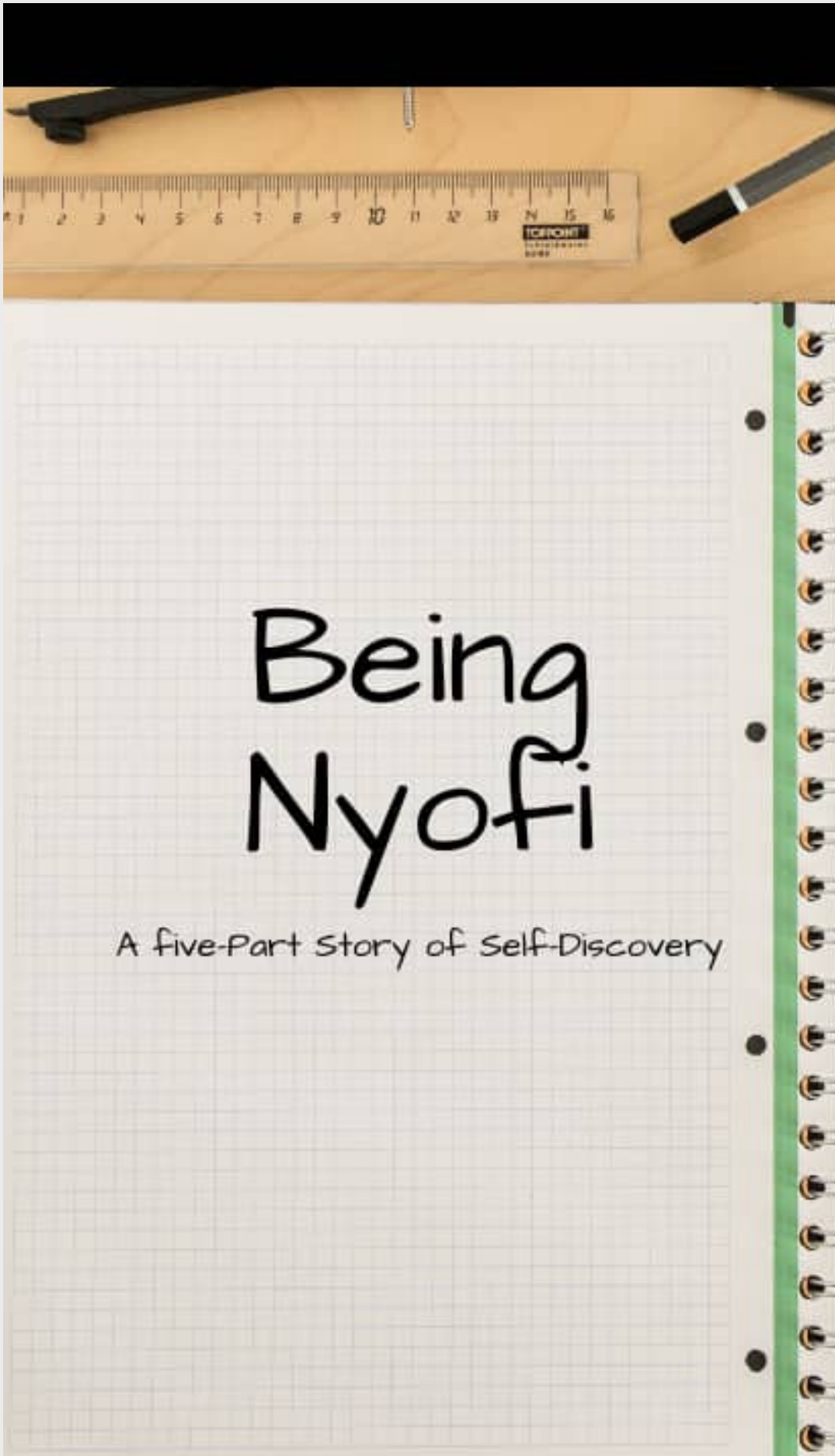




The image shows a wooden desk with a spiral-bound notebook. On the desk, there is a wooden ruler with markings in inches and centimeters, a black pen, and a small metal paper clip. The notebook is open to a page with a light blue grid pattern. The title 'Being Nyofi' is written in large, black, cursive letters in the center of the page. Below the title, the subtitle 'A five-Part Story of Self-Discovery' is written in a smaller, black, cursive font. The notebook has a green cover visible on the right side. The background is a solid black color.

