, cars, and televisions and now various computer technologies have rendered much face-to-face interaction optional rather than mandatory in daily life.

Streets and the spaces intimately dependent on them, such as bars, taverns, and cafés, are in essence the interstitial spaces of a city, at the intersections of public and private life, home and work places.

The origin and foundation of modern African street life and city space emerged during the Middle Ages. In general, cities developed without the elaborate planning characteristic of urban growth during and after the Renaissance. Weak and undeveloped national and local governments did not have the power to design, decree, or enforce specific street layouts, much less to regulate the activities that went on within them. Instead, urban communities built their houses around the principal buildings of the powerful, the holy, and the wealthy: the castles of the warrior nobility, the monasteries and churches of the Catholic clergy, and the

markets and fairs of the merchants and traders. Those who built medieval towns had in mind shelter, commercial activity, and military or religious protection rather than a rational street plan.

Across Africa, the typical Ancient house had a ground floor shop or workshop (production and retail usually shared the same space), with living quarters on the second floor.

Houses lacked halls or corridors, so rooms simply opened one upon another, and windows tended to be small and primitive.

The best facades, often with porticos and balconies, usually faced the street, and the best and biggest rooms opened onto the public realm. As one scholar has noted, the medieval house “forced the members of an extroverted society into the street.

Apart from churches, however, few truly “public” buildings existed. In the olden days, taverns and inns were virtually the only enclosed spaces where the public gathered.

Untamed countryside reigned outside the city walls, and often inside as well, for wolves often ravaged cities during

the winter. Parks were nonexistent; the only green or open spaces were small gardens or the cemeteries next to the churches.

Streets, an afterthought in olden day's construction, became the center of urban expression then. Aside from a few main thoroughfares devoted to horse-and-cart traffic, most ancient streets were more like footpaths, residential and haphazard. With living and working quarters in the same building, people met on the street, and a dense fabric of sociability developed. Bakers, butchers, carpenters, apothecaries, and craftsmen often sold their products at their own doorsteps. In addition, the streets swarmed with a wide variety of vendors hawking products and services: old clothes, food and wine, haircuts and shaves, medical and dental services. Letter writers and knife grinders mingled with magicians, cardsharps, mimes, and minstrels.

Each crier tried to create a distinctive call.

As a result, thanks streets reverberated with sounds and songs, and scholars down through the ages have found much musical, artistic, and theatrical merit in these street trades. Indeed, the mid-nineteenth-century we believed

that the polyphonic quality of medieval music was inspired, in part, by these street vendors. Modern research has shown that traveling vendors played a vital role in linking long-distance trade networks and allowing the poor of the countryside or mountainous regions of Africa to make a living.

The romantic image of conviviality and song wafting through narrow streets would be quickly dashed, however, if one looked downward. Cobblestones or bricks were reserved for main streets, and lesser routes were not only unpaved but lacked any efficient means of waste and water disposal. Streets thus had a horrifically pungent smell in summer and became swamps or ice rinks (depending on latitude) in winter. At best, a gutter running down the middle of the street served as a sewage system, and in some cities pigs ran loose as all-purpose garbage eaters.

City space in cities showed little of the segregation by class that became prevalent later. In South Africa and Nigeria cities, powerful families often staked out a section of the city and would be surrounded by their own retainers and servants rather than by other wealthy families. Any segregation in

these densely packed cities was based upon trade rather than economic status. Artisans, such as jewelers or carpenters, often organized into associations called guilds, which protected the skills and economic status of their members by fixing prices and standards of quality, and setting the terms of apprenticeship. During this period, guildhalls became vital centers of economic and social life for these artisans, and some guilds remained influential.

Gender differentiation in the use of space was clearly defined. Paintings and illustrations reveal women at home; in a favored scene, a woman is portrayed at the window.

Other female spaces included churches, markets, ovens, water wells, and flour mills, as well as courtyards and alleys around the home.

When venturing out into the street, women often traveled in groups. Historians have found that during the course of the Renaissance, upper-class women lost much of the access to street life they had had. Women from the lower classes continued to be a vital part of the street trades and the markets throughout early modern African history.

The distinction between public and private life was blurred in the olden day's cities, and interactions within the family blended into a broader sociability encompassing the neighborhood. Street and tavern life was subject to a detailed series of customs enforced by designated groups. Social drinking, for example, was often governed by rituals surrounding the passing of a common cup.

Groups of young unmarried males in their late teens and early twenties known as youth abbeys often organized festivities and monitored morality in their neighborhoods.

These associations of young men led the celebrations at the end of Lent, for example, and censured husbands who were too submissive to their wives or couples who could not produce children. In addition, guilds and groups of lay Catholics joined together in confraternities and also sponsored street processions and entertainments.

