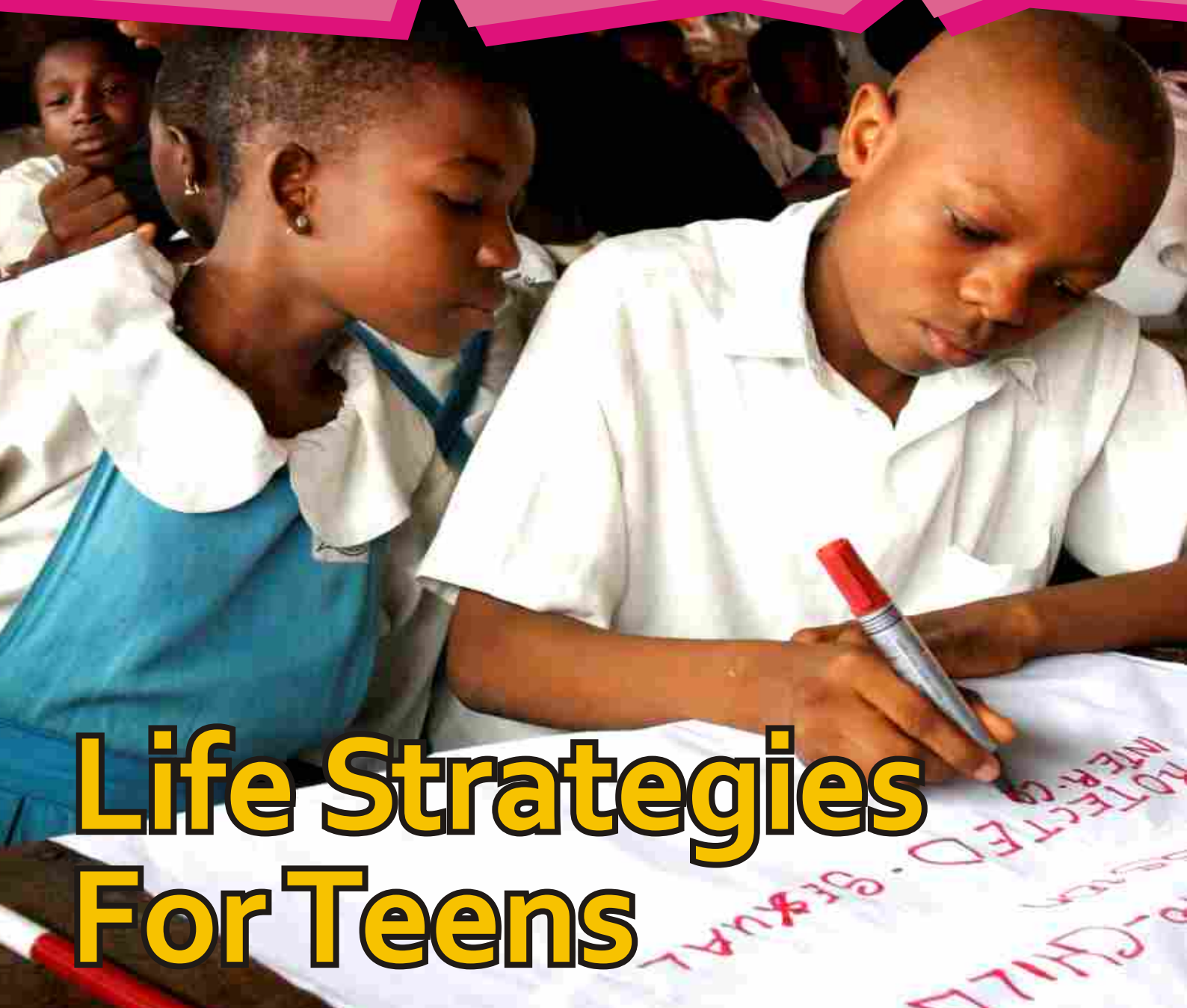




# GrowingUP



## Life Strategies For Teens

in this edition...



11

News Reel: 200 Anti-Smoking Ambassadors Trained



14

Special Report: Model Schools for Married Adolescents Girls



17

Book Launch: A Tapestry of Human Sexuality in Africa



21

True Life Story: Jimmy's Transformation



Growing Up is published quarterly in Lagos, Nigeria by Action Health Incorporated (AHI). AHI is a non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to the promotion of adolescent health and development. We serve as an advocate and a catalyst for change in the present poor status of adolescents' well-being by increasing public awareness and implementing innovative education, health and youth development programmes.

#### Trustees

Dr. Adebunmi Odiakosa  
 Rev. (Dr.) Chris Omeben  
 Dr. Adebola Okoisor  
 Dr. Uwem U. Esiet  
 Mr. Yemi Ogunbiyi  
 Mr. Olu Lutherking  
 Mrs. 'Nike O. Esiet

#### Contributing Writers

Awomodu Gbenga  
 Idongesit Young  
 Etim Agnes  
 Atunbi Bukola  
 Cameron-Cole Babajide  
 Faseyi Adeola

#### Cover Photo:

Izuchukwu Ubazuo  
 Simbiat Razak

#### Page Design

Action Health Incorporated

Articles may be quoted or reprinted from Growing Up provided credit is given to AHI. Unless otherwise stated, the views expressed in this issue are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of AHI or any of its donor organizations.

AHI's Youth Centre is located at 17 Lawal Street, Off Oweh Street, Jibowu, Lagos, Nigeria.

All correspondence should be addressed to: The Editor, Growing Up, Action Health Incorporated, P.O. Box 803, Yaba-Lagos.

Tel: 01-774-3745

E-mail: info@actionhealthinc.org

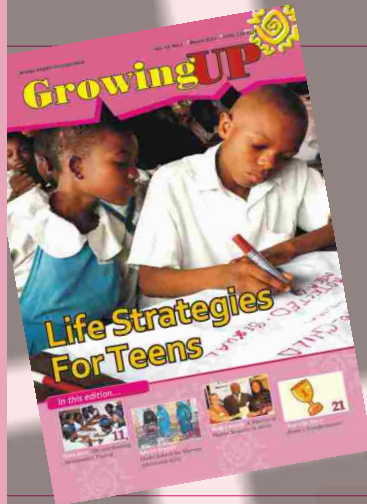
#### Website:

Http://www.actionhealthinc.org

This edition of Growing Up is produced with support from The MacArthur Foundation, Population Programme, Chicago, Illinois.

Printed by FINE PRINT LTD.  
 Tel: 01-7926938, 7624154

## Contents:



### 3. LEAD STORY

#### *Life Strategies for Teens*

*Living a fulfilling life, the very exotic one that you dream of, requires that you make some very important decisions and apply certain truths in becoming what you want to become and achieving your goals.*

### 9. Inspirational Poems

### 10. Cartoon

### 11. News Reel

### 14. Special Report

*It is quite obvious that lack of sanitary facilities affects both girls and boys...*

### 16. Dear Diary

### 17. Book Launch

*A Tapestry of Human Sexuality is a collection of papers that intricately examine human sexuality on the continent...*

### 18. Self Help Guide

*The only time bad choices are regrettable is when we knowingly enter into the bad choices ...*

### 19. Watch Your Manners

*Workers who fail to exhibit a good work ethic may be regarded as failing to provide fair value for the wage...*

### 20. Career Guide

### 21. True Life Story

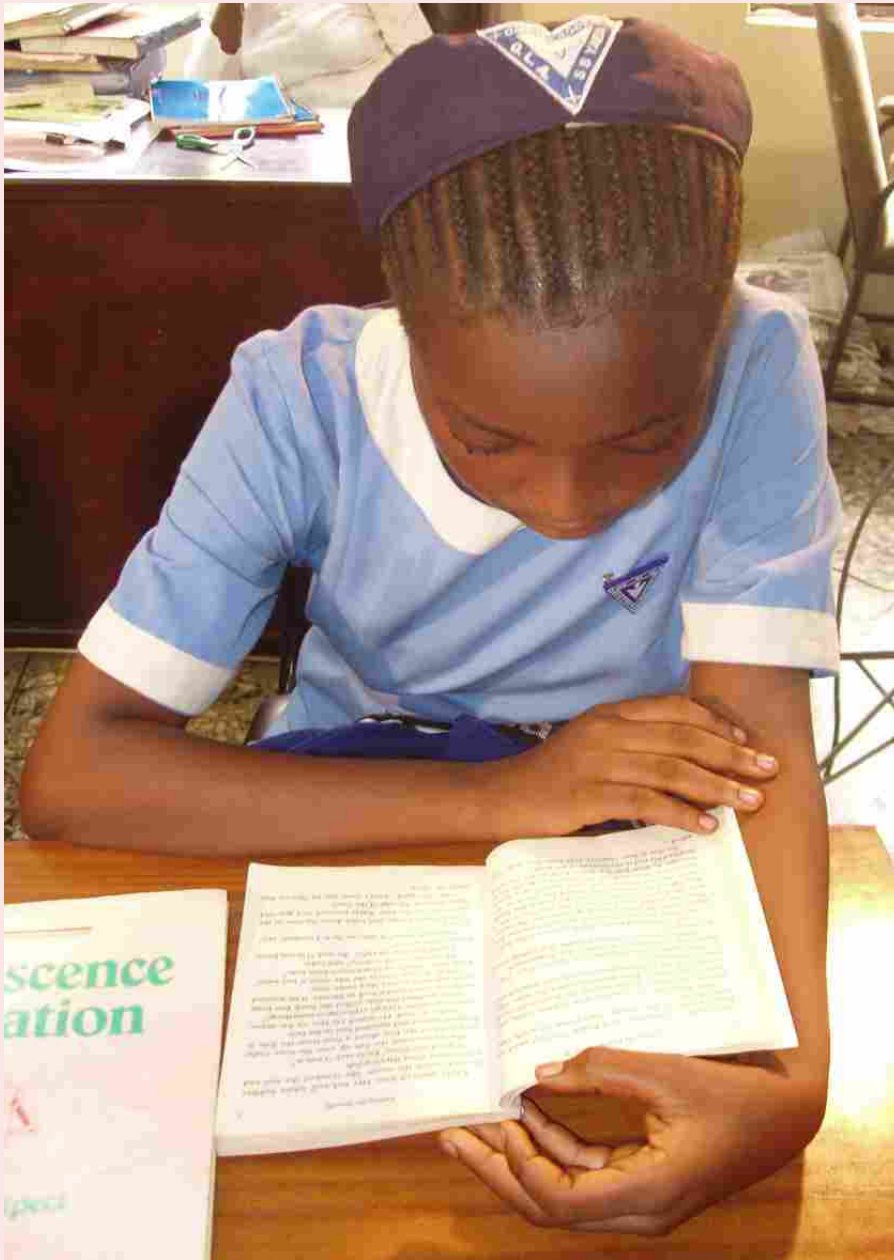
*... I have learnt to see challenges as tests for promotion and stepping stones to greater heights.*