Being Nyofi

A five-Part Story of Self-Discovery

STELLA OMEPA

BEING NYOFI

A five-Part Story of Self-Discovery

By;

Stella Omepa

Synopsis

Nyofi.

It's her name that makes the first impression on many people. "Nyofi, that's quite an uncommon name for a Nigerian." Many would say, and she would smile and nod in agreement, reiterating that she's probably the only Nigerian with the name.

And like her name, her passions and trials are equally uncommon.

Will Nyofi find satisfaction in traveling the uncommon route?

Well, after lots of tussles and internal monologue, she wouldn't have it any other way.

Lend an ear to your inner voice and accept responsibility for your life. Because only you can get you to your desired destination.

Forward

“Do not let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice.”

ONE



It was on the twenty-first day of November, the harmattan season had just begun and although the air was dry and dusty, many people were thankful that they could go about their daily lives without worrying about the rain.

“Pray for your sister.” Nyofi’s mum said in a voice that is distinctively pleasant yet strong enough to make her stop in her tracks.

“Yes, ma!” Nyofi nodded and ran off.

It was the eve of her elder sister’s birthday and she was headed for the ‘Block Rosary’ meeting in the church.

Nyofi was eight. About five years younger than her elder sister who was away at boarding school. And as the only child at home, she spent a lot of time with the other kids in her neighborhood.

At least thrice every week, she would attend church meetings with her friends. Mostly, they went separately or in pairs but returned home in larger groups. One of their favourite pastimes was singing and dancing while using their water bottles as microphones as they walked.

The community was a safe haven for everyone and the African saying that ‘it takes a community to raise a child’ held true for many of them.

“Bye aunty.” One of the kids said to their teacher at the end of the class.

“Bye aunty.” The other kids chorused.

Nyofi went before the ‘Blessed Sacrament’ and knelt down. She was silent for a moment, just gazing at the flickering light behind the curtain. Then, she started listing in prayer, all the things she wanted for her sister.

By the time she was done, she looked around and discovered everyone but the adults had left the church premises.

She started her lone walk back home but quickly got bored and decided to talk to all the things that caught her attention; pretending to be the boss.

“Hey tree, why are there no fruits on you?” she asked, hands akimbo.

She kept talking to various objects until she heard a voice speaking back and stopped.

Quickly, she turned around to see if anyone was there. When she didn’t see anyone, she looked up to see if anyone was on the tree but didn’t find anyone.

Perplexed, she went on in silence on her lone walk while thinking of the question that was posed to her by the intangible voice.

~

“Mama?” Nyofi was sitting on a stool in the kitchen.

“Yes, my dear.” Her mum turned away from the vegetables she was chopping.

Nyofi's mum was largely perceived as an intentional person who tries to be present, as much as possible, for everyone. Her slogan was simple; A few seconds away from our phone or other simple things to behold the one calling us wouldn't do any harm.

"What is the name of that big tree after Ike's house, on the way to church?" Nyofi's scenic face mirrored her puzzled state of mind.

"It's called Iroko."

"Does it speak?"

"Speak?" She furrowed her brow, then shook her head. "No dear, it doesn't."

Again, Nyofi began to wonder where the voice she heard earlier had come from.

"Why did you ask?"

Before she could answer, the theme song for Tales By Moonlight came on and her dad called out for her. She jumped down from the stool and ran off to the living room.

~

Seven years later and Nyofi was expected to be preparing for her mock examinations. The simulated exam was designed to help students get ready for the important and much dreaded Senior School Certificate Examination, which was just a few months away. Nyofi, though, was composing a play for her church group.