All told, the olden day's urban society, accustomed to vendors hawking their wares in markets and streets, did not make rigid distinctions between work and leisure, freedom and constraint, or individual and group. The notion of a lone, detached observer walking the streets, reflecting on the

Instead of the artistic individuality that would prevail in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the olden day's world spawned a convivial communality, especially in the marketplace.

Growing segregation by neighborhoods led to increasingly differentiated street life. The upper classes, in their luxurious townhouses on broad avenues, used the street to display their elaborate sartorial fashions and their carriages and fine horses. Esplanades were developed on both sides of city walls, which had their original military importance, and became fashionable places for upper-class promenades and also, unfortunately, for depredations by the city's youth. The lower classes, out of necessity rather than pleasure, continued to use city streets as they had in the olden days—as extensions of their cramped living quarters and as work and leisure spaces.

The growing reach of central governments and the decreasing pull of local communities led to the emergence of modern politics in urban space.

The growing reach of central governments and the decreasing pull of local communities led to the emergence of modern politics in urban space. The expanding literate stratum of urban society, which included the middle classes as well as the nobility, became concerned with governmental actions and demanded that their own views be considered in what is today called public policy. Private individuals gathered in the drinking houses that were spreading across African towns. They discuss public matters, with reason rather than status as the main criterion for the validity of their arguments. During some period in the olden days, a distinctive working-class subculture evolved. Although still possessing minimal purchasing power compared to their social and economic superiors, workers nevertheless developed a unique pattern of social life.

For instance, they were increasingly able to own several sets of clothes, after work, they often changed into clothes that diminished the sartorial distance between the classes.

Hats, however, continued to signal class difference: the bourgeois wore the formal top hat while the proletarian stayed with the cap.

The laboring population also adopted the bourgeois ritual of promenading, usually not on the fashionable central boulevards and parks but rather on the outer boulevards and fortifications of their own parts of town. This summary of the social history of street life and city space challenges any simple notion of “progress” in social and cultural history. On the one hand, innovations that removed sewage, dirt, and dust from the streets and sidewalks that separated pedestrians and terrace café and restaurant customers from carriage and then car traffic on the street were significant improvements in terms of sanitation, safety, and sociability.

On the other hand, especially since some war periods, changes that have turned streets over to cars and to an unprecedented degree separated the spaces of work, family, and leisure, have spawned as much alienation as efficiency. An opening and welcoming urban environment

will be crucial during the twenty-first century, as African cities will undoubtedly accept millions of new immigrants—now, however, not from the hinterlands of their own nations but from the rest of the world. It is on the streets and in the public places that the process of cultural assimilation, expression, and creation will continue.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CODE OF ALL STREETS





Of all the problems besetting the poor inner-city in almost all black communities, none is more pressing than that of interpersonal violence and aggression. It wreaks havoc daily with the lives of community residents and increasingly spills over into downtown and residential middle-class areas.

Muggings, burglaries, car-jacks, and drug-related shootings, all of which may leave their victims or innocent bystanders dead, are now common enough to concern all urban and many suburban residents.

The inclination to violence springs from the circumstances of life among the ghetto poor and the lack of jobs that pay

Above all, this environment means that even youngsters whose home lives reflect mainstream values and the majority of homes in the community must be able to handle themselves in a street-oriented environment.

This is because the street culture has evolved what may be called a code of the streets, which amounts to a set of informal rules governing interpersonal public behavior, including violence. The rules prescribe both a proper comportment and a proper way to respond if challenged. They regulate the use of violence and so allow those who are inclined to aggression to precipitate violent encounters in an approved way. The rules have been established and are enforced mainly by the street-oriented, but on the streets the distinction between street and decent is often irrelevant; everybody knows that if the rules are violated, there are penalties. Knowledge of the code is thus largely defensive; it is literally necessary for operating in public.

Therefore, even though families with a decency orientation are usually opposed to the values of the code, they often reluctantly encourage their children's familiarity with it to enable them to negotiate the inner-city environment. At the heart of the code is the issue of respect, loosely defined as being treated "right," or granted the deference one deserves. However, in the troublesome public environment of the inner city, as people increasingly feel buffeted by

With the right amount of respect, for instance, he can avoid “being bothered” in public. If he is bothered, not only may he be in physical danger but he has been disgraced or “dissed” (disrespected). Many of the forms that dissing can take might seem petty to middle-class people (maintaining eye contact for too long, for example), but to those invested in the street code, these actions become serious indications of the other person’s intentions. Consequently, such people become very sensitive to advances and slights, which could well serve as warnings of imminent physical confrontation.