### 22. Young Achiever

### 23. Puzzler

# Life Strategies for Teens

by Gbenga Awomodu



*“The difference between school and life? In school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson.”*

*-Tom Bodett*

“It is another Monday morning. Another school day dawns. Olufunke is jerked back to planet earth as the little alarm clock

vibrates. Half awake, she mutters a few confused words, slams the snooze button, and repositions her head and body for another round of sleep. Ten minutes later, she is forced to stand up by her mum who helps her get ready for school. By 7:15am, she is safely in the family car, on her way to school. Along the streets, she spots the students - some neatly clothed and others shabbily dressed in school uniforms so

large enough to become parachutes in the event of a mighty wind. Some of these kids are peddling sachet water, bottled water, soft drinks and other provisions. Among them is Bayo, her classmate who usually hawks fresh fruits (before and after school) to help support his family's finances and pay his school fee. He often appears at the school gate by 8:15am to receive a regular dose of punishment for coming late to school.

Bayo, despite his family's myriad difficulties, manages to do well in school. He ranks among the top 10 per cent of his class. At night, he sleeps by 9:30pm and wakes up by 3am to read with the candle light till 6am. Thereafter, he helps with some chores and prepares to market his mother's goods from 7:15am till 8am. He often borrows books from other students because he cannot afford to buy most of the recommended text books. Olufunke is an average student who is addicted to excessive TV and finds it difficult to concentrate on her studies. Her parents provide all her needs, but she still grapples with indiscipline and self-satisfaction. At 15, she realises the need to improve on her academic performance. Lately, she has found a helper and friend in Bayo, a benevolent, unassuming young boy who is always ready to help her with difficult subjects”.

Growing up in life, we are bound to face challenges. This is regardless of our background. Many young people have been misled and thus courted the toxic mentality that they can never succeed in life because of their family history and personal weaknesses. They have been made to let their personal weaknesses and circumstances dictate their direction and pace in life. You get from life what you give to it. Living a fulfilling life, the very exotic one that you dream of, requires that you make some very important decisions and apply certain truths in becoming what you want to become and achieving your goals. You need to plan – just like you see in war films and the games you play for leisure. The game of chess is a classic

application of strategy. The key word here is strategy.

A strategy is a carefully devised plan of action to achieve a goal, or the art of developing or carrying out such a plan. Life strategies are those plans you come up with and implement in order to obtain the things that matter to you in life. For you to discover what you want, it would be really helpful if you try to uncover those things you do not want. Knowing what you don't want in life is important because that makes it easier to identify the things you want to eliminate from your life. In this piece, you will learn some basic truths you can imbibe in everyday life. Whenever you need a reality check, guidance or encouragement, turn to these simple truths. They won't fail you.

*"The indispensable first step to getting the things that you want out of life is this.*

*Decide what you want."*

*- Ben Stein*

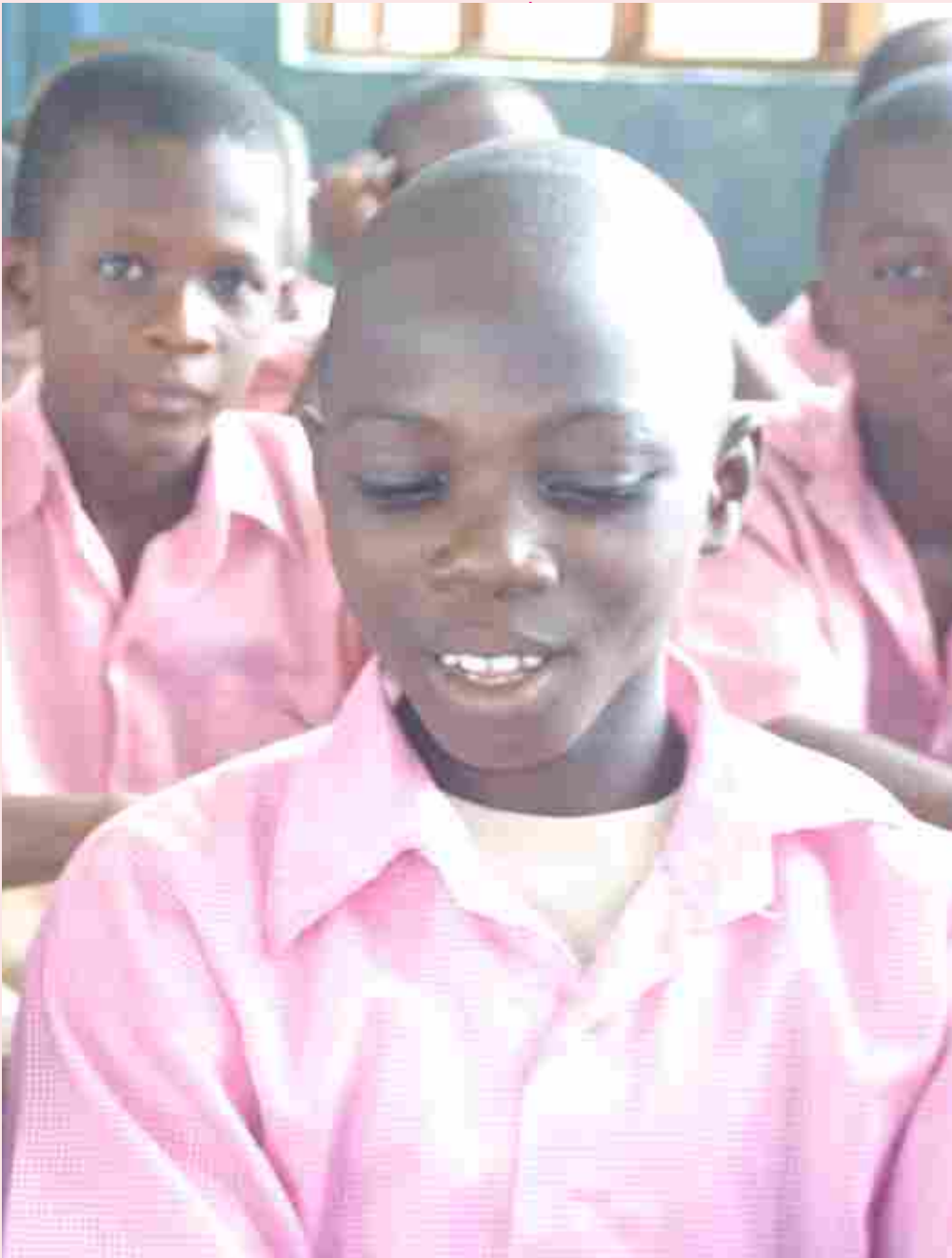
*In life, you either get it or you don't.* You can choose to be the one who gets the ultimate prize. The world works as a system. If you learn about that system by careful observation, you will have advantage over everybody else. It is cool to want a better life and work toward getting one. Learning and using the life laws will help you become one who 'gets it.' Today, we enjoy a lot of wonderful things because some people craved better living conditions, not just for themselves, but also for the world around them. Albert Einstein, Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, and Mother Theresa knew what they wanted in life and went all out to make impact in their world.

*You create your own experience.* You are responsible for choosing the statement you make to the world with your attitude and appearance. When you choose that statement, you automatically choose how the world will respond to you. If you don't like the way



people treat you, you can change that by changing the statement you make to them. What role do you play? Is it getting you the results you want? You and you alone, are responsible for the experiences you have in life. There is also the need for you to realise that people do what works. Success in life is often measured by results! If you are continually doing something that you don't like, you are doing it for a reason. Until you figure out why you do things that you don't like, you will never stop doing them. If people are treating you in a way that you don't like, find out what their payoff is and

eliminate it. If you do, they will change their approach to you. Ignoring the payoffs of your own negative behaviour will cost you in the long run. Remember, you cannot change what you do not acknowledge. If you don't acknowledge that something is bothering you, it will never change. Don't spoil your chances for success by denying your problems. Peer pressure may be an issue that you need to acknowledge and deal with. It is often easy, but less rewarding to stay in a comfort zone - doing what you are just comfortable with, without stretching yourself to explore bigger possibilities.



willpower with a long-term programme. See your life management as a major personal project. Develop a specific goal plan, follow it through, and you will be successful.

People 'size you up' based on how you present yourself to the world. They test you to see how you will allow them to treat you. Basically, we teach people how to treat us. You can control your life by working within the boundaries by which you are limited. You can retrain people to treat you better. Treat yourself well so that others will be motivated to do the same. Have you ever felt so bad – infuriated, worried and unhappy because you found it difficult to forgive someone who offended you? There is power in forgiveness! You need to realise that emotional wounds, like physical wounds on our bodies, leave scars on one's soul. Withdrawing emotionally can affect you physically. Holding on to previous hurts poisons all potential relationships. Forgiveness is a choice that you are entitled to.

Finally, whatever you desire in life, you have to name it before you can claim it. You must be able to describe specifically what it is that you want. Winners in life know exactly what they want. Do you? Don't confuse wanting an object or an event with the feelings that come with the object or event. If you don't know exactly what you want, you can't know if what you are doing is moving you closer to, or further away from, your finish line. Be prepared to step up and claim the things that you want. They are there to be taken only because you worked to put them there. You can be a winner: the choice is yours!