"What is that you are doing?" her dad's voice startled her.

“Ouch!” she screamed and turned around to meet his cold facial expression. “I did not hear you come in.” she stuttered.

“What is that?” he asked, ignoring her statement.

“It’s a drama for my church group.”

“You are busy writing a drama when you have a major exam in two days?” He spoke in a low but distinctly hostile tone.

Nyofi really wished she could be entirely honest with her dad. But how could she explain the fact that she could write dramas all day and not get tired or bored but couldn’t say the same thing about her core subjects without hurting his feelings?

“I was just taking a break.” She finally said.

“What did we discuss about doing things at the right time?”

“I am sorry.” She pleaded. “It won’t happen again.”

“Let this apology reflect in your results.” He walked out.

Nyofi let out her breath slowly, dropped her pen, and went to bed.

She tossed about on the bed with her emotions all over the place.

As much as she wanted to do the things she loved, she felt a special kind of happiness when she made her dad happy.

She recalled how his face glowed when he first saw her grades in the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examinations, and how he promptly agreed with their head teacher that the science class was the best fit for her. At the time, she was equally proud of her performance and the choice of subjects but a few terms in and her interest began to change.

Nyofi couldn't endure the thought of her dad's possible reaction in the event that her grades weren't excellent. She was still unable to get over his disappointment when he discovered that her last term's grades weren't all A's.

Beyond feeling terrible, she practically walked around her house like a robber and avoided personal time with her dad for weeks.

She recalled her mother challenging her to concentrate on winning the next round and to quit sneaking around the house, saying that although failure may be embarrassing, a commitment to keep working hard would eventually lead to success and earlier failures would no longer have the same effect.

Nyofi got out of bed and went straight to her reading table.

TWO



The living area was filled with the aroma of burning incense. Nyofi loved the aroma, but she placed more faith in its ability to call forth the presence of God and drive out evil spirits because it was always her mother's justification for burning it.

.They were all waiting for the breaking news as Nyofi's dad, Mr. Chude, was on the phone. With God in the house, Nyofi was hoping for good news. The environment appeared energised for miracles.

"The first list is out and Nyofi's name is not on it." he said as he dropped the phone. "Apparently, someone wants money in exchange."

"Money in exchange." Nyofi's forehead tightened. "What does that even mean?"

"University admission has become business ventures for many." Her mum responded.

"But that is not fair."

"We do not live in a fair world." Her dad answered.

"Where is the place of justice then?"

"You fight for it, my dear. Justice is hardly handed to anyone on a silver platter." He got up and left.

Nyofi couldn't believe that after meeting all the requirements for admission, her parents were still expected to pay one greedy staff in order for her to be admitted into the university.

"After all the hard work and prayers?" Her smiling countenance changed as her eyes dimmed with tears.

"We will do whatever it takes to get you into school." Her mum said.

"Mum..." She gazed steadily at her mum. "whatever it takes?"

"Yes."

"Including bribing someone?"

"You met all the requirements. It is only unfortunate that greedy men are using the process for personal gain."

"Why didn't God answer my prayers?" She blinked and the tears dropped.

"He answers in different ways. Maybe this is an experience that might help you fulfil purpose." She let out a deep breath. "Now, wipe those tears."

Nyofi wiped her eyes.

~

The second admission list was eventually released and Nyofi made the list. But she wasn't offered her preferred course of study.

"No!" she screamed and stormed out of the living room, slammed the door behind her as soon as she got into her room and threw herself on the bed. As her vision became blurry from crying, her perfectly imagined future also started to become hazy. She detested the salty taste of the tears she unintentionally licked off her lips as well as the warmth that they brought to her face.

She couldn't stop wishing for something sweet. But her head was clouded and her emotions were solely negative as she considered the idea of wasting another year at home or opting for a less esteemed programme, particularly one that she had been warned wouldn't be good enough to land a well-paying job. Nyofi sobbed uncontrollably, and her voice could be heard from the living room.