This hard reality can be traced to the profound sense of alienation from mainstream society and its institutions felt by many poor inner-city black people, particularly the young. The code of the streets is actually a cultural adaptation to a profound lack of faith in the police and the judicial system. The police are most often seen as representing the dominant white society and not caring to protect inner-city residents. When called, they may not respond, which is one reason many residents feel they must be prepared to take extraordinary measures to defend themselves and their loved ones against those who are inclined to aggression. Lack of police accountability has in fact been incorporated into the status system: the person who is believed capable of “taking care of himself” is accorded a certain deference, which translates into a sense of physical and psychological control. Thus the street code emerges where the influence of the police ends and personal responsibility for one’s safety is felt to begin. Exacerbated by the proliferation of drugs and easy access to guns, this volatile situation results in the ability of the street oriented minority (or those who effectively “go for bad”) to dominate the public spaces.

Almost everyone in poor inner-city neighborhoods is struggling financially and therefore feels a certain distance from the rest, the decent and the street family in a real sense represent two poles of value orientation, two contrasting conceptual categories. The labels "decent" and "street," which the residents themselves use, amount to evaluative judgments that confer status on local residents. The labeling is often the result of a social contest among individuals and families of the neighborhood. Individuals of the two orientations often coexist in the same extended family. Decent residents judge themselves to be so while judging others to be of the street, and street individuals often present themselves as decent, drawing distinctions between themselves and other people. In addition, there is quite a bit of circumstantial behavior--that is, one person may at different times exhibit both decent and street orientations, depending on the circumstances. Although these designations result from so much social jockeying, there do exist concrete features that define each conceptual category.

Generally, so-called decent families tend to accept mainstream values more fully and attempt to instill them in their children.

Whether married couples with children or single-parent (usually female) households, they are generally “working poor” and so tend to be better off financially than their street-oriented neighbors. . They value hard work and self-reliance and are willing to sacrifice for their children. Because they have a certain amount of faith in mainstream society, they harbor hopes for a better future for their children, if not for themselves. Many of them go to church and take a strong interest in their children’s schooling. Rather than dwelling on the real hardships and inequities facing them, many such decent people, particularly the increasing number of grandmothers raising grandchildren, see their difficult situation as a test from God and derive great support from their faith and from the church community.

Extremely aware of the problematic and often dangerous environment in which they reside, decent parents tend to be strict in their child-rearing practices, encouraging children to respect authority and walk a straight moral line. They have an almost obsessive concern about trouble of

In-fact the overwhelming majority of families in the inner-city community try to approximate the decent-family model, but there are many others who clearly represent the worst fears of the decent family. Not only are their

financial resources extremely limited, but what little they have may easily be misused. The lives of the street-oriented are often marked by disorganization. In the most desperate circumstances people frequently have a limited understanding of priorities and consequences, and so frustrations mount over bills, food, and, at times, drink, cigarettes, and drugs. Some tend toward self-destructive behavior; many street-oriented women are crack-addicted ("on the pipe"), alcoholic, or involved in complicated relationships with men who abuse them. In addition, the seeming intractability of their situation, caused in large part by the lack of well-paying jobs and the persistence of racial discrimination, has engendered deep-seated bitterness and anger in many of the most desperate and poorest blacks, especially young people. The need both to exercise a measure of control and to lash out at somebody is often reflected in the adults' relations with their children. At the least, the frustrations of persistent poverty shorten the fuse in such people--contributing to a lack of patience with anyone, child or adult, who irritates them. In these circumstances a woman--or a man, although men are less consistently present in children's lives--can be quite

Actual peace and quiet, and also the appearance of calm, respectful children conveyed to her neighbors and friends, are often what the young mother most desires, but at times she will be very aggressive in trying to get them. Thus she may be quick to beat her children, especially if they defy her law, not because she hates them but because this is the way she knows to control them. In fact, many street-oriented women love their children dearly. Many mothers in the community subscribe to the notion that there is a “devil in the boy” that must be beaten out of him or that socially “fast girls need to be whupped.” Thus much of what borders on child abuse in the view of social authorities is acceptable parental punishment in the view of these mothers.

Many street-oriented women are sporadic mothers whose children learn to fend for themselves when necessary, foraging for food and money any way they can get it. The children are sometimes employed by drug dealers or become addicted themselves. These children of the street, growing up with little supervision, are said to “come up hard.” They often learn to fight at an early age, sometimes using short-tempered adults around them as role models. The street-oriented home may be fraught with anger, verbal disputes, physical aggression, and even mayhem. The children observe these goings-on, learning the lesson that might makes right. They quickly learn to hit those who cross them, and the dog-eat-dog mentality prevails. In order to survive, to protect oneself, it is necessary to marshal inner resources and be ready to deal with adversity in a hands-on way. In these circumstances physical prowess takes on great significance.

