

ANTHONIA OLUWATUMININU ELEMOSO



LENS

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Lens: when a vision is blurry, sometimes you need lens to focus on the object. I have written some guidelines as a lens for you in relationship. My desire is that our relationships make the world a different place; I am an advocate of and for true love alongside purpose. I believe true love is real and I want everyone to know how to find it

This book is titled **lens** because people say love is blind. However, it is advisable to date with your lens on since the future is the focus. The book is actually filled with a lot of do's and don'ts, guidelines that we need. I don't know it all but I have decided to share mine.

Please feel free to share yours with me.

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DISCLAIMER

There is no rule for relationship or marriage; it is not mathematics so there are no formulas. Every relationship is unique in different ways, what works for relationship “A” may and may not work for relationship “B”. What worked in your previous relationship might not work for you in the new one, **(if it actually really worked for you in the first place, you wouldn’t be in a new one).**

In other words, I am not saying you should take my writing hook, line and sinker, this is just a guideline. I also left few pages behind for you to write yours and it would be nice if you discuss it with your partner.

Enjoy.

DEDICATION

Love is quite important, just like breathing. Christ is love and there is no better person to write, sing and act about love but a person who has met Christ. In that light, I dedicate this book to my parents, Mr and Mrs Elemoso. You are the best gift God gave me and you are great examples of true love.

I love you both.

Do's

PRAY AND STUDY THE WORD TOGETHER

This is number one because, if you are looking to make this relationship a marriage, it is advisable to build a solid foundation in God. And yes, this is as important as the air you breathe daily!

Matthew 7 vs 24 – 27 (NLT) “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵ Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶ But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷ When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”

You necessarily do not have to sit in the same room all day to read the word or pray, but pray about your relationship as much as you can. It is going to be a life time journey and it is important that you enjoy it to the fullest. You both need to come in agreement to speak what you want in the relationship you are building.

Amos 3vs 3 (KJV) “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”

Trust me if you stand for nothing, you will fall for anything. I’d advise that you stand for something, for something great, for something another person would love to emulate, for something unique, for something that can stand the test of time.

Note: I am not saying you should only pray and study the word for the sake of a relationship, you should for yourself also. You should read the scriptures for your growth; when you pray for yourself, you are investing in your life. You should have a personal relationship with God.

I was having a conversation with my mentor some months ago; he told me a story of a guy who wanted to get married. He said this particular guy had not prayed for anything as much as he prayed for his relationship and this guy claimed that he was convinced this certain lady was his wife. He then asked the guy a simple question, (you prayed so much about your relationship, why can’t you pray so much about your life too, why can’t you put the same energy in praying for yourself so that you can also get bearing for not only your relationship but your life?)

Prayer is a seed. For example you can pray like this; (Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your grace which You so generously, and continuously bless us with. You are worthy of all praise and all glory.)

1 Peter 4:8 *“Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.”*

- **Guide and direct our relationship**

I pray that You continue to guide our footsteps and our lives as we walk in agreement according to Your will. I trust that our new relationship is a blessing from You O Lord, and I pray that You guide us and show us what we need to know. Open the eyes of my heart, Father God, and reveal anything that is not of You. May I not go into this relationship love-blind but rather spirit-wise.

Proverbs 13:20 *“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”*

II Corinthians 6:14 *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?”*

- **Draw us closer**

Bless our relationship and draw us both even closer to You and to your will for our lives. May I never be unequally yoked. Lord, teach and guide us that we will always seek You first in everything we do. May our love be filled with genuine affection and may we honour each other at all times.

1 Peter 3:7 *“In the same way, You husbands must give honor to Your wives. Treat her with understanding as You live together. She may be weaker than You are, but she is Your equal partner in God’s gift of new life. If You don’t treat her as You should, Your prayers will not be heard.”*

Proverbs 31:10,11 *“Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is worth more than precious rubies. Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life.”*

- **Bond us together**

Bless our lives in our journey together and fill us with Your Glory. May we be bonded together, Lord, in the type of love Your Son Jesus showed on the cross. Let our lives be a wonderful reflection of Your grace, as we abide in it forever. In Jesus’ name, I humbly pray, Amen.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 *“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where*

there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.”

You can add yours; these are just examples and guides.

- **Importance of prayers in relationship**

With you getting closer to God and learning more about Him, you practically understand the purpose of your marriage in the place of prayer and know the reason He has picked both of you for each other.