"Nyofi?" Her dad opened her door before she got the chance to answer.

"Why are you crying as if the world has come to an end?" He asked as he walked in.

Her tears flowed the more. She literally felt like her world was coming to an end.

"It is not the end of the world." He said, taking a sit beside the bed. "Now, wipe your tears and stop crying."

She wiped her tears.

He gave her a very long look. A calm conviction that all is well. Then he asked, "Would you like to enroll for the general experience while you write another matriculation exam next year?"

"I met the requirements this year and I didn't get it. So, there is no guarantee I would get it next year."

"I know and I understand that corruption has taken over the process, but that doesn't mean you can't keep trying until you get what you want."

Nyofi was quiet. And her dad waited patiently.

“Waste of time.” She said quietly.

“We can try a private university then.”

“Father.” She uses ‘father’ as an endearment. “Thank you, but I know that would be too expensive for us.”

“Don’t worry.” He said firmly. “We can make it work.”

She knew it would be too expensive for them but she loved the fact that her dad was ready to go all out for her.

“Thank you, but no.” She smiled. “I will take this admission and try again next year.”

~

The first group of people she interacted with became her buddies for the first few days at the university. But she quickly discovered their personalities were too far apart. So, she withdrew and eventually gravitated toward others who shared her values.

“Come join us for fellowship today.” Tunde, one of her friends said to her.

She raised her head, smiling and winking at him.

“Why are you teasing me now?” He asked, blushing.

“Don’t mind me.” Nyofi smiled. “But I guess you make heaven really happy.”

“Why?” He grinned. “Not like there is anything special about me.”

“Ah!” She laughed. “Cute guys rarely take church things seriously.”

“Oh!” he nodded.

“What?” she frowned.

“You finally get to confess I am cute.”

“Naughty!” she hissed, and he laughed out loud, drawing the attention of others.

He made a head nod and she carried her bag and followed him out.

~

The departmental fellowship was meant to last an hour. Shortly after the opening prayer and worship, someone stepped up to give the message. The hall was quiet and people were taking notes. Nyofi was simply listening.

With this line, “Please remember that God would sometimes withhold what we want in order to give us what we need,” the preacher ended his message.

“How convenient.” Nyofi said under her breath.

The fellowship went on for another fifteen minutes before they shared the grace and dispersed.

“Why did you say that in there?” Tunde asked as soon as they were out and alone.

“What?”

“How convenient.”

“Oh. That.” She shrugged. “I just think that sometimes we use God’s will as an excuse for our failures.”

“You don’t think God can sometimes say ‘no’ because he wants something better for us?”

“He said he will not withhold any good thing from his own. Then he says we should ask, believe and then receive.” She paused. “If it doesn’t work that way then something is wrong on our part and that is what I believe we should focus on finding instead of dismissing it with the whole ‘it’s not God’s will’ narrative.”

“I get your point.”

“Yeah.”

“So, are you still going to try for medicine next year?”

“No. I have made peace with where I am. I will see to the end of it.”

“Great.” He pointed at the chairs in the garden. “Let’s sit here for a while.”

“Okay.” She smiled and urged him to lead the way.

THREE



She kept her eyes closed to contain her emotions as the mood in the office was depressing.

Nyofi's level coordinator had told her to take her time and put her emotions together before leaving. He was equally pained; after consecutive years of fatal failure, he was pleased to see at least a third of his students graduating. Nyofi was supposed to be one of them.

Yes, students are many times unserious. But Nyofi couldn't understand why a department should be excused when massive failure is recorded, especially if it is recurrent.

Why did I blindly believe in this system? She wondered.

It took a personal experience for Nyofi to start questioning the entire process that goes into the preparation of students' results. She had seen how bad the results of final-year students from her department were and had assumed it had everything to do with the students. So, she resolved to work harder for better grades.

Now, she regrets her assumptions and hates the fact that she wasn't curious enough. Maybe if she had asked enough questions, she would have gotten a cue and avoided her current predicament.