In some of the most desperate cases, a street-oriented mother may simply leave her young children alone and unattended while she goes out. The most irresponsible women can be found at local bars and crack houses,

Realities of inner-city life are largely absorbed on the streets. At an early age, often even before they start school, children from street oriented homes gravitate to the streets, where they “hang”, socialize with their peers. Children from these generally permissive homes have a great deal of latitude and are allowed to “rip and run” up and down the street. They often come home from school,

put their books down, and go right back out the door. On school nights eight- and nineyear-olds remain out until nine or ten o'clock (and teenagers typically come in whenever they want to). On the streets they play in groups that often become the source of their primary social bonds.

Children from decent homes tend to be more carefully supervised and are thus likely to have curfews and to be taught how to stay out of trouble.

When decent and street kids come together, a kind of social shuffle occurs in which children have a chance to go either way. Tension builds as a child comes to realize that he must choose an orientation.

The kind of home he comes from influences but does not determine the way he will ultimately turn out--although it is unlikely that a child from a thoroughly street oriented family will easily absorb decent values on the streets. Youths who emerge from street-oriented families but develop a decency orientation almost always learn those values in another setting in school, in a youth group, in church. Often it is the result of their involvement with a caring "old head" (adult role model).

They see that one child succumbs to the greater physical and mental abilities of the other. They are also alert and attentive witnesses to the verbal and physical fights of adults, after which they compare notes and share their interpretations of the event. In almost every case the victor is the person who physically won the altercation, and this

person often enjoys the esteem and respect of onlookers. These experiences reinforce the lessons the children have learned at home: might makes right, and toughness is a virtue, while humility is not. In effect they learn the social meaning of fighting. When it is left virtually unchallenged, this understanding becomes an ever more important part of the child's working conception of the world. Over time the code of the streets becomes refined.

Those street-oriented adults with whom children come in contact with, including mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, boyfriends, cousins, neighbors, and friends--help them along in forming this understanding by verbalizing the messages they are getting through experience: "Watch your back." "Protect yourself." "Don't punk out." "If somebody messes with you, you got to pay them back." "If someone disses you, you got to straighten them out." Many parents actually impose sanctions if a child is not sufficiently aggressive. For example, if a child loses a fight and comes home upset, the parent might respond, "Don't you come in here crying that somebody beat you up; you better get back out there and whup his ass. I didn't raise no punks! Get back out there and whup his ass. If you don't

The code revolves around the presentation of self. Its basic requirement is the display of a certain predisposition to violence.

Accordingly, one's bearing must send the unmistakable if sometimes subtle message to "the next person" in public that one is capable of violence and mayhem when the situation requires it, that one can take care of oneself. The nature of this communication is largely determined by the demands of the circumstances but can include facial expressions, gait, and verbal expressions--all of which are geared mainly to deterring aggression. Physical appearance, including clothes, jewelry, and grooming, also plays an important part in how a person is viewed; to be respected, it is important to have the right look.

Even so, there are no guarantees against challenges, because there are always people around looking for a fight to increase their share of respect--or "juice," as it is sometimes called on the street. Moreover, if a person is assaulted, it is important, not only in the eyes of his opponent but also in the eyes of his "running buddies," for him to avenge himself. Otherwise he risks being "tried"

Objects play an important and complicated role in establishing self-image. Jackets, sneakers, gold jewelry, reflect not just a person's taste, which tends to be tightly regulated among adolescents of all social classes, but also a willingness to possess things that may require defending. A boy wearing a fashionable, expensive jacket, for example, is vulnerable to attack by another who covets the jacket and either cannot afford to buy one or wants the added satisfaction of depriving someone else of his. However, if the boy forgoes the desirable jacket and wears one that isn't "hip," he runs the risk of being teased and possibly even assaulted as an unworthy person. To be allowed to hang with certain prestigious crowds, a boy must wear a different set of expensive clothes -- sneakers and athletic suit--every day. Not to be able to do so might make him

appear socially deficient. The youth comes to covet such items-- especially when he sees easy prey wearing them.

In acquiring valued things, therefore, a person shores up his identity, but since it is an identity based on having things, it is highly precarious. This very precariousness gives a heightened sense of urgency to staying even with peers, with whom the person is actually competing. Young men and women who are able to command respect through their presentation of self-by allowing their possessions and their body language to speak for them--may not have to campaign for regard but may, rather, gain it by the force of their manner.

Those who are unable to command respect in this way must actively campaign for it-and are thus particularly alive to slights.