**GUIDES TO DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS**

Picture the world at large as a vast ocean, awesome in its beauty and frightening in its power. Your parents are the captain (or co-captain) of a family-owned ship that is traversing the waters. The crew (you) have been with the co-captain for over a decade. Within a short time, you will be left to pilot your own ship. The ship in this metaphor is your home, the crew your

Break out of that comfort zone and you will be rewarded for it. This is because life rewards action. If you do nothing, you will have nothing. Take action today so that you don't miss your window of opportunity. Make a decision to take reasonable, responsible risks. If you never try, you will never succeed. Don't give up if you don't succeed immediately. Eventually you will succeed.

*“You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses.” - Ziggy*

Another truth often overlooked is that there is no reality, only perception. Your

emotions are based on your perception of what is happening to you. If you perceive something as scary, then to you it is scary. Your perceptions of the world are based on the lenses through which you see things. You can, however, change your lenses. You are the only person who can change your perception of yourself and your life. Your perception is your reality! Life is mana ged, it is not cured. You will encounter problems for the rest of your life, but there will be nothing you can't manage. You are your own life manager, and successful management is an acquired skill. Replace short-term

Feel like you're always running late? Managing time well is evident, for example, when you are able to awaken on time to meet the school bus, arrive promptly for appointments, and finish school projects before their deadlines. A deficiency in time management may be caused by any number of factors beyond simple "laziness." The cause may be physical, emotional or neurological. Here are some tips for taking control of your time and organizing your life:

**Make a "To Do" List Every Day:** Put things that are most important at the top and do them first. If it's easier, use a planner to track all of your tasks. And don't forget to reward yourself for your accomplishments.

**Use Spare Minutes Wisely:** Get some reading done on the bus ride home from school, for example, and you'll kill two birds with one stone.

**Find the Right Time:** You'll work more efficiently if you figure out when you do your best work. For example, if your brain handles math better in the afternoon, don't wait to do it until late at night.

**Review Your Notes Every Day:** You'll reinforce what you've learned, so you need less time to study. You'll also be ready if your teacher calls on you or gives a pop quiz.

**Get a Good Night's Sleep:** Running on empty makes the day seem longer and your tasks seem more difficult.

**Communicate Your Schedule to Others:** If phone calls are proving to be a distraction, tell your friends that you take social calls from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. It may sound silly, but it helps.

**Become a Master of your Time:** Figure out how much free time you have each week. Give yourself a time budget and plan your activities accordingly.

**Don't Waste Time Worrying:** Have you ever wasted an entire evening by worrying about something that you're supposed to be doing? Was it worth it? Instead of agonizing and procrastinating, just do it.

**Don't Push Yourself Way Too Much:** Setting goals that are unrealistic sets you up for failure. While it's good to set high goals for yourself, be sure not to overdo it. Set goals that are difficult yet reachable. Consider these tips, but personalize your habits so that they suit you. If you set priorities that fit your lifestyle, you'll have a better chance of

achieving your goals.

**Organization:** Lack of organisation fails most of people in life, more often at critical junctures. If you are well-organised the tide of a problem can push you to a new opportunity instead of a failure. Like a master chess player you are able to organise your steps in life in such a way that can lead you to success. A disorganised person is mostly an unlucky person whatever the field may be. During childhood, you've probably spent many hours with your parents teaching you to pick up your clothes and putting your toys away. All successful people have a habit of organising their work. You must spare at least one hour every month to examine your progress in life through answering these questions:

- *What are your goals in life?*
- *What are you able to give in return to achieve those goals?*
- *Are you doing something everyday to fulfil your dreams?*
- *How much time did you waste last month?*
- *What are you going to do to plug the wastage of time?*
- *What improvement do you need to move faster towards your goals?*
- *How much will you spare in the coming month to study more in the field of your interest?*

**Relationships:** Healthy relationships are fun and make you feel good about yourself. You can have a healthy relationship with anyone in your life, including your family, and friends. Relationships take time, energy, and care to make them healthy. The relationships that you make in your teen years will be a special part of your life and will teach you some of the most important lessons about who you are. Below are some qualities of a healthy relationship:

**Communication & Sharing:** The most important part of any healthy relationship between two people is being able to talk and listen to one another. You and the other person can figure out what your common interests are. You can share your feelings with the other person and trust that they will be there to listen and support you. In healthy relationships, people don't lie. Communication is based on honesty and trust. By listening carefully and sharing your thoughts and feelings with another person, you show them that they are an important part of your life.

**Respect and Trust:** In healthy

relationships, you learn to respect and trust important people in your life. Disagreements may still happen, but you learn to stay calm and talk about how you feel. Talking calmly helps you to understand the real reason for not getting along, and it's much easier to figure out how to fix it. In healthy relationships, working through disagreements often makes the relationship stronger. In healthy relationships, people respect each other for who they are. This includes respecting and listening to yourself and your feelings so you can set boundaries and feel comfortable. You will find that you learn to understand experiences and feelings of others as well as having them understand your experiences and feelings.

**Money and Finance:** Money and financial planning include budgeting, expenses and saving insurance among others. Understanding how each of these work together and affect each other is important for laying the groundwork for a solid financial foundation for you.

**Saving:** At the very basic level of personal finance you are dealing with money; you make money and then you spend that money. You can accumulate a fortune through opening a saving account with any bank and acquired money from birthday and holiday gifts, weekly allowances or payment for completing chores are paid into the opened account for your future use.

**Budgeting:** As a teenager, you are faced with spending money on something, you think about it and realize that by spending that money, you will not be able to spend that same money on something else. When you create a budget, you begin to see a clear picture of how much money you have, what you spend it on, and how much, if any is left over. When you can clearly see where your money is going, you can then budget appropriately so your money is going where it should.

**Cutting Expenses:** After you have successfully created a budget, you'll have a much better understanding of where your money goes and where you can possibly trim expenses. For many people, this is as simple as cutting back on some of the little things that can add up.

**Stress Management:** "Stress" is defined as the way our bodies and minds react to life changes. Since adolescence is a period of significant changes, including physical, emotional, social, and academic



family. The co-captains are your parents in charge of preparing you for independence. What abilities will you require growing from adolescence to adulthood in order to sail the waters of the world safely? You will need the skills that are encapsulated by the acronym, "STORMS."

- S - Self-care
- T - Time management
- O - Organization and cleanliness
- R - Relationships
- M - Money and finance
- S - Stress management

**Self-care:** By the end of adolescence, you would start taking care of yourself seriously. You would know when you need a break, when you need a rest, what to get worked-up about and what to get rid of as well as knowing when it's time to take care of yourself, for yourself! One of the things we have to do to feel better in life is to take good care of ourselves. We are so busy in school with after-school activities, taking care of others, etc. that we neglect our physical, emotional and social needs. We really have to try to pay more attention to ourselves. Developing and growing from childhood to teens is probably the most difficult time of life. The alarming pace of the growth when

rapid physical and psychological changes are taking place can create confusion in teens' minds. Looking good or bad in later years has to be taken care of now. Below are some tips for self care:

**Hygiene:** Keeping your body clean is an important part of keeping you healthy and helping you to feel good about yourself. Caring about the way you look is important to your self esteem (what you think about yourself). By the way, you don't need to wear the latest designer clothing to look good! There are other things you can do which are much more important for your "image". Have you ever walked into a classroom full of kids when all the windows are closed? PhWew!! According to the experts young kids may sweat but they don't start having body odour until they reach puberty. That's when special sweat glands under the arms and around the genitals roar into full production pouring out sweat which smells! Changing underclothes often is advisable and ensuring a clean breath is important.

**Food & Nutrition:** A sensible diet includes fruits, green and vegetables, milk product. Keep nutrition in your mind and eat in right quantities. Leave the dinner table when you can still eat

another plate of food. Teens digestive system will function better. Drink plenty of water, at least 8-10 glasses a day, to eliminate toxins from the body.

**Moderate Exercise:** A regular routine of 30-40 minutes of moderate exercise is enough to keep the body beautiful, supple and active. Jogging is a natural exercise, good for teen and all. A brisk jogging of 30 to 40 minutes daily can fill you with vigor and vitality.

**Mental Attitude:** Teen thoughts from the expression of there face. So keep a check on thoughts and keep tensions away. Learn to be cool and collected because anger, worries results in blemishes and outbreak of rashes. Teenage is the time for preparation. Enlarge your skill, beauty and appearance to acquire that self confidence with which you will be facing the years ahead.

**Time Management:** One thing that accompanies young people in secondary school is the increase of independent time and this is a problem for most students who have several extracurricular activities that they attend and loads of homework on top of them. Does it seem like there's never enough time in the day to get everything done?

changes, many teens are under more stress than at any other time of life. It is very important for teens to learn to handle stress, as long-term build-up of stress that is not handled effectively may lead to problems, including physical illness, anxiety or depression, which may produce a faster heart rate, increased blood flow, shallow breathing, a sense of dread and a desire to escape. However, teens can teach themselves to perceive life challenges as being within their control and can even change their body's reactions to such events, promoting a lower heart rate, deeper breathing, clearer thinking and feelings of calmness and control. Stress management is an all-purpose skill that is useful in every area of life. One might think that teenagers lead a stress-free life. But adolescence is a time of tremendous changes, both internal and external. Stress management involves two crucial steps:

**Awareness:** Awareness of signs of stress overload; e.g., changes in sleeping or eating patterns, avoidance and withdrawal from friends and family, or unexplained sadness or depression.

**Management:** An ability to lower the stress level by means of healthy coping mechanisms, such as exercise, relaxation techniques and supportive relationships.

There are many stress management skills that promote the relaxation response. Many adolescents cope well with the stress in their lives, especially if they have close friends who can serve as confidants. However, even friends may not suffice if the pressure rises above a threshold that they can not handle. Stress Management Skills for teens include:

- Taking deep breaths accompanied by thoughts of being in control ("I can handle this")
- Progressive muscle relaxation, (repeatedly tensing and relaxing large muscles of the body)
- Setting small goals and breaking tasks into smaller manageable chunks
- Exercising and eating regular meals, and avoiding excessive caffeine
- Focusing on things you can control and letting go of things you cannot control

- Rehearsing and practicing feared situations (e.g., practicing public speaking)
- Talking about problems with others, including parents, older adults and friends
- Lowering unrealistic expectations
- Scheduling breaks and enjoyable activities, such as music, art, sports, socializing
- Accepting yourself as you are and identifying unique strengths and building on them, but realizing no one is perfect!

