ORDERLINESS IS AN ILLUSION; LIFE & CHAOS ARE SIBLINGS.

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Let us conclude before we start: Depression is real, and it is approaching a pandemic level, but it is not peculiar to Nigeria alone, it is a global virus. For different reasons, people living in America, India, China, Nigeria and Iran are more vulnerable to depression.

Contrariwise, Japan is reputed to have one of the lowest depression rates, while at the same time has one of the highest suicide rates, arising from cultural values. Japanese see suicide as more dignifying to failure and depression. Tellingly, the depression virus is gender, class, religion and nationality neutral.

However, Nigeria presents an an interesting case study: while the World Values Survey named Nigeria as the happiest country in the world in 2003, twenty two years later, in 2025, Nigeria is listed as the 105th happiness out of 147 countries surveyed, which means 104 countries are now happier than Nigeria according to World Happiness Report. Like Euphrates River that is experiencing significant drying, happiness seems to be evaporating in Nigeria, while depression, like the Sahara desert, is fast encroaching. Meanwhile, Mauritius and Finland are the happiest countries in Africa and the world respectively.

Four weeks ago, a woman brought her son who is in his twenties to my office for guidance and counseling. He is a university graduate but has been Jobless since he graduated five years ago. The woman one day, secretly went through his diary and saw that the boy wrote in it that if by certain date, his prayers for a job and meaning in life remained unanswered, then he would conclude that there is no God and that his continued existence in this world is meaningless.

Same week, another woman brought her daughter who is suffering from melancholy arising from her joblessness after graduating from a top private university 3 years ago. The said girl would not go out or see anyone. The mother sorrowfully confided in me, Sir : My husband and I are essentially responsible for the sorry state in which our daughter finds herself today. For roughly 25 years, we keep lamenting openly and continuously about how hopeless Nigeria is as a country in her presence at home. Now she has lost hope in both: country and self. I'm confused as to how to bring her back from her present state of acute reclusiveness

In the same month of June, a university don from Europe visited my office. He informed me that the information at his disposal showed that 22 Nigeria students died in just one European country where he lectures in 2024, for reasons not unconnected with depression arising from financial crisis of their parents back home. Earning Naira and converting it to dollars to finance their children education overseas is a veritable pathway to depression for some parents who don't have access to public Treasury.

Most Youths who were sent back home from overseas by their parents for wrong attitude or poor academic performances are not helping the situation in Nigeria, especially in private Universities. They are the ones teaching the "indigenous students'' how to do dangerous drugs, which further compound the already bad situation.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently submitted that the rate of depression is rising globally, and about 280 million people are victims worldwide.

One out of three women, and one out of five men are likely to become victims of Depression. Paradox one: women are more vulnerable to depression than men.

Paradox two: more guys are now beginning to align with the Elon Musk's dangerous theory that “marriage is obsolete”. Meanwhile, once ladies cross 30 years of age and still single, it is color of anxiety.

Youths are now embracing sex toys as alternative to marriage, which posses an existential threat to human civilization.

Paradox three: long screen hours and social media addiction increase chances of depression in students and remote jobbers. This is why China has passed a legislation limiting students screen hours per day.

Paradox four: based on my deep involvement in Youth Empowerment in the past thirty years, I came away convinced that the university a student attended does not determine his/her future success. I have graduates from State Universities under my mentorship doing extremely better than even those who attended any of the global Top 10 Universities. And I equally have students whose parents sent back to Nigeria for mental reprogramming. Therefore, parents should not kill themselves over "BRANDS"!

What do we know? 20% of teens will

experience depression at age 17. Also, 50% of mental health are established by age 14, while 75% are established at age 24.

Depression is a mental disorder characterized by feelings of sadness, anxiety, uselessness, hopelessness, failure and several psychological and physical symptoms.

The apparent absence of order in the world is not helping matters. There is harsh heat in Europe, Killer flood in Texas, the Siberians in Russia are abandoning their cities due to hazardous weather, Middle East has remained enmeshed in the middle of crises, Kenya youths are back on the streets protesting, Africa is rotating in circular crises like a barber’s chair, where is the order? or better said,

when will order arrive and from where? or how can one be sane in a world that is increasingly becoming insane?

Having watched the way the world works for a while, I am convinced that complete orderliness is an illusion, chaos and nature are like Siamese twins: inseparable. Know this and be happy.