One way of campaigning for status is by taking the possessions of others. In this context, seemingly ordinary objects can become trophies imbued with symbolic value that far exceeds their monetary worth.

An important aspect of this often violent give-and-take is its zero-sum quality. That is, the extent to which one person can raise himself up depends on his ability to put another person down. This underscores the alienation that permeates the

inner-city ghetto community. There is a generalized sense that very little respect is to be had, and therefore everyone competes to get what affirmation he can of the little that is available. The craving for respect that results gives people thin skins. Shows of deference by others can be highly soothing, contributing to a sense of security, comfort, self-confidence, and selfrespect. Transgressions by others which go unanswered diminish these feelings and are believed to encourage further transgressions. Hence one must be ever vigilant against the transgressions of others or even appearing as if transgressions will be tolerated. Among young people, whose sense of self-esteem is particularly vulnerable, there is an especially heightened concern with being disrespected.

Many inner-city young men in particular crave respect to such a degree that they will risk their lives to attain and maintain it.

The issue of respect is thus closely tied to whether a person has an inclination to be violent, even as a victim. In the wider society people may not feel required to retaliate physically after an attack, even though they are aware that they have been degraded or taken advantage of. They

may feel a great need to defend themselves during an attack, or to behave in such a way as to deter aggression (middle-class people certainly can and do become victims of street-oriented youths), but they are much more likely than street-oriented people to feel that they can walk away from a possible altercation with their self-esteem intact. Some people may even have the strength of character to flee, without any thought that their self-respect or esteem will be diminished.

In impoverished inner-city black communities, however, particularly among young males and perhaps increasingly among females, such flight would be extremely difficult. To run away would likely leave one's self esteem in tatters.

Hence people often feel constrained not only to stand up and at least attempt to resist during an assault but also to “pay back”--to seek revenge--after a successful assault on their person. This may include going to get a weapon or even getting relatives involved. Their very identity and self-respect, their honor, is often intricately tied up with the way they perform on the streets during and after such encounters.

This outlook reflects the circumscribed opportunities of the inner-city poor.

Generally, people outside the ghetto have other ways of gaining status and regard, and thus do not feel so dependent on such physical displays.

On the street, among males these concerns about things and identity have come to be expressed in the concept of "manhood."

Manhood in the inner city means taking the prerogatives of men with respect to strangers, other men, and women-being distinguished as a man. It implies physicality and a certain ruthlessness. Regard and respect are associated with this concept in large part because of its practical application: if others have little or no regard for a person's manhood, his very life and those of his loved ones could be in jeopardy. But there is a chicken-and egg aspect to this situation: one's physical safety is more likely to be jeopardized in public because manhood is associated with respect. In other words, an existential link has been created between the idea of manhood and one's selfesteem, so that it has become hard to say which is primary. For many

The operating assumption is that a man, especially a real man, knows what other men know--the code of the streets. And if one is not a real man, one is somehow diminished as a person, and there are certain valued things one simply does not deserve. There is thus believed to be a certain justice to the code, since it is considered that everyone has the opportunity to know it. Implicit in this is that everybody is held responsible for being familiar with the code. If the victim of a mugging, for example, does not know the code and so responds "wrong," the perpetrator may feel justified even in killing him and may feel no remorse. He may think, "Too bad, but it's his fault. He should have known better."

So when a person ventures outside, he must adopt the code, a kind of shield, to prevent others from “messing with” him.

In these circumstances it is easy for people to think they are being tried or tested by others even when this is not

the case. For it is sensed that something extremely valuable is at stake in every interaction, and people are encouraged to rise to the occasion, particularly with strangers. For people who are unfamiliar with the code-- generally people who live outside the inner city--the concern with respect in the most ordinary interactions can be frightening and incomprehensible. But for those who are invested in the code, the clear object of their demeanor is to discourage strangers from even thinking about testing their manhood. And the sense of power that attends the ability to deter others can be alluring even to those who know the code without being heavily invested in it--the decent inner-city youths. Thus a boy who has been leading a basically decent life can, in trying circumstances, suddenly resort to deadly force.

Central to the issue of manhood is the widespread belief that one of the most effective ways of gaining respect is to manifest "nerve." Nerve is shown when one takes another person's possessions (the more valuable the better), "messes with" someone's woman, throws the first punch, "gets in someone's face," or pulls a trigger. Its proper display helps on the spot to check others who would violate one's

True nerve exposes a lack of fear of dying.

As the people of the community say, "They are the bad dudes on the street." They often lead an existential life that may acquire meaning only when they are faced with the possibility of imminent death. Not to be afraid to die is by implication to have few compunctions about taking

another's life. Not to be afraid to die is the quid pro quo of being able to take somebody else's life, for the right reasons, if the situation demands it. When others believe this is one's position, it gives one a real sense of power on the streets.