**References:**

Jay Phillip McGraw, *Life Strategies for Teens*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000  
 Jay Phillip McGraw, *Life Strategies for Teens Workbook*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2001  
 Encarta Dictionaries, 2008  
 Family for Life, by Kathy Peel (NY: McGraw-Hill, 2003)  
 Fighting Invisible Tigers: A Stress Management Guide for Teens, by Earl Hipp

# Teen Models

Are you bold and beautiful?

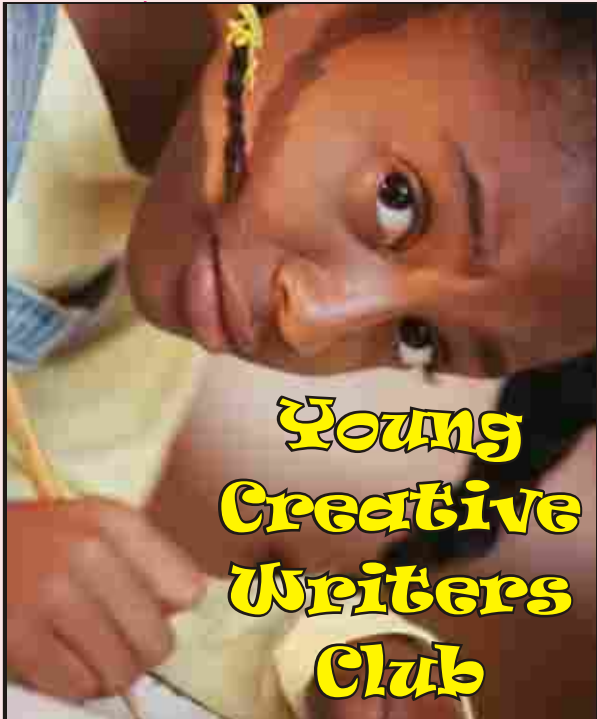
Do you consider yourself stunning enough to grace our cover page?

If Yes, Send your picture/Bio-data to:  
 The Editor, Growing Up,  
 Action Health Incorporated,  
 P.O. Box 803 , Yaba-Lagos.  
 Tel: 01-774-3745  
 E-mail: [info@actionhealthinc.org](mailto:info@actionhealthinc.org)




**Criteria:**

Photograph must be in School Uniform with a white background and in portrait format and should be submitted with a one page composition about yourself



## Young Creative Writers Club

AHI is calling on young writers and creative artists to become contributors to Growing Up Newsletter and TeenZone (<http://www.actionhealthinc.org/teenzone/index.html>). It's your voice and that of other teens that makes AHI tick, and we'll like you to be part of us. You can do this by contributing original articles, stories (including personal experiences), puzzles, quizzes and drawings for publishing in Growing Up Newsletter and TeenZone.

Send your contributions to: The Editor, Growing Up Newsletter: [info@actionhealthinc.org](mailto:info@actionhealthinc.org) (include your name, and telephone number). To join our community on TeenZone, Facebook, Twitter, Flickers and YOUTUBE visit our website: [www.actionhealthinc.org](http://www.actionhealthinc.org)

# Poems

## Life's Challenges

When you have doubts about yourself,  
 About your worth, your values;  
 When you failed at life and the world weighs you down,  
 So you fall deeper in a hole.;  
 When you cry out, but no one hears,  
 No one is there to wipe your tears,  
 No one is there when you need someone most;  
 When you feel there are limitations in your life and  
 You feel you cannot achieve your dreams;  
 That's when you have to wake up from your slumber,  
 Believe in yourself and in the power of change,  
 Even though you have shortcomings,  
 Acknowledge your potential and design your own  
 destiny,  
 Then you'll see that the sky will not be your limit, but your  
 starting point.

*Idongesit Young (Male, 17 years old)*

## The Gardener

The gardener is my true friend,  
 He has been there since I was a seed,  
 He helps water me with pure affection,  
 And protects me from the weeds in my life,  
 The gardener tends me as I grow and blossom,  
 And bombards me with radiant beams of good counsel,  
 So I can grow well and bear good fruits.

*Cameron-Cole Babajide (Male, 16 years old)*



## The Bully

She pretends to be my friend,  
 But she deems me a fiend,  
 I never understood her,  
 Neither did I know her character.

She threatened to deal with me,  
 Trampling my self esteem,  
 And putting fear in me,  
 She goes about setting rules,  
 That gave us all roles.

She is a rule setter and pretender,  
 She is an intimidator and harasser,  
 She is a big bully,  
 With illicit policy.

It's time to stand up to her!  
 Enough is enough!  
 I cannot be a doormat to her!  
 I have had enough!

*Etim-Ekpo Agnes (Female, 17 years old)*

## Life

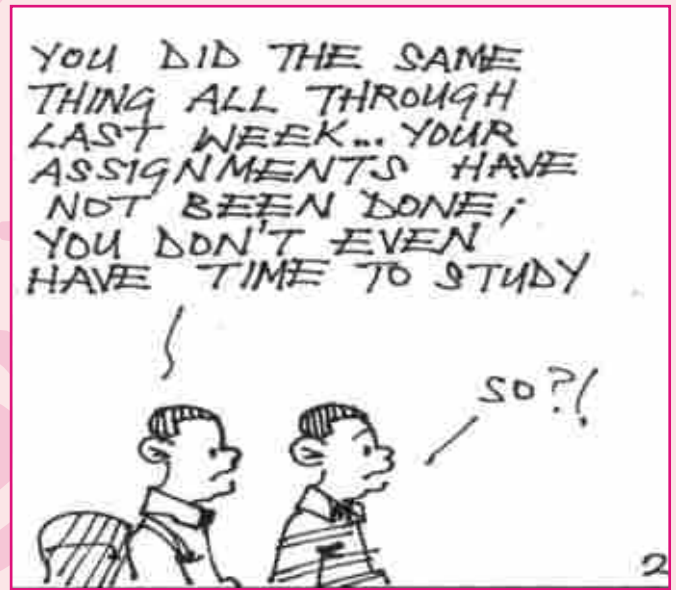
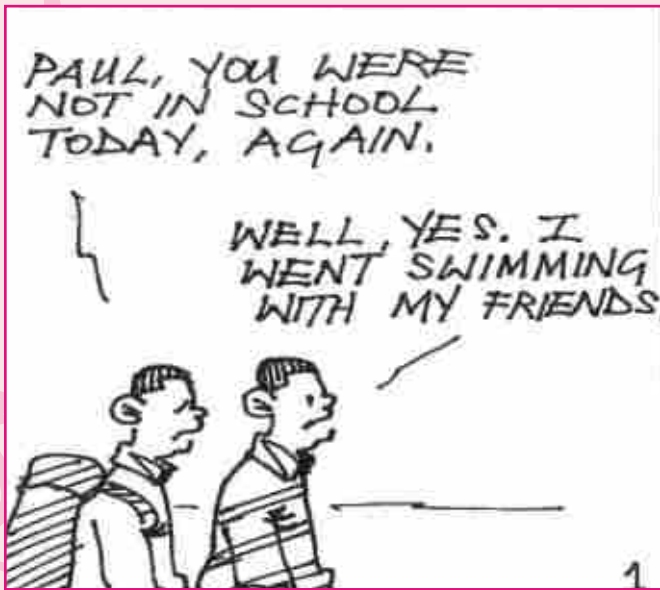
There's just one life to live,  
 Why not make good use of that opportunity?  
 You never can tell what tomorrow can bring,  
 Make hay while the sun shines.

Do your very best as you live each day,  
 Live it like it's the last one you are living.  
 Enjoy every moment while it lasts,  
 Do not waste one bit of time in your life span.

Brace up yourself to the challenges of life,  
 Do not be a quitter, be a warrior.  
 Take this with you down the aisle of life;  
 L - Love because that's the greatest gift of life.  
 I - Innovate at any given opportunity; you never can tell  
 how many souls you'll touch.  
 F - Follow your mind in all you do in life.  
 E - Endure all challenges that come your way; with this  
 you become a better person.

*Atunbi Bukola, (Female, 17 years old)*

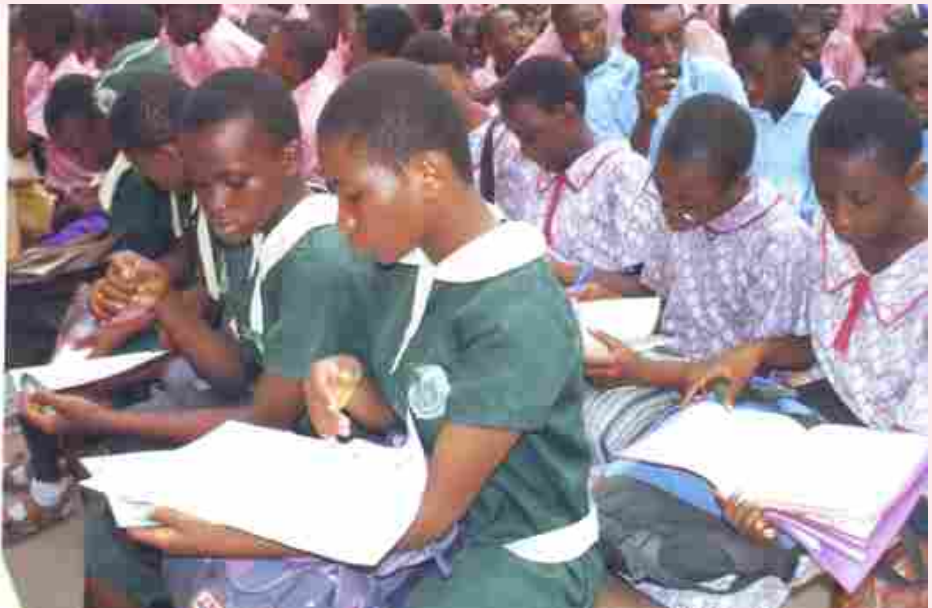
CARTOON



**NEWS REEL**

**International Day Of Zero Tolerance To Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).**

**O**n the 5th of February 2010, AHI marked the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation at St Lukes Junior Grammar School 1, Bariga, themed “Youth Participation: Addressing Female Genital Mutilation”. The event kicked off with a presentation on the effects and consequences of FGM, where and how it is being practiced and why it should be eliminated. Students were also enlightened about the damages caused by FGM which include intense pain in the genital area, internal/external bleeding, infections, infertility or even death. Over 1,000 young people were reached and AHI newsletters and other IEC materials were distributed to the students. Participating schools include neighboring schools from: Eva Adelaja Girls Junior Secondary Grammar School, Ajayi Crowther Memorial Secondary School 1, Ajayi Crowther Memorial Secondary School II, Gbagada Comprehensive Junior High School 1 and Gbagada Comprehensive Junior High School II.