She abhorred the fact that she was one of those students shouting “There are only two universities in Nigeria, hers and others.” Without concrete facts to back it up.

Dr. Musa, her level coordinator, had just informed her that she had failed the course and would have to retake the exam after his attempt to find one of her final results that had been reported missing.

“Did you see the script, sir?” she asked as tears filled up in her eyes.

He just stared at her.

“I know I did not fail that course,” she argued. “And to think that I was the only one who failed that course in my class, is that even possible?”

“That is one thing I don’t understand. Did you have a problem with the lecturer?”

“No.” she frowned. “He is an elderly professor who came to class only twice before the examination. I am certain he doesn’t even know ninety-five percent of us.”

She wanted to request a reassessment but her level coordinator advised her against it and encouraged her to reseat the course and get it done with.

Nyofi despised the system that was in place, in all her years at the university, she had seen only one of her scripts. One of their professors gave them the script in class, asked them to check if they had any reasons to contest their scores, then collected back the scripts for documentation.

She wished others would emulate him and desperately wanted to see her script before retaking the course.

After being told the processes involved in having a script remarked and how it might make her a target of abuse, she took the path of ease and peace like she was advised by her coordinator and re-registered the course.

As Nyofi wondered what she would do with all the time she had left before the next defined phase—the compulsory National Youth Service Corps, she remembered her iroko tree experience and the question; 'Do authors experience everything they write in books or do they just make it up?'

Because of how distinct the voice in her mind was, especially since she wasn't thinking about books or movies prior to the time, she had assumed the question was posed by someone else.

Now she understands a lot more about internal discourse and how potent inner monologues can sometimes be. If only she had entertained that internal dialogue instead of looking around to see the source of the question, and probably gone further to discuss the question with others, she most likely would have gained an empowering piece of information.

Einstein was right. Nyofi thought. The important thing is not to stop questioning because curiosity has its own reason for existing.

Nyofi spent the rest of the day in her room, reliving her past and noting down all the things that pricked her interest while growing up. She had an extra year with many free hours and she was determined to use them wisely by following her curiosity and intuition.

The year passed by very quickly and Nyofi found out that following her curiosity was basically the only way to finding happiness in her life.

But she needed to close the previous chapter.

The professor didn't do anything different. He sent his notes to the class as usual and Nyofi couldn't be bothered because it was exactly the same as the one from the previous year. She read her notes, sat for the course and passed.

All she needed was the certificate so she could call it a day.

"Do you realize that with an addition of 0.01, your class of degree will change?" The academic officer asked after studying her final result.

Nyofi shrugged. "I know." She said but really didn't care, she had had enough and just wanted out.

"If you know anyone who can help, one of your grades can be changed and that would be all." He said.

Nyofi was perplexed. Although she had heard before that individuals buy results, she was unaware that an academic officer she was meeting for the first time would say that to her directly and without hesitation because it had been the standard.

She thanked him and left. But she was furious and disappointed in herself for being so naïve. If people can buy results, then people can manipulate the results of others.

As soon as she arrived home, she pulled out all of her results and made the decision to recalculate her CGPA.

She took a look at the grades, which were all written by hand. She had copied them off the departmental notice boards where the general results were posted.

Nyofi shook her head and questioned why she had so foolishly trusted a school with such a subpar grade report system.

She calculated and recalculated for several minutes before realising there was a significant discrepancy between the outcome and what she had been awarded.

This night would become one of Nyofi's longest. It dragged on forever as she waited anxiously for daybreak. She felt betrayed by the institution she had trusted with her future and couldn't stop herself from crying. Her heart was broken.

Nyofi arrived back at the university the following morning with sore eyes and headed right to the transcripts office. The office door was unlocked, revealing walls filled in shelves reaching to the ceiling that contained numerous dusty files. A young man was seated behind a table that was in the middle of the room.

"Good morning, sir." Nyofi said, walking towards the visitors' chairs while trying to be as cordial as possible.