Such credibility is what many inner-city youths strive to achieve, whether they are decent or street-oriented, both because of its practical defensive value and because of the positive way it makes them feel about themselves. The difference between the decent and the street-oriented youth is often that the decent youth makes a conscious decision to appear tough and manly; in another setting--with teachers, say, or at his part-time job--he can be polite and deferential. The street-oriented youth, on the other hand, has made the concept of manhood a part of his very identity; he has difficulty manipulating it which often controls him.

INCREASINGLY, teenage girls are mimicking the boys and trying to have their own version of "manhood." Their goal is the same as to get respect, to be recognized as capable of setting or maintaining a certain standard.

The remark will then get back to the person talked about. She may retaliate or her friends may feel required to “take up for” her. In essence this is a form of group gossiping in which individuals are negatively assessed and evaluated. As with much gossip, the things said may or may not be true,

but the point is that such imputations can cast aspersions on a person's good name. The accused is required to defend herself against the slander, which can result in arguments and fights, often over little of real substance.

Here again is the problem of low selfesteem, which encourages youngsters to be highly sensitive to slights and to be vulnerable to feeling easily "dissed." To avenge the dissing, a fight is usually necessary.

Because boys are believed to control violence, girls tend to defer to them in situations of conflict. Often if a girl is attacked or feels slighted, she will get a brother, uncle, or cousin to do her fighting for her. Increasingly, however, girls are doing their own fighting and are even asking their male relatives to teach them how to fight. Some girls form groups that attack other girls or take things from them.

A hard-core segment of inner-city girls inclined toward violence seems to be developing. As one thirteen years old girl in a detention center for youths who have committed violent acts told me, "To get people to leave you alone, you need to fight. Talking don't always get you out of stuff." One

Girls are not often willing to put their lives on the line for “manhood.” The ultimate form of respect on the male-dominated inner-city street is thus reserved for men.

In the most fearsome youths such a cavalier attitude toward death grows out of a very limited view of life. Many are uncertain about how long they are going to live and believe they could die violently at any time. They accept this fate; they live on the edge. Their manner conveys the message that nothing intimidates them; whatever turn the encounter takes, they maintain their attack--rather like a pit bull, whose spirit many such boys admire. The demonstration of such tenacity "shows heart" and earns their respect.

This fearlessness has implications for law enforcement. Many street oriented boys are much more concerned about the threat of “justice” at the hands of a peer than at the hands of the police. Moreover, many feel not only that they have little to lose by going to prison but that they have something to gain.

The toughening-up one experiences in prison can actually enhance one's reputation on the streets. Hence the system loses influence over the hard core who are without jobs, with little perceptible stake in the system. If mainstream society has done nothing for them, they counter by making sure it can do nothing to them.

At the same time, however, a competing view maintains that true nerve consists in backing down, walking away from a fight, and going on with one's business. One fights only in self-defense. This view emerges from the decent philosophy that life is precious, and it is an important part of the socialization process common in decent homes. It discourages violence as the primary means of resolving disputes and encourages youngsters to accept nonviolence and talk as confrontational strategies. But "if the deal goes down," self-defense is greatly encouraged.

When there is enough positive support for this orientation, either in the home or among one's peers, then nonviolence has a chance to prevail. But it prevails at the cost of relinquishing a claim to being bad and tough, and therefore sets a young person up as at the very least alienated from

Although the nonviolent orientation rarely overcomes the impulse to strike back in an encounter, it does introduce a certain confusion and so can prompt a measure of soul-searching, or even profound ambivalence. Did the person back down with his respect intact or did he back down only to be judged a “punk”—a person lacking manhood? Should he or she have acted? Should he or she have hit the other person in the mouth? These questions beset many young men and women during public confrontations.

What is the “right” thing to do? In the quest for honor, respect, and local status, which few young people are uninterested in common sense, most often prevails, which leads many to opt for the tough approach, enacting their own particular versions of the display of nerve. The presentation of oneself as rough and tough is very often quite acceptable until one is tested. And then that presentation may help the person pass the test, because it will cause fewer questions to be asked about what he did and why. It is hard for a person

to explain why he lost the fight or why he backed down. Hence many will strive to appear to “go for bad,” while hoping they will never be tested. But when they are tested, the outcome of the situation may quickly be out of their hands, as they become wrapped up in the circumstances of the moment.

13

CHAPTER
THIRTEEN

THE WALL OF ALL STREETS (“THE GAME”)





Street has different interwoven compartments with different complexities, in other words, I will say the street is quite complex just like the world we live in. We have different offices in the street as we call it because of the activities being carried out there being synonymous with that of the usual every day office we know.