You focus on important things.

It keeps you together; you both spend quality time together.

You learn things about each other: just so you know, in the place of prayer, we are always vulnerable, something your partner wouldn't share with you, he or she shares in the place of prayer, with that you understand how important a particular issue is to him or her, you learn about each other's hopes, dreams and concerns. You can either join them to pray about it or pray about it in your personal time.

BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION

After building a strong foundation in Christ, build a solid relationship foundation. Bear it in mind, it takes two to tango. While the early months of a relationship can feel effortless and exciting, successful long-term relationships involve ongoing effort and compromise by both partners. Building healthy patterns early in your relationship can establish a solid foundation for the long run. Build a foundation of appreciation and respect. Focus on all the considerate things your partner says and does. Happy couples make it a point of noticing even small opportunities to say "thank you" to their partner, rather than focusing on mistakes their partner has made.

You can create some in-house rules you want your relationship to go by. Now, I am not referring to some rigid rules, your relationship is meant to be a fun house; I am talking about fun and romantic rules to keep you together and help you in your tough moment.

For example;

Hey babe, can we agree that after every phone call or every good bye, we must say "I love you". This rule might sound funny but try it when you are having an argument, your mouth will be so heavy to say it but when both of you want the relationship to work, and you both are genuinely in love with each other, you will say it and trust me, it does the magic. You will reconcile immediately because you do not want to hurt someone you love.

Hey honey, it would be nice if we make sure we never go to bed upset with each other. You should actually take this to marriage, do not go to bed upset with each other, trash every quarrel, finish every conversation and make sure both of you are fine and comfortable with each other at the end of the conversation.

Boo, whenever we are together in church or in a religious gathering, can we hold our hands to pray together when we need to, sow seeds together etc.

I was in a relationship years ago and we had a rule, we decided that every time we saw each other, we were going to eat from the same plate. I know this sounds cheesy but this act kept us closer and we are still very close even after the relationship ended. I am guessing we were just meant to be good friends.

You can add your rules and you can also ignore mine and create yours.

COMMUNICATE

It is already a cliché but communication is key; it is a cliché for a reason. Adequate communication is one of the most important aspects to having and sustaining a healthy relationship. When you start a new relationship, it is critical to talk about what both of you need and anticipate. Some of the time this implies being straightforward and having awkward conversations, however, if you are in a healthy relationship, your partner will be responsive and listen as well as you when the table turns. Finding a communication balance that you're both comfortable with is super important.

Talk about every and anything, have fun, laugh together, create time out for just conversations, talk about your childhood, your dreams and aspirations together, your mistakes and failures. Conversations and communications links the heart together, helps you to discover the kind of person you are with, helps you understand when to help, when to be a friend, when to be a lover etc.

Being on the same page as your partner goes a long way and opening up to your partner about what's bothering you, compromising over your disagreements and complimenting each other are all equally as important. While communication is important, you should both be comfortable with how often you talk to each other. Make your partner look forward to talking to you about any and everything.

Communication in relationships—at its core—is about **connecting** and using your verbal, written and physical skills to fulfil your partner's needs. It's not about making small talk. It's about understanding your partner's point of view, offering support and letting your partner know you have their best interest in mind.

Knowing that we're loved through effective communication in relationships can make you feel alive, but absence of love can cause pain like nothing else can. Too often we automatically say "I love you" in order to solve a conflict with our partners and forget to show love as an action, a tangible way that speaks to our partner's needs. Reverse this pattern: consciously show your partner love every time, and by doing that, your connection will deepen.

Do this in a way that speaks best to their personal preferences and needs. How to communicate better is about realizing what "language" your partner best understands and giving them love in that way. Remember, love is about giving, not getting, and you should always be focused on how you can give more.

UNDERSTAND YOURSELF

If you understand yourself and love yourself personally, it would be easy to add someone else to your life. It will be easy to show love to your partner.

Personally, I love gifts, I love new shoes and hand bags. I do not wait for a partner to buy it for me before I spoil myself with an expensive one. I also realized I also do not mind spending money on an expensive gift for a partner. If I say I love them then I can do what I do for myself for them.

You need to be full of love; you need to be whole before you get into a relationship. Don't get into a relationship because you are trying to heal from the past relationship. Deal with your wounds, hurts and insecurities before you bring someone on board.