*Cross Section of Students at the programme*

**St. Valentine Day**

**O**n Friday, 12th February 2010, AHI organised a valentine's day programme at Ikosi Senior Grammar School, Ketu. The Health and Life Planning Club (HLPC) members of the school entertained participants with a song rendition titled “Lean On Me” by Michael Bolton followed by a presentation on “Youth Participation: Encouraging a Healthy Relationship”. Students were advised on the importance and gain of keeping a healthy relationship in order to achieve their set goals in life. The programme was well attended by students from Ikosi Senior Grammar School, coordinating teachers, and the HLPC patron.



*HLPC Executive members of Ikosi Ketu Grammar School*

**NEWS REEL**

# International Women's Day



*Teachers and Students engaged in a participatory exercise*

The annual theme “Men and Women United to End Violence against Women and Girls” celebrated the 2010 International Women's Day held at Ajao Estate Junior High School on March 9, 2010. The AHI representatives gave a presentation on sexual harassment, sexual abuse, harmful traditional practices and gender roles. The presentation focused on the importance of education for the girl child. The presentation also discussed the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls. The session was very participatory and attracted a total of 50 Health and Life Planning Club members from neighboring schools including Apostolic Faith High School, Anthony, Anthony Village High School, Anthony and Aladura Comprehensive High School, Anthony.



## 200 Anti Smoking Ambassadors Trained

Action Health Incorporated organized a 3-day Peer Education Training on “Youth Smoking Prevention” for 200 young people and 10 coordinating teachers from 22<sup>nd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> February 2010. The training workshop which was held for students in four batches focused on providing factual information on the effects of cigarette smoking on young people. Overall evaluation of the training revealed significant increase as well as improvement in disposition towards reducing underage smoking among young people.



*Students engaged in a group activity*

**ACTION HEALTH** Incorporated *Presents*

# 17th Teenage Festival of Life



*Theme:*  
**A NEW NIGERIA:**  
**Change starts with me**

**SUB-THEMES**

- Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Ethical Behaviours
- Meritocracy
- Quality of Education

**Categories - Music, Poetry & Drama**

**Rules**

1. Each school can only submit one entry per category and each (script) must be typewritten. The school principal must certify all entries.
2. The music, poetry and drama entries must be original and reflect the theme of the event.
3. All music entries must be accompanied by the script and the CD on which music is recorded.
4. All entries must have the name of the scriptwriter on them.
5. Submission of Entries closes on Wednesday, 30th July, 2010.
6. Entries will be short-listed and short-listed schools will be notified.
7. A panel of judges will select winners in each category.

**Eligibility:** The competition is open to all secondary schools in Lagos State

**Grand Finale**

Saturday  
November 13, 2010

**Time**

8:00am  
Prompt

**Venue**

Main Auditorium,  
University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos



For further information, please contact: TFL Planning Committee, AHI Youth Center - 17, Lawal Street, Off Oweh Street, Jibowu, Lagos. Call: Nelly on 08028279185 or Ayo on 07056674873; Email: [info@actionhealthinc.org](mailto:info@actionhealthinc.org)

# Model Schools For Married Adolescent Girls



*A Cross-Section of Participants at the Maiduguri Event*

**T**he residents of Yola and Maiduguri gathered to witness the grand launch of childcare, health and sanitation facilities in the schools designated for married adolescent girls in Adamawa and Borno States on the 16th and 18th February respectively. These are school crèches, clinics, toilets, bathrooms, kitchenettes, and water boreholes. But if one may ask, what exactly birthed this process?

In 2002, AHI extended her work to Northern Nigeria with the aim of expanding access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for underserved youths in this region. A major category of these underserved youths are the married adolescent girls who in the context of sexual and reproductive health services have been largely marginalized. AHI embarked on efforts to ensure that married girls are reintegrated back to formal schools in North-East Nigeria.

In view of the socio-cultural sensitivities

that revolve around issues of girl-child education in Northern Nigeria, a lot had to be put in place to ensure that the aim of the project was achieved. Part of this was the selection and training of a hundred women innovators (25/state) who are indigenes of the four focal states of the project (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, and

*Today, these women are socially and economically empowered and stand as role models for married girls. They also advocate in support of education for married adolescent girls.*

Yobe). These are women who got married when they were adolescents, but were able to continue with their education in spite of marriage. Today, these women are socially and economically empowered and stand as role models for married girls. They also

advocate in support of education for married adolescent girls. So far, the intensive advocacy efforts of these women has yielded tremendous progress; 5 schools designated for married girls in 3 states (Adamawa, Bauchi, and Borno), and over 4,000 married girls being mentored by the women innovators.

As soon as schools were designated for married girls in Adamawa, Bauchi, and Borno States, AHI provided each school with basic equipments and supplies for a crèche and clinic. This was to ensure that married girls were not discouraged from enrolling in schools for lack of childcare facilities, and also ensure that minor ailments are taken care of without the girls necessarily having to boycott classes.

It is quite obvious that lack of sanitary facilities affects both girls and boys, but poor sanitary conditions at schools have a stronger negative impact on girls. All girls should have access to safe, clean, separate and private sanitation facilities

**SPECIAL REPORT**

in their schools. If there is no water and no latrines at school, or if they are in a poor state, then many children would rather not attend than use the alternatives. In particular girls who are old enough to menstruate need to have adequate sanitary facilities at school. When this is lacking, they may miss school that week and find it difficult to catch up, which makes them more likely to drop out of school altogether. Furthermore, provision of safe water and

are brought to the crèches daily. In Yola, the selected school was School of Islamic and Arabic Studies, while Women Day Secondary School Maiduguri was also a beneficiary. These facilities were officially launched in Yola on February 16 and in Maiduguri on February 18. The event in Yola attracted a large turnout of dignitaries including Hajia Zainab Nyako, wife of the Executive Governor of Adamawa State; Hajia Aishatu Bello Tukur, The State Commissioner for

Lucile Packard Foundation, Dr. Mairo Mandara; Adamawa State Women



*Inside the Clinic At School of Islamic and Arabic Studies, Yola*



*The Borno State Commissioner for Education Hajiya Asabe Bashir with CHAYFA President during a tour of one of the Creches at Women Day Secondary School, Maiduguri.*

sanitation facilities can also have an influence on school enrolment and attendance by girls. The lack of adequate, separate sanitary facilities in schools is one of the main factors preventing girls from attending school, particularly when menstruating.

In view of this, AHI, with further support from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, took another step and provided one school in each of Yola and Maiduguri with water borehole, toilets, and kitchenettes. Bigger crèches and clinics were also built to accommodate the increasing number of children who

Women Affairs; The State Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Comrade Hamman Bello who represented the Hon. Commissioner Ministry of Education, Hon. Gabriel Adama; The Chairman, Adamawa State Health Services Management Board, who was also the Chairman of the occasion; a notable religious leader, the Mai Anguwa of Yola, Alhaji Saad Yerima; The Executive Secretary, Post-Primary Education Board, Alhaji Ahmed Y. Abubakar; The Executive Director of AHI, Mrs. Adenike Esiet, The Senior Country Advisor of The David and

# Dear Diary

## Sunday

I woke up with so much anticipation, so I quickly took my bath and breakfast was ready before I even finished preparing. Suddenly the room became dark and I looked through the window to confirm it was going to rain. In less than a few minutes, it started raining cat and dog. I decided to stay at home to see some movies because I could not visit my friends as planned. Late in the afternoon, my uncle and his wife visited my parents and we had fun talking about the newly wedded family. Also, I took some time to prepare my school uniform and books for school resumption tomorrow.

## Monday

I got my sleepy head out of bed with so much joy, because school was resuming today. I just couldn't wait to see my friends, especially my best friend, Temmy Alandu. I have missed her so much. We didn't see during the short Christmas holiday because she traveled to Calabar for the annual carnival. I couldn't communicate with her because she lost her mobile phone while in school and her parents refused to replace her lost phone. I did my house chores and prepared for school and my mother ensured that I took my breakfast before leaving for school. When I got to school, the number of students I saw was not more than a quarter of the school's student population. More painful was that I couldn't spot Tammy she wasn't in school and her absence subtracted from my fun. After weeding some grasses and cleaning the school surroundings as the custom is every first day of resumption, I was sweating profusely like a 'Salah ram'. By the time I got home, I was exhausted so I slept like I had been drugged!

## Tuesday

I woke up unhappy about yesterday, but I later got over it. Not quite long, the PHCN restored power supply and I switched on the television to see my favorite cartoon on TV. Before I knew what was going on, the time was already 7:00a.m. Quickly, I stood up from the couch and ran into the bathroom. I couldn't wait for breakfast because I was running late. On getting to the bus stop, I met a long queue and I couldn't join the line so I decided to board my private jet (a.k.a. okada) in order to meet the assembly. The student attendance was better than that of yesterday and I was happy because I could easily figure out Tammy in the middle of the file of students in my class. When we got to the class, Tammy began to recount her holiday experience, especially the Calabar carnival and how much fun she had. We could not finish the details of the carnival because our class teacher came in and, to our greatest surprise, there was a warm-up test! Though I wasn't prepared for the test, I tried my best and enjoyed the rest of my day.