"Good morning." He smiled. "How may I help you?"

I have just received my final result and the CGPA doesn't correspond with the one I calculated.

"Hmmm." He was silent for a moment. "Are you sure you calculated it right?"

“I am pretty sure, Sir.” She responded.

“Do have a sit.” He said pointing at the chair. “And let me have your matriculation number.”

She called it out and he stood up to check the files. After several minutes of searching through dusty files, he found hers, flipped through the pages, and returned to his chair.

“You can leave your number with me. Once I go through your transcript, I will call to let you know the findings.”

“Thank you very much, Sir.” She shifted uneasily on the chair. “But please, may I take a look?”

“No.” He raised an eyebrow. “You are quite aware that we don’t give students access to their transcript.”

“I am.” She managed to put on her best pleading expression. “But please, I am begging you, let me just take a look.” She was determined to see for herself as she had lost complete trust in the system.

He hesitated and she continued to plead until she won him over.

She scanned through the document and her eyes twitched, then she shook her head. “This is a joke.” She said, raising her head from the document to meet the young man’s confused facial expression.

“What is the problem?” he asked.

“Three of my courses in year two are recorded here as zero.”

“So?”

“Well, that is not possible because I had very good grades in them, and they are not reflecting in year three which means they weren’t carryovers.”

“Let me take a look.” He collected the document and scanned through. About a minute later, he says, “I see your point.”

“This is an absolutely terrible oversight.” She frowned. “If it is not an intentional act of wickedness.”

“Human beings compute these results so errors are bound to happen. I am certain it is not intentional.”

“Wow! Errors with my future.” She sighed. “Interesting.”

“This can be resolved. Just calm down.”

“How?”

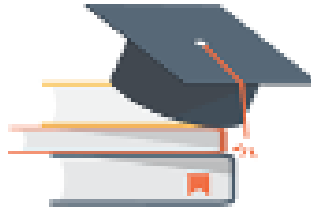
“First off, nobody must know I gave you a copy of your transcript, except if you want to get me into trouble.”

“I don’t want to do that.”

“Good. You need to write a formal application, contesting your result and we will address it officially.”

She stopped paying attention and began to wonder why the very battle she was trying to avoid by accepting an extra year would end up being her sole escape route.

FOUR



When Nyofi arrived home, she shut the door and leaned back against it. She stood there in the pitch-black space for several minutes, allowing herself to embrace her emotions. She never imagined having to attend school for an additional year or dealing with the effects of a flawed system. A system that she had held in high esteem.

She gently slipped till her butt was resting on the floor with her back still resting on the door. She then raised her right leg and put her head on it while extending her left leg. Her thoughts were scattered all over the place.

Choose your battles, they say, not avoid your battles. Nyofi couldn't help but wish she had challenged the initial result because it appeared that would have prevented her from having to spend an additional year.

Even though she despised the fact that she caved in without a struggle, which may have prevented her from having to stay an additional year, she was grateful for the chance to witness the extent of the system's shortcomings because it inspired her to think creatively and aim higher.

She stood up, went to the refrigerator, and poured herself a glass as gratitude boosted her mood. She started to think about her friends who had emigrated to other countries and how she had labelled them as being unpatriotic. Right now, she would do anything to get out.

The more she thought about leaving the country, the more audible the still voice within her became.

“I am not running!” She screamed.

Now, she has learned how to engage her inner voice, so she took a moment to collect herself before deciding to find out why the quiet voice within her kept saying she was running.

“Am I running?” She asked herself.

Nyofi would eventually discover that she was. She dodged the initial argument by agreeing to an extra year, and now, rather than requesting that the university correct her result, she is more interested in moving to any other region where institutions are effective.

She recalled her dad saying severally that justice is not given to anyone on a silver platter.

If the fight I avoided can return a year later, Nyofi thought, then I had better stop choosing ‘convenient’ over ‘right’ to avoid moving in circles.

Nyofi wanted a distraction, so she opened the Twitter app. Many of the tweets on her timeline were funny and cheered her up, but the trend list brought back memories of institutional failures.