Whenever the youths say “yes, i do” in marriage, that is the toughest university in the world where scoring 30% qualifies them to become CHARTERED HUSBAND/WIFE!

Has anyone ever noticed that in the marriage university, there is no unified curriculum. Little wonder why the failure rate is exponential. In the USA for instance, roughly 40%-50% of first marriages end up in divorce. This means about 60%-70% of second marriages fail.

In the Marriage University (MU), First Class (1+1=10+) is as scarce as hen's teeth. It's a rarity. The popular French footballer Paul Pogba recently shocked his fans when he admitted that he failed the marriage exam. Pogba is not alone, the Highest Common Factor (HCF) which the world's richest people on the Forbes list share in common, besides cathedral-size wealth is marriage complications: Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Pep Guardiola and Elon Musk to name just a few are all in the same loop of marriage failures.

Paradox five: the wealthier a man or woman becomes the higher the chances of having complications in marriage and depression. Or so it seems.

Paradox six: deep intimacy with God and pure spirituality as against religiosity helps in fighting the depression virus.

Paradox seven: Happy homes, deliberate parenting begets happy children that became good citizens.

Even then, the few who managed to make 2:1 (1+1=4) or 2:2 (1+1=2) in marriages are not immune from other life challenges.

Ethics, morality and Life skills need to be integrated into our school curricular. The youths need to know that crises are part of life. the butterfly gets its beautiful colours from struggles.

What lessons can human beings learn from the longest living vertebrate in the ocean, I e. the Greenland Shark that manages to live up to 400 years, and an Aldabra tortoise that lives for 200

years in the jungle? Whereas, both ocean and jungle are bereft of CCTV cameras, fence, houses, windows, doors and padlocks. It is a daily battle for survival!

What is it that both living organisms have in common that their colleagues in the same dangerous ecosystem lack? ADAPTABILITY.

Charles Darwin in 1860 opined that it is not the strongest of animals or the most intelligent ones that survive but the ones that are most adaptable to change

People going through depression need to learn how to adapt and leverage RANDOM OPPORTUNITIES. Happiness is a choice, and it is as free as air

For instance, the deadly COVID-19 was an organized CHAOS against the world, nonetheless, some people leveraged it to create abundance.

I chatted with Eric Yuan, the founder of ZOOM in January 2013, the day he launched ZOOM in California. He asked me how his innovation could be useful in Nigeria because he didn't have a clear idea of how to commercialize it globally then. But Eric waited patiently, and C-19 came and ZOOM "zoomed" to mega profitability from a market capitalization of $15B in 2019 to $28B today.

To Eric , C-19 was one crisis too consequential to be wasted. Today he is on the Forbes list of the richest people in the world.

COVID-19 was a blessing to many, it provided a lifetime opportunity to reinvent and reimagine their lives and businesses.

In Nigeria, the Chinese, Indians, and Lebanese see random opportunities that most Nigerians fail to see. Why? Overthinking. Too much negativism.

Meanwhile, environment blesses only those who bless the environment and curses those who curse it.

The students loan policy of President Tinubu Administration is another random opportunity which most undergraduates in the Southern part of Nigeria are ignoring.

Another random opportunity is NAIRA DEVALUATION. As I write, Chinese are buying Nigeria BEER in large quantities, exporting them to China because naira devaluation makes Nigeria BEER very cheap and attractive in China. Chinese are making a killing in this business. Honest.

Yet, most Nigerians are taking poison on behalf of politicians, abusing one another over the 2027 presidential election candidates in which the applicants, their children, spouses and grandchildren are all billionaires in any currency. What is the difference between six and half a dozen among the politicians?

Epileptic GRID ELECTRICITY provides yet another random opportunity. For Youths in SOLAR BUSINESS, off-grid power is selling like hot potatoes now.

Our melons, gari, bitter Cola and bitter leaves are being repackaged for export globally by the Chinese.

The best anti depression capsule is “GO OFF THE NATIONAL GRID" in as many things as possible”. Even, go- off the "INTERNATIONAL GRID" of social media, too , occasionally.

Some of my mentees are earning up to $12k monthly. They are OFF THE NATIONAL GRID in virtually everything even in banking, their money is in cryptocurrency.

The quantum of opportunities that exist in Nigeria dwarf those in Europe, Canada and America. It is not correct that there are no Jobs. What Youths lack are the right SKILL-SET, the right information at the right time, good infrastructure and selfless mentors.