## Wednesday

I was happy when I heard the class captain announced that a debate competition would be coming up on Friday at the national stadium in Surulere. I was very excited because I was among the three speakers selected to represent the school in the competition and we'll be speaking in support of the motion: "SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOULD USE MOBILE PHONES." We were so happy because there wasn't going to be any co-curricular activities after school hours. There would be enough time to prepare for the debate competition. Tammy and I went home

together and later searched the internet for more information about the debate topic. We spent a lot of time and money at the cyber café before finally heading home. Wondering why the police haven't found a law to abolish cyber crime. The café had lots of yahoo boys who were busy duping other people's hard earned money online!

## Thursday

We started practicing for the debate competition and I was made the chief speaker of the group. This means that I have a lot more responsibility on my shoulders. Knowing well that I have short comings and that much is expected from me, I started working towards improving my vocabulary, use of the English language, and gesticulation. I didn't waste any time in the school after closing hours because I had to run a few errands for my mother. After doing all my chores, I started practicing in front of my mum's dressing mirror. Dinner was ready later in the evening and I didn't stay up late because I have to wake up early tomorrow.

## Friday

I woke up around 4:00am and I couldn't wait for the day to break. I quickly took my bath, got dressed and had breakfast, but it was like time went by pretty slower than ever this morning. I had to sit in the couch with my eyes fixed to the wall clock, watching as it ticked. Finally, I heard the cock crow and I left for school without wasting any time. After the morning assembly, we went to Surulere for the debate competition. There were more than a thousand students in the hall, but the competition started a little bit late because some schools arrived late. We passed the first and second stages of the competition, but came second in the third and final stage because we lacked time management. I was frustrated because I was expecting to come first, but my teachers said that we were fantastic and those words cheered me up. We won a laptop computer for our school and each of us went home with a mobile phone. There was mouth watering refreshment for everybody. I never realised how much these meant until we got back to school. There was jubilation in the school and the principal called for a brief assembly and congratulated us publicly. The principal said she was very proud of us and I was also proud of myself.

## Saturday

Waking up with a smile on my face and remembering what happened yesterday, I thanked God for everything even though we didn't come first. I went to my parents' room to see if they were still asleep, but on getting there, I didn't find any one in the room. I was so surprised because it was still early and I thought I was the first person to get out of bed today. I started calling out for my mum, but nobody responded. I checked the toilet and other parts of the house but couldn't find anyone. I called her phone line and my dad's, but none of my calls went through. I was beginning to get worried when suddenly, I heard a sound come from the basement. I quickly went to check what it was. When I got to the entrance of the basement, I saw blood drips on the floor. I opened the door, I saw my mum lying on the flour bleeding and tears dripped down my eyes in panic. HELP!!! I shouted. **(Find out in the next edition).**

**BOOK LAUNCH**

# A Tapestry of Human Sexuality in Africa

**A** new book titled “A Tapestry of Human Sexuality in Africa” published by Jacana Media in association with Action Health Incorporated and the Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre was launched recently in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the 4th Africa Conference on Sexual Health and Rights from 7th - 12th February 2010 at the UNECA Conference Centre, Addis Abba Ethiopia. The book is a collection of research reports

of the 2007 Sexuality Leadership Development Fellowship Programme of the African Regional Sexuality Resource Centre. The book is a collection of papers that intricately examine human sexuality on the continent such as the sexual health needs of those with HIV/AIDS (in Nigeria), sexual violence in a Nigerian University, print coverage of gender-based violence in Kenya, and Female Genital Cutting (FGC). It is an impressively researched, informative collection of 18 essays by young

professionals drawn from Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa. In each essay the author succinctly outlines methodology usually a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. This is a wonderful book, and a most moving one. And its research methods are impeccable. The publication which was launched on 10th February 2010 had in attendance over 100 conference delegates. Below are photographs from the launch:



Contributors (L-R): Ms Theron Liesl, Mr. Mbugua Njoroge and Ms. Nduna Mzikazi.



Dr. Rosemary Coates Presenting an Overview of the Book.



Mrs. Adenike Esiet, Executive Director AHI Presenting a paper during the Launch.



Cross-Section of Participants at the Launch.

**SELF HELP GUIDE**

# Decision Making: *Why we make bad choices in life*

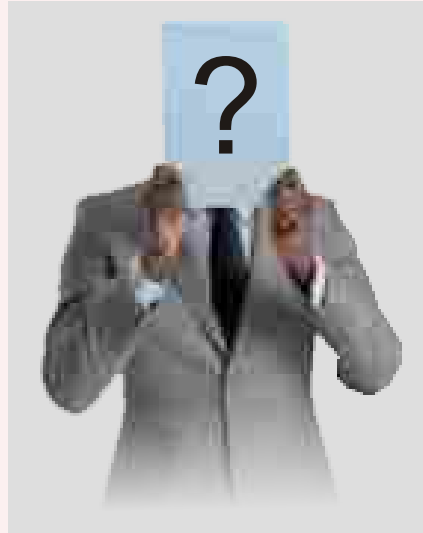
**H**ave you ever made mistakes? Do you remember those decisions you made in the past, but felt silly about them when you recalled those instances years later? In life, every day, we make decisions, whether good or bad. Our decisions range from simple things like what kind of food to eat, what clothes to wear and what route to pass on the way to school to much more complex decisions like what career to pursue in life, who to marry and how to spend salary earned.

The good decisions we make come with loads of benefits and make us happy while the bad ones usually make us unhappy because they usually cause us pain. In order to ensure that we make less bad decisions and more good decisions in life, it is important that we examine what decision making is all about. In this article we will be examining how to make right decisions by outlining the major reasons why we make bad choices in life.

"If I only knew then what I know now." "Had I known," These are some common preludes to statement of regrets. We often use these expressions to show how we feel about bad choices we made in the past. Young people make choices based on the information and knowledge they have at the time. In fact, this is true for all age groups. When we are young, we don't always make the best choices. The reasons for our bad choices fall into several categories, including lack of experience, lack of knowledge, lack of judgment, and lack of maturity.

As we get older, we make bad choices for the same reasons, but with more complex decision making challenges. Our judgment becomes clouded with feelings of inferiority or superiority, substance abuse, mental illness, poverty, envy and all the other numerous conditions and situations influencing the human condition. Another significant reason we make bad choices is low self esteem. Subconsciously, we might think we don't deserve something better in life, and therefore, we settle for the bad choice. Negative voices resonating from the past make us believe this is the best we can hope for, and again, we settle.

When we find ourselves repeatedly making bad choices, it is time to think



“  
As we get older, we make bad choices for the same reasons, but with more complex decision making challenges.”

about getting help with our self esteem issues. Repeating the same bad choices over and over can be our downfall, and put us at risk on various levels. Bad choices fall under the category of inexperience. Most bad choices are made in ignorance and, when we later become enlightened through knowledge or maturity, it is best to cut our losses and move on to better choices. The only time bad choices are regrettable is when we knowingly enter into the bad choice and continue along that path with no remorse. On the other hand, time has a way of putting some previously perceived bad choices into perspective. What seemed like a bad choice at the time, upon reflection, could be a blessing in disguise. How often have you thought to yourself, "If I hadn't made that bad choice, I would not have been in the right place to receive this good opportunity."

**Moving Ahead**

Life is short. There is no point wasting time on regrets about bad choices. Better to move on with the lessons learned and give conscious thought to making better choices going forward. We are where we are today, because of decisions that we made. Decision making is the most important activity you'll ever engage in. Everything

else stems from your decisions. Those who lead, excel or succeed do so, based on decisions.

You need to employ a system that will help you make great decisions. Your decision making paradigm has the greatest impact on our lives. The first thing you need to do is to decide now for all the decisions you need to make. If not, you will always go for what is easier, which is not necessarily the best. When you decide your values beforehand, you limit your options and technically eliminate other possibilities that could distract and slow you down. Don't wait till the exam day to decide if you'll cheat or not, don't wait till the opportunity to lie comes before you decide. Decide long before you decide'. The further your decision is from the event, the stronger your resolve. If you need to pause to think about anything, if you need to pray before you know what your decision is, then pause thoroughly and form convictions rather than take impulsive decisions.

**"Chance favors the prepared mind" – Louis Pasteur**

The next step is for you to maintain a clear midterm and long term vision. "Will what I am doing now help me achieve my objective(s)?" Decision making becomes easy when you have a clear picture of where you are going and what you want. People without a clear vision and defined purpose vacillate between opinions. Grab a journal and document your vision, get a glimpse of 20 years from now, and form a 1-2yr plan. Take a step at a time.

**"Give to us clear vision that we may know where to stand and what to stand for – because unless we stand for something, we shall fall for anything" -Peter Marshall**

Lastly, you need to get guidance from people who have had experience before you. Parents and trustworthy adults, including school teachers can be of great help in providing direction for you when you are confused and need proper guidance. In the multitude of counselors there is safety. If you get to that unforeseen crossroads in life where it's difficult to consult your convictions or your vision, ask. Don't rely strictly on your knowledge and efforts. It is not a weakness to ask; it is wisdom!

**"The secret of success is to ask" – Unknown**

**References:**

*Why we make bad choices in life*

by Carol Gioia

*How to make decisions,*

by Adeolu Akinyemi

**WATCH YOUR MANNERS**

# Work Ethics

**W**ork ethics is a set of values based on hard work and diligence. It is also a belief in the moral benefit of work and its ability to enhance character. Workers exhibiting a good work ethic in theory (and ideally in practice) will usually be selected for better positions, more responsibility and ultimately promotion. Workers who fail to exhibit a good work ethics may be regarded as failing to provide fair value for the wage the employer is paying them and may not be promoted or placed in positions of greater responsibility. Whether you intend to take up paid employment or start up your own company in the near future, work ethics is crucial to your survival in the business world. Business and industry leaders have identified essential work ethics that should be taught and practiced in order to develop a viable and effective workforce. The ten traits of a person with good work ethics are identified below:

**Attendance:** A student with good work ethics attends work regularly, arrives and leaves on time. He/she notifies the instructor in advance of planned absences; and makes up assignments punctuality.