Nigerians were trending #AFoolAt60 to mark the nation’s 60th Independence anniversary while Americans were tweeting about their troubling presidential debate.

Nyofi realised that no system in the world is perfect. However, because the systems recognise how valuable individuals are and are intimidated by their significance, they try hard to make them downplay their influence.

Nyofi recalled Dr. Musa telling her she couldn’t fight the federal government when she threatened to sue.

And then she thought. Actually, I could. I may lose the case to them but that doesn't mean I couldn't. Then, she was mad that she believed him, and had downplayed her power to effect change.

She gulped what was left in the cup and went to bed.

~

Nyofi turned around and opened her eyes after feeling the warmth of the rising sun on her face. When she went to bed, she was unaware that she had left the blinds open.

In order to see the time, she found her phone next to her pillow and tapped one of the buttons. It was 8:30 in the morning. Even though she had only slept for five hours, she felt completely renewed.

Leaving the night behind, Nyofi started making her plans for the day.

She had made Twitter one of her favourite sites to check in the morning for city information before stepping out. Since it was a holiday to commemorate Nigeria's 60th anniversary of independence, she had intended to spend the entire day indoors, but she still checked Twitter.

Her timeline was littered with opinions on the President's Independence Day speech. Curious, she decided to read through the thread.

A particular tweet caught her attention;



Muhammadu Buhari ✓
@MBuhari

Democracy, the world over and as I am pursuing in Nigeria, recognizes the power of the people. However, if some constituencies choose to bargain off their power, they should be prepared for denial of their rights.

Nyofi gaped at the audacity it took for the president to tweet that, knowing full well it would receive considerable backlash from the people, regardless of the fact that the statement in itself was the truth.

Actions have consequences. She thought. If like Esau, we choose to sell off our rights to people who should be answerable to us, then we must be prepared to face the consequences.

She closed her eyes, placed both her hands behind her head, and tried to visualise the biblical tale of Esau and Jacob.

Hunger caused Esau his birthright and hunger is still one of the major reasons many Nigerians are giving their votes to underserving candidates in exchange for a token.

A thoughtful leader would empower the people so they do not fall victim to vote buyers who are only self-seeking, but a wicked one would leave them susceptible so as to equally reap off of them.

Nyofi opened her eyes, took her phone, and replied the tweet with eleven simple words; Anyone who isn't solving the problem is part of the problem.

She dropped her phone and went back to her thoughts.

Esau could have chosen to find something else—a fruit or a cup of water for strength to keep it moving but he chose instant pleasure.

She shook her head. "I cannot judge him." She said out loud.

Nyofi had chosen the seemingly less stressful path before so she understood that ignorance of the big picture can easily make one settle for less.

She pulled out her diary and began to write.

Dear Nyofi,

Always keep the larger picture in mind, ask questions, and consider all of your options before making a choice since anything less could end up costing you more than you would like to.

Don't forget to cut off those who have the power to prevent mistakes but would prefer to see you fail so they can make you pay for it. They are the real issue.

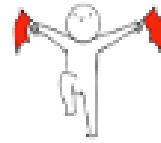
Finally, never forget that if you can think it then you can do it.

Regards,

Your Inner Voice

Nyofi closed her dairy, returned it to its position, and began to pack her bags.

FIVE



Nyofi couldn't be happier that the drama she produced during the extra year earned her the chance to attend a writers' fellowship abroad. Even though she adored Nigeria, she was aware that in order to shatter preconceptions, she required a broader perspective of the world.

"Tomorrow is almost here." From the door, her mum's voice resounded.

"And I miss you already." She said, pushing aside some of the clothes on the bed to make space for her mum.

Nyofi's conversations with her mum when packing for a trip always made her happy. But this night was extremely special, it would be the last one before her first major trip on an entirely new but exciting path.

She moved close to her mum and sat down. "I thought I could have it the normal way; graduate with a good grade, get a lucrative job, earn monthly salaries, and live beautifully." She smiled. "But life would rather have me go where there is no actual path and leave a trail."