Know your likes, your dislikes, know what moves you; you are what your type is. Know how you behave when you are upset. It's an advantage for your partner, when you know things about yourself and you inform him or her. This helps your partner know how best to love you.

Know the reason why you were created. Don't just sit and wait for a partner to come. Know your career path, how you think, what you stand for as a person, your beliefs, your turn offs etc.

I have heard break up stories and the lady goes, "I converted my religion because of him and now he has left me, where do I start from." I get confused because it means you actually had no plan for yourself, you were just moving with someone else's compass. Get your own compass!

Or the man goes, "she made me a better person, now she has gone, I will just go back to my old self." So sir, are you telling me you didn't intend to be a better person before she came? You need to create a life for yourself by yourself.

I had a friend while I was in school; we were in 400 level when she told me, "after school, I will just get married". It never went down with me, I also asked a question, "so is that the only reason you were created? To get married? So after you are married, what's next?" Because to me, marriage is just a box you tick then you continue with the life and purpose given to you. There's nobody that has been awarded best marriage of the year or award

for getting married early or late. Discover yourself and be useful and productive.

HAVE A LIFE OUTSIDE EACH OTHER

You should exist without your partner. Know your purpose, with or without your partner. Do not be a robot nor do things in their shadow. In essence, know your purpose and understand it. Know and function by yourself individually.

You should be able to handle things on your own without your partner. You should be able to have fun in a party without your partner.

Also release your partner to live and enjoy moments even without you when you have to.

Occasionally, you could just sit back and enjoy the story. You are definitely not the only reason why your partner exists, so it is smart to allow them function in their capacity. It makes the relationship interesting and you don't get choked.

I know you don't plan to break up but if it sadly occurs or separation happens, having a life of your own will help you move on easily. If you have friends of your own, a job of your own, you don't live together or always go out together and you are performing in purpose individually, you will be able to pick life up if you become single again.

BE FRIENDS

A friend told me once, love fades, but friendship keeps it going. I don't know how true it is but I am an advocate for friendship first and the all time. I'd definitely love to end up with my friend, actually my best friend. Someone I can talk to anytime, someone I can be the craziest with forever, someone you would want to travel the world with, someone you would love to be vulnerable with, someone who knows you in and out and would pick you over again, someone who laughs at your jokes, someone you can stay up all night gisting about your funny childhood, someone you can run to in need, in hurt, in pain, someone who can call the best out of you, someone you can pray with, sing with, dance with, someone that annoys you so bad you want to hug them, someone that make you feel safe, someone to call home. Someone you will like to go back home to after a long day, someone you want to tell how your day went and laugh, cry etc.

On a lighter note: people in serious relationship are the best "amebo" (gossip) partners

As a child sitting behind my parents— as they drove the car—while going on a trip together, both of them would gist, fight, gist, fight. Sometimes they dissed people on the road and we all would laugh in the car. The funny part was when we met someone they knew on the road, both of them will greet this person so well, as soon as we moved the car; My dad goes "that woman, did you see what she wore to church" and both of them will talk, laugh and analyse. My brother and I will be behind wondering why they greeted the woman nicely if they knew they were going to "finish" her outfit.

This happened/happens because they were/are friends.

One day, I asked my parents how they stayed enjoying these years together and they both turned the supposed serious conversation to a funny one. I even forgot I was asking a serious question.

My mum said "you know, we actually enjoy every process of the marriage as it unfolds."

My dad said "there are different phases and it comes with different stories."

They talked about when they got married, when they had me, how I changed their lives from just a couple to a parent, they talked about my first word,

my childhood that made them laugh, their old friends, the ones that scammed them, when my brother came, his behaviour, the family members who lived with us, their fights, their travels, their growth process, their Christian journey and so on.

Both of them decided to enjoy it as friends and after hours of answering my question, I went back to bed desiring to be married to my friend because I want to enjoy life with my friend.

When you get old and the children are married, you will still have each other, you need to look forward to something and the friendship is a good thing to look forward to.

This also helps you forgive easily. You always want to have your friend with you, so normally if you have a best friend, both of you know how to forgive each other and you actually won't want to stay angry. It's a powerful bond.

KNOW YOUR STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES AS A COUPLE

Both of you are different beings who have come to complement each other. You are not in a relationship with a robot so you do not have a manual for this person. Take out time to study who you are with, not to take advantage of them but to understand how to relate with them. Sadly, some men think it's the job of a woman to understand her partner but that's a wrong idea. Both of you should understand each other and be ready to compliment weaknesses with strengths.