**Character:** Character is a blend of several qualities that form a wonderful product which is evident in your conduct. A person who has character displays loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness, reliability, dependability, initiative, self-discipline, and self-responsibility. These traits are displayed in the open as well as in private, when other people are not watching.

**Teamwork:** A young person with work ethics respects rights of others. He/she is a team worker, cooperative, and assertive. Such a person displays a customer service attitude, seeks opportunities for continuous learning, and displays mannerly behaviour.

**Appearance:** It is common knowledge that people are generally addressed the way they are dressed. Ensure that you display appropriate dressing, grooming, hygiene, and etiquette. Each organisation has its own dress code and code of conduct.

**Attitude:** A positive attitude is like sweet smelling aroma – it soon spreads round. You cannot hide it. Demonstrate a positive attitude, appear self-confident; and have realistic expectations of self.

**Productivity:** Companies pay premium to achieve results. Business enterprises are built on profit-making. Big rewards await workers who follow safety practices, conserve



materials; keep work area neat and clean, and follow directions and procedures. Flouting any of these rules can ultimately cost the institution a huge amounts of money in maintenance and repairs that could have been otherwise channeled into increased productivity

**Organizational Skills:** A person with good organisational skills manifests skill in personal management, time management, prioritizing, flexibility, stress management, and dealing with change. How you manage your time and prioritize the things you plan to achieve tell a lot about you and could be a pointer to how organised you could become in the future.

**Communication:** Communication involves passing across information to a second party in the most effective way. If the intended receiver of the information does not

understand, then communication has not taken place. In this vein, information has to be clearly transferred to the receiving party. A good worker should display appropriate nonverbal and verbal skills.

**Cooperation:** A good worker displays leadership skills, appropriately handles criticism and complaints, demonstrates problem-solving capability, maintains appropriate relationships with supervisors and peers, and follows chain of command.

**Respect:** Ensure that you deal appropriately with cultural/racial diversity and do not engage in harassment of any kind.

*Reference:*

[http://www.griffintech.edu/academics/work\\_ethics.htm](http://www.griffintech.edu/academics/work_ethics.htm)



# Do you want to be an Entrepreneur?

you don't feel happy unless you've had a good measure more than this, then there's a good chance you won't cut it as a business leader.

## 2. The Willingness to Delegate

From low-level positions, delegation is seen as a mouth-watering perk. Who wouldn't love to be able to give important tasks to people below them, and take the weight off their own shoulders? The real answer is; less people than you'd think. While most people think delegation is something they could get very used to; in practice, it's a very tough and draining process if done incorrectly.

Entrepreneurs have the ability to delegate tasks completely to those below, even though so much stands on the success of the activities. A successful leader simply places confidence in those beneath them, and let experts do what they do best, leaving the entrepreneur to do what they do best – leading!

## 3. The Lightning Pursuit of Opportunities

The difference between a successful entrepreneur and a normal individual is that when they both see a business opportunity, their reactions are different. A normal individual may actually consider a business opportunity that has presented itself, and have a look at their bank account... maybe plan the possibility of leaving their job. However by this point, the entrepreneur will have already organised a team to begin!

## 4. Proactivity

Business Leaders do not wait for opportunities to slip onto their lap. They instinctively partake in continuous research (or pay someone else) to always make sure they have some new directions to be exploring. They're never happy staying in the same place, and are always looking for the next new idea.

Even successful entrepreneurs that are seen to stay firmly within one business may be actually exploring several products or business models within that single entity.

## 5. Optimism

An ineffective entrepreneur may think – “There are pros and cons here... let's weigh it up” The successful business leader thinks – “Those pros are significant enough to pursue this, we will solve the cons later.” Being optimistic is a crucial habit for entrepreneurs, because it's the only way to deal with the amount of risk these people take on! Would you risk your year's salary in order to make more money next year? Many wouldn't, and that's why successful entrepreneurs aren't common.

## 6. Ruthlessness

It's probably their most famous trait – Entrepreneurs can sometimes be ruthless individuals. This isn't to say they're immoral, but don't expect to receive politeness and 'niceties' if it will hinder their success. You have to be this focused too. Maybe you're thinking 'It isn't worth it'. Well, being an incredibly successful entrepreneur isn't for everyone!

## 7. Obsession with Attention to Details

Everything has to be perfect. Competition is so fierce in today's business world that entrepreneurs cannot afford to do a half job. A successful businessperson won't go home until the job is completed 110%. Delivering above what is expected is a classic signature of entrepreneurs. This is how extraordinary profits are made and how a small venture can explode into a multi-million dollar success.

### Reference:

<http://www.leadership-expert.co.uk/the-seven-habits-of-incredibly-successful-entrepreneurs/>

**E**ntrepreneurship is the creation of an innovative economic organisation (or network of organisations) for the purpose of gain or growth under conditions of risk and uncertainty. Entrepreneurs are some of the most powerful individuals in society. Not because they are wealthy, but because the habits they possess ensure that they are successful in whatever they set out to accomplish. Take a look at the seven habits below and find out which habits you have in common with incredibly successful business leaders, managers, team leaders and entrepreneurs worldwide!

## 1. A Hatred for Sleep

You'll find most entrepreneurs never sleep in late (unless perhaps when on vacation!). Every second you spend lazily snoozing in bed, is a second spent watching your productivity plummet. For most people, this is pleasurable and a welcome break, but for an effective entrepreneur and leader, it's a restless affair. Taking a break is worthwhile. But that's what your 8 hours of sleep is for. If

## TRUE LIFE STORY

# Jimmy's Transformation

I am Jimmy Adebayo Bitrus (not real name), a former student of a reputable secondary school in Lagos. My life has been plagued with ups and downs. I have faced numerous challenges in different areas of my life. These trials have taken their toll on my academics and social life. At the age of 13, I could not read or write well; neither could I speak English fluently. I wasn't serious with my studies and so I frequently had bad grades in nearly every subject. I always got promoted on trial and failed two consecutive classes in junior school. I began to cheat in exams and always got caught each time I did.

When I was finally pushed into S.S.S.I, I was the dummy of the school and people took pleasure in calling me names like olodo (unintelligent student), moron, jerk, freak and loser. I had zero control over my life because I allowed people to make decisions for me. Feeling confused about what I wanted to become in life, I kept changing my department in school because I wasn't coping in any class. I had no friends, no one to play with or talk to. I eventually joined a notorious gang in school and was introduced to drugs and pornography. Marijuana became my best food after a few weeks into my fascination with the weed.

I was very loyal to my new clique of friends because I felt I had found people who would watch my back, people who would always be there when I need support. But I was wrong. They abandoned me when I got into trouble with the school authorities trying to steal the principal's money to buy marijuana.

After much pleading by my parents, who had to sign an undertaking on my behalf, I was still retained in school for a final chance. I cut grass two hours every day for three weeks and my parents had to report in school every week to observe my compliance. It was an embarrassing experience altogether for my parents and I. They are the type who live conservative lives and do not like to

“

I was the dummy of the school and people took pleasure in calling me names like olodo (unintelligent student)

”

be brought into the public, at least not on matters that could tarnish their image.

My life was in great turmoil and I felt like I was in a raging storm. I was advised to see the school counselor and was so lucky not to have been addicted to the marijuana. At first, I wasn't so open to Mrs. Martins the psychologist, but when she started asking me some questions, I found myself telling her all my problems. She later asked to meet my parents and after seeing her for two weeks, I was a changed person. She was more than just a psychologist; she became a friend and a motivation to me. I started believing in myself, learnt how to read and write even though it was difficult at my age.

In the next academic year, I was totally a changed person. I started improving in class and everyone

noticed it. Just a few students appreciated it while others started spreading rumours that I cheated in the tests and exam. I didn't give ears to the falsehood being propagated - I kept pressing on. I was determined to get to the top of the class. Less than a year after my rediscovery, my persistence paid off. I was the second best mathematics student in the school by the end of S.S.S.2 second term. It wasn't long before I started representing the school in various debates, science and mathematics competitions. I always came back with awards each time I went. Not only was my WASSCE result the best in the school, I also gained admission into one of the best universities in the country.

Through all these challenges I faced, I have learnt to see challenges as tests for promotion and stepping stones to greater heights. Whatever things you are not proud of, whatever habits you feel ashamed of, you can overcome them. Learn to seek help from the right places and, finally, remember that you are responsible for your life. You can decide what you want to become in life.



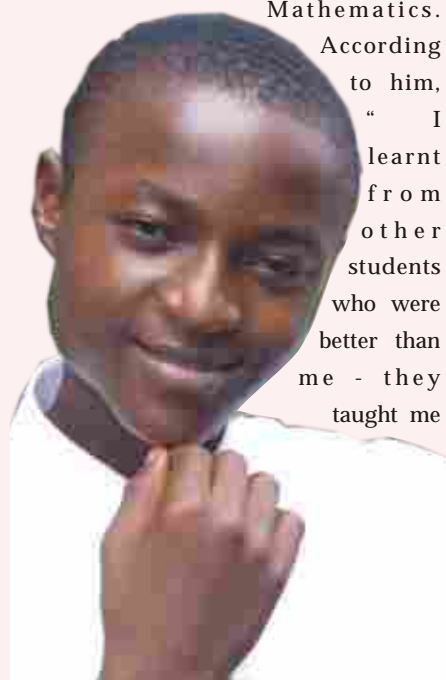


# Young Achiever

## NASIR ALABI: *A Lesson in Perseverance*

**T** rue success is built on a foundation of hard work. In fact, what people call luck is preparation meeting with opportunity. The story of 17 year old Nasir Alabi, an SS3 student of the Lagos City Senior College, underscores the fact that you can be whatever you want to be despite your history. This is an account of success despite setbacks and is certain to inspire thousands of young people to strive to be the best they can be.

Nasir was born on August 11, 1992 into the family of Mr. & Mrs. Alabi as the last of six children. He had his primary school education at Command Children School, Army Barracks, Sabo, Lagos. It was in this school that his desire to be knowledgeable received life. "I had always been in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> position up till Primary 5, when suddenly I felt I had been an average student for too long," he says. He went out of his way to seek help from his classmates who taught him different topics, especially in Mathematics.