Talking about office subjectively based on the name given to it by the individuals on the street. There are different terminologies used by the street dwellers and dealers which is subjected to the types of activity such individuals do on the street.

It is being asserted that the terms used by different individuals on the street, were formulated individually and flexibly to relate with themselves uniquely in a way and pattern they themselves would only understand, making it difficult for anybody outside their cartel or group to relate nor comprehend the vocal diversities in their conversations or perhaps lexically. The word office is brought about by some lords of the street in order to esteem and uphold their privacy and enact a standard by creating jurisdictions and policies to guide through their activities. Different policies for different offices, like the usual office we know, the street office also has lines of authority or lines of command in whichever way we would prefer to use it, which goes from the office owner to the head person in the office and so on and so forth according to the laydown policy by the owner of the office.

There are different organization or groups as it may be named, based on individual's concepts. The street has made it easy for the settlement and formulation of secret groups or organization with a general name called 'cult', based on the street activities with respect to the settlement and diversities of the street offices. We have different cult

individuals in the so called street who operates under the leadership of the office with the supervision of the office head person for easy operations of it dealings. The office owner might be a cultist or might not. which is never a barrier to the office settlements and it activities, what is actually paramount is the administrative capacity of the person in charge, the monetary capabilities and reputations in the street affairs. There can be different cult individuals in one office depending on the leadership in the particular office, but there would be laws to guide through their operations which is supervised in most cases by the head person in the office.

The activities of the street individuals, made it vulnerable for diabolic infiltrations and intrusions dynamically, hence causing negative effect on the society at large and the religious believes.

The so called office on the street can also be broken down to, small office and big office or main office. The main office is the place where all individuals reside to do or plan their daily activities, and it is actually not flexible but rigid unless there is security case and perhaps get moved to another

Mind you, it is not the usual game we are talking about here like the one individuals partake in, by physical appearance nor on phone, but rather, they are different activities that leads to transaction and ends up with something in exchange for the particular transaction. The exchange is always something valuable. Life on the street is very tasking and can be very dangerous based on the hazards being exposed to. To live, relate and deal on the street, you must

be extra careful, smart, and be strong most importantly. Some people find themselves on the street living the street life at the long run not because they wanted to, but something they could not comprehend led them through it. Generally, I will advise every individual to be conscious and pay attention to their everyday progression as they grow older, especially from the teenage and youthful age to avoid ending up on the street, because all the evil things and activities you can think of in this world happens on the street.

There is almost no correct way to start off what needs to be said other than to jump right into it. This is aimed at the minds of people who feel like they never had a chance because of where they grew up and who they grew up around - the ones who live in the hood and whose minds feel,

"The hood is all I know," the ones who feel that because of your race or gender you are being held back. This is aimed at the people whose minds believe that if they pray things will change - magically. This is for you.

We live in a world where actions mean everything. I don't care what country you live in actions are the solution to success or to failure. This is true no matter what you believe or been lead to believe, and I'll tell you why. The cycle has already been built for people who live in countries like the United States. I'll explain: although you may not see this, but the overall mind state of the country is "positive." What I mean by that is that in this country people will help you when you need help... people will help you when you don't need help. This may not happen as much on the hood (neighborhood), but it happens. Your job is to put yourself in the position to receive the help, so that one day you can continue the cycle that has been built. The way you position yourself is simple: you go to school. The cycle is in full effect there. Not only do you just show up for the sake of showing up, you put forth some action. Your actions should show that you are willing to be taught what is needed to survive in this world.

I am fully aware that these day's schools have become a fashion show and people in general (mainly young people) care about how they look, which becomes a major distraction when in the process of positioning yourself to

be a part of the cycle. This is where young people become attracted to drugs. Drugs in the neighborhood is a way to make fast money. Once money becomes involved, it's almost impossible to tell the young person anything. They begin to practice the "law of actions" in a different way. This way is by force, with guns. These actions are no good in some countries. It is impossible to be able to buy the amount of guns one would need to continue living a life of force by guns. My point is that sooner or later you will lose by way of prison or death, and that is the truth. And if you go to prison, you will have passed up the years of being young without collecting the full education which is the true key to success in life.

Right now, if you are between the ages of 13 years old and 17 years of age, you have the chance. If you have children or brothers/sisters between these ages, you have the chance. This is bigger than being tuff, because I was tuff. This is bigger than being down for the hood, because I was down for the hood. This is bigger than worrying about what to wear to school. This is as big as life itself!