"Developing cold feet?" Her mum rubbed her back. "You were very excited a while ago."

"I'm thrilled, but I also view this as the world acknowledging the validity of a dream I have had for a very long time. I can't help but wonder why I was shying away from it in the past."

"Life is a process and there are frequently many ups and downs throughout the process. Moreover, visions are for a set time."

Nyofi nodded and leaned her head on her mum's shoulder.

"If you could go back in time, would you have done anything differently?" her mum asked while stroking her back.

"Yes. I would have been more daring." She sat up and furrowed her brow. "Like ignore fear and go after all the things I secretly admired."

"Why were you afraid?"

"I didn't want to make a fool of myself by performing below expectation."

"God is said to use the foolish things of the world to shame the wise."

"Now I know that." She shrugged. "Growing up, I don't think I heard enough of those motivating stories."

"We should have provided enough of those resources. We failed in that regard."

"You provided as much as you could." She took her mum's hand and squeezed it. "I understand that you and dad didn't know I had any of those internal struggles."

"Those insecurities and fears are part of the growing process. We experienced that as well."

"Wow!" Nyofi folded her arms below her bust. "So why didn't you tell me about it?"

"I did and your dad did as well." She smiled. "Remember those stories of how we fought to acquire formal education?"

"That is true. You knew exactly what you wanted and you went for it."

She leaned back on her mum. "I wish I was bold enough to do that, instead of spending years studying a course I would no longer need."

“Look at me.” Her mum made her sit up. “Life is always evolving and no knowledge is a waste.”

Nyofi nodded.

“If a dream from your past comes tugging powerfully at your heart, give it the attention it needs. Today may just be the set day for its manifestation.” She kept her tone down and eyes fixed on Nyofi. “And if in the process you become curious about something else, consider it as well. That is the only way you can keep your journey interesting and fulfilling.”

Nyofi smiled and nodded.

“You are a star.” She paused; eyes still fixed on Nyofi. “Aside from the fact that this is what your name implies, you are genuinely meant to shine. Even while you might not always be able to see your own light—just as we don’t always get to see the star—it doesn’t mean that you aren’t doing so. There is a force at work in you.”

“Hmmm.” Nyofi blushed. “Thank you, ma.”

Her mum opened her arms. “I need to get all the hugs I can get now.”

Nyofi hugged her mum and held on tightly. “I never thought a day would come when I would be continents apart from my family.”

“I knew it would come.” She freed her from the hug so she could see her face. “I gave you a foreign name that means a star because I wanted you to shatter boundaries, soar and shine.”

“You set me up for exploits.” Nyofi grinned.

“As I should.” She chuckled. “As you go far and near, my only wish is that you remember the road that leads you home.”

“Let me set ‘Skeleton Move’ by Master KG as my ringing tone then.” Nyofi teased and they both laughed out loud.

ENDNOTE

Being Nyofi is based on a true-life story, and just like her, many others were equally faced with the ills of the system. Majority of them also played safe for fear of being victimized while others challenged the system and won:



Aisha Yesufu  @AishaYesufu · 6h



They once failed me in a chemistry course no one failed. We only had group practicals and all my group members had B. The lecturer said I had to accept it. I went to the HOD and when he didn't do anything I went to the Dean. I was ready to go to the VC! I passed!



Flo @Folarin_AA · 7h

I once had a missing script in my first year, when I complained to the lecturer, she said and I quote "congratulations, come back next year"

...

Whatever the case, it is always more honourable to fight and lose than to let evil slide for fear of consequences.

Nyofi is originally a Namibian name and Namibia is known to have one of the best stargazing sites in the world.

Being Nyofi is a true life story of a young girl's struggle through a failing educational system, and how the challenges became stepping stones to a fulfilling life.

By:



STELLA OMEPE

An economist, social entrepreneur and writer who delights in inspiring people and lighting up their paths to success and bliss.