According to him, "I learnt from other students who were better than me - they taught me

LCM (lowest common multiples). Our female class teacher was also very nice to us and advised us. In Moral Instruction, one of the subjects we studied, she taught us about perseverance and that encouraged me to study more and work harder." By the third term in class 5, he rose to the third position and by the next year, he had become very good at Mathematics. However, he did not score up to the cut-off mark for admission into highly rated Kings College, Lagos, so he was transferred to Aje Comprehensive Junior High School, Sabo, a less known public school run by the state government.

*"The height by great men reached and kept, were not achieved by sudden flight. But they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night."*

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), U.S. Poet*

At Aje Comprehensive Junior High School, he had to study under difficult conditions – half constructed classes, some had no roof. Nevertheless, he was quick to add that "the teachers imparted useful knowledge in us. I remember Mr. Oshipitan and Mrs. Oshin who taught us Mathematics in JSS 1 and 2 respectively. The laboratories were not equipped and we only had science practicals during the JSCE examination."

In October 2006, Nasir resumed at the Lagos City Senior College, Sabo, where he had a little difficulty choosing what department to enroll in. He finally chose to go to the science class in order to keep his dreams of becoming a medical doctor alive. In the first year, the science class had a Further Mathematics teacher, but no Mathematics teacher. He excelled and became the best Further Mathematics student, as well as occupying the

first position throughout SS1. He has maintained this position, though he admits that SS2 posed greater challenges. "The industrial strike actions by teachers in Lagos state did not help matters, but after the strike, some of the teachers organised after-school classes to complement classroom efforts in order to finish the syllabus."

In August 2009, Nasir wrote a qualifying examination and emerged as one of the top 30 students selected, out of a pool of strong candidates from across the state, to attend a three-week summer camp organised by Lonadek Oil & Gas Consultants. Two months later, Nasir Alabi won the Lagos State finals of the National Science and Technology Quiz Competition organised by the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology, in conjunction with the Lagos State Ministry of Science and Technology. The candidates were tested in core subjects: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Agricultural Science, and ICT during the preliminaries and all except Further Mathematics and ICT at the state finals (quiz). To claim the top spot in the state, he outclassed over 40 best students from schools in the Local Educational District 4 (Mainland, Yaba, and Surulere), and another 35 best students from all the 6 Districts in the state. The quarterfinal and semifinal stages involved written tests while the final was in an oral quiz format. At the final, he contested against nine other students and secured the top spot. He won a trophy for his school. He also went home with an Omatek Notebook and books worth about 50,000 Naira.

Nasir is an official (Provost) of the JETS Club at the Lagos City College where he coordinates meetings and special events and ensures regular attendance at the weekly meetings. He also serves as the Naibul-ameer (Vice President) of the LCC chapter of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN).

# Puzzler

T	U	E	F	I	P	R	O	S	T	A	T	I	C	F	L	U	I	D	C
E	R	T	A	F	E	N	M	E	S	H	V	M	E	N	A	G	P	N	A
S	E	M	E	R	N	J	A	I	G	A	X	O	V	R	Y	I	V	A	N
T	N	A	E	S	G	L	M	P	S	P	M	A	C	U	L	A	T	L	N
A	S	C	C	U	T	Y	I	D	R	A	E	R	O	R	S	R	O	G	E
O	T	I	L	U	D	O	E	O	S	O	N	G	E	D	X	V	T	S	R
G	N	T	N	I	L	F	S	V	A	S	I	N	E	P	R	E	F	R	M
I	R	H	D	T	E	A	A	T	D	C	E	F	I	O	S	H	O	E	U
S	E	I	R	R	K	S	J	U	E	O	E	M	A	T	A	Y	R	P	T
T	P	E	E	B	U	R	E	T	H	R	A	T	E	W	E	W	E	W	O
E	S	N	F	L	U	I	G	U	E	D	O	S	Z	N	G	I	S	O	R
R	S	C	A	N	C	E	R	N	G	L	A	N	S	A	C	P	K	C	S
E	L	I	T	F	A	P	R	O	S	T	A	T	E	G	L	A	N	D	F

## MALE REPRODUCTIVE PARTS

- TESTOSTERONE
- SCROTUM
- SEMEN
- EPIDIDYMIS
- URETHRA
- PROSTATIC FLUID
- TESTES
- GLANS
- COWPERS GLAND
- PROSTATE GLAND
- PENIS
- VAS DEFERENS

*Further reading on the male reproductive Part:*  
[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

## Book Review

**Title:**  
Chicken soup for the teenage soul: the real deal

**ISBN:**  
0-7573-0334-X

**Authors:**  
Jack Canfield, Mark Victor and Deborah Reber

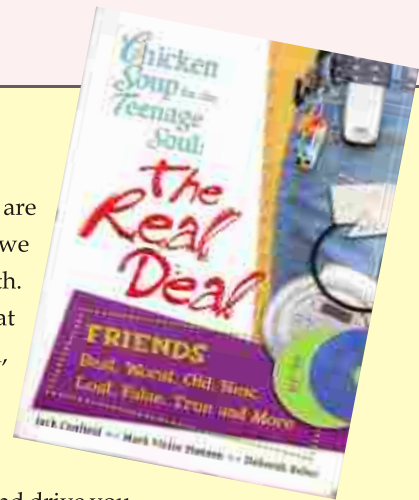
**Publisher:** Health Communications, Inc.      **Year of publication:** 2006

**Chapters:** 8 Chapters      **Pages:** 260 pages

**Reviewer:**  
Idongesit Young (18 years old)

Chicken soup for teenage soul focuses on the ups and downs of friendship: making them, keeping them, fighting them, losing them, helping them, and competing with them. The book defines what friendship really means, the qualities of a true friend, friendship challenges and many more. It

shows that friends are more than people we just hang out with. They are people that make you laugh, keep your secrets, offer advice and sometimes they betray your trust and drive you crazy, but mostly they are people who are always there for you. Sometimes, friendship is overwhelming, confusing, and you feel like you don't have a friend in the world, but don't worry because there are real stories and poems from real teens, quizzes, side stories, a ton of information on what movie to see, books to read, website to check out, and things to explore on journals. All these are designed to help you figure out what you and your friends are all about.



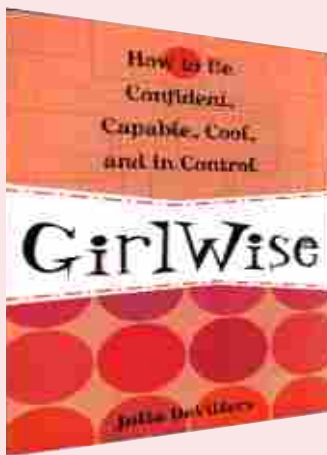
# RESOURCES

The materials listed here are resources on adolescent health and development. These materials are available for use in the Life Skills, HIV/AIDS and Sexuality Education Resource Centre at the AHI Youth Centre at 17, Lawal Street, Jibowu, Yaba, Lagos. You can also view our e-library on the AHI website: [www.actionhealthinc/library/](http://www.actionhealthinc/library/)

## BOOKS

### GIRLWISE:

The Ultimate Teen Girl Bible



What do you do when.....you're at the lunch table and you knock soda over into someone's laps? or you need a job? you hate your clothes? you're broke? Inside, more than 100 experts tell you how to deal and so much more! Girl wise is one-stop shopping for all the stuff you want to, need to, you MUST know! You'll find great tips from experts in fashion, business, etiquette, sports, and more to help you become the Ultimate Teen Girl- confident, capable, comfortable, cool, conscious, and taking control of your life.

### CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE PRETEEN SOUL2:

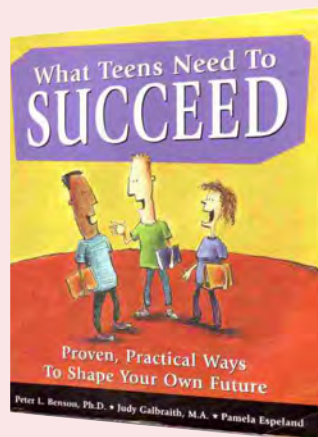
Stories about Facing Challenges, Realizing Dreams and Making a Difference



A chicken soup for the preteen soul book written mostly by preteens- for preteens. Filled with true stories about finding yourself, achieving dreams and dealing with tough issues- this book will inspire you, make you laugh out loud, show you that you're not alone in your experiences and help you to remember that life isn't as bad as you sometimes think it is. The issues that you deal with each day are in here- friendships, body changes, first crushes, difficult choices, and tough stuff like divorce, moving, and dealing with death for the first time.

### WHAT TEENS NEED TO SUCCEED:

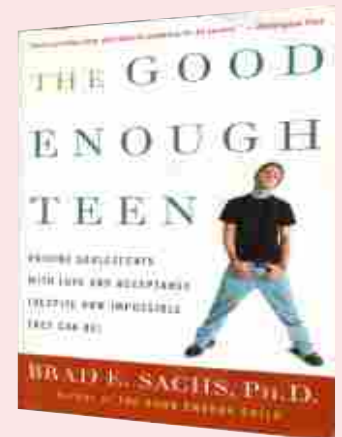
Proven, Practical Ways To Shape Your Own Future



This book tells you how you've got the power to shape your future, change your live for the better, and make a difference in the lives of people around you. This book helps you learn how to build assets. Not financial assets, but developmental assets- good things you need in your life and in yourself. In What Teens need to succeed, you'll find more than 1,200 ideas for building assets at home, at school, in your community, and with your friends. More than 120 true stories about teens and adults who are building assets for themselves and other.

### THE GOOD ENOUGH TEEN:

Raising adolescents with love and acceptance (Despite how impossible they can be)



The Good Enough Teen will help parents to understand the invisible transformation experienced by teenagers, as well as the ways in which adolescents intimately influence this understanding. Respected psychiatrist helps you to recognize your unrealistic expectations for your teenager and to love, accept, and nurture him or her- not just in spite of, but because of, his or her imperfections.