As I write, there are 7 skills in ICT today that have ZERO UNEMPLOYMENT rate! and the chances of becoming gainfully employed is 10/10 for anyone who is certified in any of them. I have been experimenting this for the past 10 years by picking and adopting 10 NYSC members yearly in Lagos to put them through one-year intensive ICT skills acquisition on scholarship. The results are 100/100 in them securing quality jobs. There are some skills that the world needs up to 6 million professionals as at today.

Honestly, we don't need Rocket Scientists to fix Nigeria, what we need is common sense, grit and seriousness. 50% of our problems are Technical, the remaining 50% are human disasters! If we stop playing ludo game today with our collective destinies, in ten years’ time, Nigeria will be more prosperous than France that we are begging cap-in-hand for a lifeline. What is in France? what is in the UK? There are only two countries that Nigeria cannot catch up with by 2040, that is China and USA. But all others are beatable! Be it Saudi Arabia, Germany, Japan, India etc. The weakened Europe will get weaker because of negative age demographics. India can't become a super power because of brain drain syndrome. You need your best brains in your country to become a super power but India best and brightest brains are residing in the US and Canada sending about $100B

home yearly as remittance for 1.4 billion people to share. Japanese are running out of youthful population. Nigeria has a bright future if and when we stop playing.

However, when things are not going our way as they often do, we should learn to slow down and plot the graph with a view to knowing what went wrong: when, where and how.

Secondly, we should bear in mind that we already have all we need, what is causing depression is our want, not our needs

The problem is not what we don't have but what we have but we don't know how to maximize them.

Thirdly, ladies should learn to ignore the NUMBERS!

Fourthly, guys should forget the NOUN and focus on the VERB (Lead without titles). Title is a noun, action is the verb.

Fifthly, in this world of information overload, overthinking is killing people. Therefore, people should have a routine which includes shutting down their gadgets regularly and be themselves (disconnect from the world to connect with their subconscious being). Social media is filled with 50% rubbish and 50% useful information. The task is to identify the rubbish.

The Swedish are the first to conclude that unbridled attachment to digital tools is injurious to health and is the number one killer of epistemology knowledge.

Six, youths must realize that to thrive in the new globalized world, they have to put that EXTRA plus their ORDINARY inorder to get EXTRAORDINARY outcomes in life.

President Tinubu's ambition of transforming Nigeria to a $1Trillion GDP is achievable within 12 months using a mixture of appropriate technology to create wealth and jobs. But as long as "tailors" are engaged to do the jobs of "nurses", Nigerians will continue to witness mega frustrations because the needle in the hands of the tailor is not the same thing as the syringe which the nurses use, though they may look similar!

We have more "tailors" in the cabinets at both the federal and state levels, whereas what Nigeria urgently needs today are "nurses", metaphorically speaking. This is why all the beautiful programs announced by the government to help the Youths remain an illusion. One of which is the creation of 3M jobs. Where are the three million technology workers today earning quality income? "Tailors" were engaged, probably, to execute the project!

I strongly believe that Nature does not permit a situation to be mismanaged in perpetuity. Nigeria won't be an exception.

I'm not unaware that some challenges come with chairs and throw pillows, some come with twin-beds and bedsheets, while some bring King-size bed and duffle along, but like every uninvited guest, challenges have an expiry date.

But even then, challenges are like London Buses: as one passes, another one stops just beside you! Ah! Yes! That's it!

However, with positive mental attitude, accurate thinking, and the realization that life and chaos are like 5&6, random happiness is achievable.

The earlier we realize that searching for orderliness or stability in one's personal life or a nation is akin to searching for a needle in a haystack , the better for our mental purity.

We all have it (success) in retail, wholesale happiness/success are not sold on the shelf here, maybe, at the hereafter, FINAL MALL!

Now, let us listen to the Great Sage, Chief Jeremiah Obafemi Awololo for the final conclusion.

In 1968, after reflecting deeply on the Game of Life, Awo came to the conclusion below and I concur: After rain comes sunshine, after darkness comes the glorious Dawn. There is no sorrow without its alloy of Joy, there is no Joy without its admixture of sorrow. Behind the ugly terrible mask of misfortune lies the beautiful soothing countenance of prosperity. So, tear the mask!

What do you think?

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#NO2Depression #NO2Suicide #NO2Overthinking