You are from different backgrounds, different homes, different ideologies, you might also have different views and needs, it is best for you to understand and help each other. You want to start a life together, a life you do not intend to end till death, so it is best to understand your strengths and weaknesses.

Now, you can never know someone completely, my parents are close to 30 years together and I remember my mum telling me she still discovers new things about my dad and vice versa. All you need to do is notice the changes, weaknesses or strengths and talk about it **together**. This will help you understand where it is coming from and where you come in if you are the stronger person in that area.

A friend once told me, "When you know the root of a problem, you will know how to solve it."

Know what works for your partner. (Know your partner's mumu button)

This is where the role for 5 love languages comes to play. Please I'd advise you do not use this selfishly. You should use this to make yourself and your partner happy in your beautiful relationship.

Chapman suggests that to discover another person's love language, one must observe the way they express love to others, and analyse what they complain about most often and what they request from their significant other most often. He theorizes that people tend to naturally give love in the way that they prefer to receive love, and better communication between couples can be accomplished when one can demonstrate care to the other person in the love language the recipient understands. An example would be if a husband's love language is acts of service, he may be confused when he does the laundry for his wife and she doesn't perceive that as an act of love, but views it as simply performing household duties, because the love language she comprehends is words of affirmation (verbal affirmation that he loves her). She may try to use what she values—words of affirmation—to express her love to him, which he would not value as much as she does. If she understands his love language

and mows the lawn for him, he perceives it in his love language as an act of expressing her love for him; likewise, if he tells her he loves her, she values that as an act of love.

In knowing what works for your partner, you have to know few basic things.

How to pass a message across.

Your partner might prefer spoken to in a subtle way but you keep shouting when you are upset. If you use your method, you will be deceiving yourself. It's either your message wouldn't be communicated adequately or you get into a fight for actually something you have the ability to suppress. So it looks like you are pouring water in a basket.

You want to correct a mistake your partner made and because you are used to shouting (might be a thing from your background or past) you raise your voice. To you, you might have communicated but guess what, you didn't. Sadly, if the same event occurs again you say "but I thought I told you the last time" no, you didn't tell him or her, you were just shouting.

You are allowed to be vulnerable. Vulnerability is not a weakness as long as you are with your partner, it is strength. Your relationship should be your safe haven, a place where you can be who you are in your low moment, a place where you can express every bit of feelings you have without any judgment, a place where you can sleep with both eyes closed. As a man you should be able to express your feelings with your woman, say everything. Do not hide any detail. In this part of the world (Africa) some men rather not share their sadness or pain with their family, they always try to suck it all up and act like a super hero. That to me is a weak move because he literally has too many emotions pent up from childhood he hasn't expressed. Most times these men react to situations the wrong way because they do not know how to express emotions adequately.

BE EACH OTHER'S CHEERLEADER

Note: this is one of the best gifts you can give your partner.

Take queue from an arsenal fan. Those guys are the most loyal football fans I have ever seen in my life.

Compliment each other

Oh babe, I like that dress, it looks great on you.

Ladies, I have a secret for you, men like this too. Sometimes, it's hard for us as ladies to notice their hair cut, but when you do, say it, say you like it, say it looks good on him. Tell your partner he is the finest boy in the world or to the lady, she is the most beautiful woman you have ever seen, you are not the only one who wants to hear this, so make the compliments two sided.

Even if you know he is repeating the same black suit. Try and say something nice about it every time.

Send a note, a text. You may not live together and definitely not see each other before leaving the house, send a text saying you love how they looked today or how they smell. Or a note saying you appreciate what they do. **You just want to say I love you, you just want to say good job, you just want to say I love your smile.**

Make them blush even when you are far away.

Talk more about the good things they did and emphasize on it than the bad ones

For instance

He forgot this year's valentine because he was pressured at work but remember last year he gave you the best gift. Instead of getting upset, thank him for last valentine's gift or get him a gift too and make it look like you got it yesterday. Trust me he will never forget because he sees that you cherish what he has to offer.

On the side. Hope you know as a lady, you can also send valentine's gift to your partner. It's not only a man's job.

When she cooks and it is delicious, uncle say it, don't just brag with your friends, when he cooks and it's delicious say it, if it's not delicious appreciate the effort.