I grew up in Nigeria, Ebute metta Lagos area. With good educational background from Iponri Grammar School Anwar Islam movement Lagos and University of Benin, Benin City. There is nothing about the hood life I don't know. This is why I have dedicated my time to warn as many people as I can about the so-called lifestyle referred to as "The Game." I understand how hard it may be to trust me, because I can remember when I was in my teenage years, I heard an exgang member speak similar to how I am speaking now. I didn't trust him. I didn't want to hear him, but to this day, I can't get past the fact that he was right.

People are already in positions to ensure your success in this country. You just have to be there. We live in a world where good things happen to us no matter what at one time or another. Even if nothing good has

happened to you yet, keep living - something will. This is because of the overall cycle which is in motion.

There's a cycle in motion within the hood, but its outcome is death or poison and, at the very least, sprang out of drugs. This is no way to live when we have the opportunity to become anything we want to. I encourage young people, don't get caught up in worrying about what to wear to school, if it looks nice or not. Don't get caught up in not having the latest shoes, because I promise you this, it will be plenty of time for that once you have finished school and have the career you wanted. I encourage you to join the majority and be part of the solution and not the problem.

This is a world where actions speak louder than words.

There is no house on the hills. There is no pot of gold on the other side of the rainbow. It's all a lie. This lifestyle is designed to bring you all down; either you will turn on a so-called "Homie" or a so-called Homie or Homies will turn on you.

This is the truth. I write you from the mainline of one of the cities in Lagos state Nigeria, not from some protective area of the. It is hard for me to be seriously considered as

And of course, you will need math because you will need to be able to add up all the money you're making or going to make in The Game, plus you'll need math to add up all the time you will have to do off of 20 years with 85% if not more, maybe less the first time, but more the second time.

However, if you look around at all the young people your age who already know how to read, write, spell and do math, you will probably notice that they are the ones who's been smart enough to read through The Game and know it's a road headed to nowhere fast! I speak the truth to you all. There is nothing for me to gain in this speech. I speak from my heart. The Game is no place for none.

First and fore-most I've been in the same situation many years ago trying to find my place in life! But I must tell you that there's nothing good that comes from being a gang member!

True, you have some good times but in the end you wind up going to a lot of funerals or visiting a lot of prisons! Now if that's your idea of a life then the gang scene is for you, drugs, murder, mayhem, prison, and death!

Oh yeah, while you're hanging out with your homies and home girls drinking, getting high, fighting rival members, or just committing any kind of crime, it's all cool!

But when it turns into a life or death situation then you want to take time to reflect and question your present position in life!

Life is our teacher, teaching us with good experiences and with painful ones. The painful days are difficult to understand like the death of my brother Jude Mafiana who couldn't escape from the street but died after different hustle for survival from the street. He was sure a good hearted man as I know him very well as my brother. Though at a point in life he got stuck with the street affairs that he went really deep conforming to all kinds of street attributes due to what life offers according to him, although I contrasted his point of view, but it is from these troubled times that we learn to be strong. We learn to hold on and face each day, even though we hurt and feel frustrated.

We learn that the simple pleasures are often the most rewarding. And we learn that losing is often only another step towards winning. And when life turns its smiling side to use again, as it always does, we find ourselves stronger, with a greater knowledge of ourselves, and able to feel the welcomed comfort of good times even more deeply than before.

I will like to use medium to advice everybody reading this book that, nothing is unchangeable in life, you can be on the street today, and still come out for good at the long run, but you need to be very strong in all areas of life and develop a positive notion on everything around. Also you must note that nothing good comes easy without hard-work. It might come easy for other people and mightn't for you, but I sure know you can achieve anything in life with strong focus and steadfast work and prayers to God.

Nobody likes nor wants to end up on the street, but different life upbringing and pop-ups conforms us therein.

CONCLUSION





The street has expose children to a variety of experiences, both positive and negative. A striving after autonomy is clearly depicted by these children, who are able to tap into a range of responses, both on- and off—street.

These ambiguous experiences lead to feelings of confusion, despair. Helplessness and suicide ideation in children living on the streets. The children living on the street in my research and experience so far strives to lead a morally good life which involves the ability to distinguish between good and bad actions. There is clearly the ability to appreciate cause and effect linked to criminal behavior

and negative outcomes. Children living on the streets make a choice to engage in processes of mobility, which impacts on their actual identity. This mobility affords them a number of opportunities that enhances their survival strategies and resilience on the street.

They are able to tap into a range of resources on the street and off-street locations at different times, enabled by their fluid identities.

My advice for us all is, try not to get stuck on the street nor compromise your good pursuit with the fear that makes it seem unrealizable, but know that with God and seriousness in all important areas of life, you can escape from the street. It might not be easy for you and might, but I strongly believe you can and you will.