Encourage each other

Because you are a life partner or an intending life partner, there is a 95 percent chance your words, and actions of encouragement might go a long way. You should know what to say to make them feel powerful. We humans need to be reassured of how great we are and it carries more weight when it comes from a partner.

There are times when your partner gets frustrated about an issue, listen to understand, do not listen to reply. Understand the issue and look for the words needed to encourage your partner. Be available to encourage with your presence even when you have not words.

Example, she failed a paper, encourage her to read and make it better, he is not getting good contracts, say something to boost his ego. Her business is not going well, you don't have the money to help but you have time to spend with her, give her your time.

Grow in love

Personally, I am not an advocate for falling in love, its sounds better to me when you grow in love. If you fall, you will get up but if you grow, you can't outgrow it instantly. If you are with the right person, it is advisable to grow in love.

Grow in love through phases, grow in love through good time and bad times, and grow in love even when it makes no sense. Love is like a plant, you nurture it, you water it, you feed it, if you don't; it dies. Let the growing be two sided, both parties are advised to put the same energy to grow in love.

The truth is when you are growing in love, the more you discover the person the more you love the person. Just like Jesus, the more you read about him, the more you listen to the word, the more you build your relationship with Him, and you grow deeply and helplessly in love with Jesus.

Imagine that energy in the right romantic relationship.

GIVE!

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Please repeat after me, **GIVE!** Even God gave His son for us to have everlasting life and we have given our lives to Him by sharing the good news. God loved so He gave.

Love is giving, giving is powerful; giving is magical, giving helps progression, giving open doors. You can give without loving but you can't love without giving.

In a relationship, go the long way, give when you don't have, give when you have, give when it's hard and give when it's not hard. Give on normal days not only Valentine's Day nor birthday. Give gifts, time, smiles, positive words, a pat on shoulder, a peck, emotions, attention, logic, hugs. Just give what you can. You don't have to kill yourself or break the bank, once you start breaking the bank, you might need to check your relationship.

Give just because she wore your favourite dress, give just because he stopped by your office to say hello. Little things go a long way. Don't wait for him or her to do something mighty before you give.

Amazingly, I have friends who think like this and it inspires me. I remember we were researching for gifts months back. She wanted to gift her boyfriend for Valentine's Day and she wanted something special. We later got a comment that he was the only guy who got a gift in his office. It was funny but a part of me felt men are less appreciated.

GO ON DATES

Create time to go out, try something a little fancier than what you do normally. You could go out monthly but try and celebrate each other. Dress up nicely for this event, yes event because it is a big deal for both of you. You can also use this medium to review plans for the present and future. Bond, laugh, talk and admire each other. If you miss a date, make it up by all means.

ASK QUESTIONS

If you are not asking questions in your relationship, you are never going to grow beyond the level that you currently are, especially when it comes to intimacy. If you are single and afraid to ask questions, it will be a problem. If you can't ask questions when you are single, there is a possibility that you might not have that confidence to ask when you are married. When you get married you'd start having arguments over questions you should have asked while dating.

You are not supposed to avoid conflict in your relationship because conflict creates a platform for your relationship to grow. Clarify things before you say **I do**. Understand things before you say **I do**. Make sure you have gotten the answers you are comfortable with, ask over again if you are not satisfied with the response you get. When you do this, you prevent emotional breakdown later in the marriage. When you are in doubt, don't go ahead.

Confirm the things that you have been told, interrogate, observe and investigate. This sounds like you have got a lot of work to do but its best this is done while you still are dating rather than seeing or hearing different things when you are married. By then you'd start to ask yourself how you got into it in the first place. Your relationship will never grow beyond the questions you ask.

PLAN

Set goals individually and as partners. This is another way you can motivate each other and keep the connection strong.

Your individual and partnership goals need to be in alignment. This is important for creating harmony and allowing both of you attain your dreams. Talk about where you want to be, what you want to do and your time limits. Keep it positive. Make sure the goals both of you strive for as individuals and as a couple makes you feel good about each other. You can't achieve something that goes against your values.

These goals should be attainable, specific, time bound and realistic. Celebrate it when you reach milestones, together or individually. Create a reward system that will keep both of you motivated. Be accountable to each other.

Give yourselves room to achieve your desires by allowing your partner experiment. As long as you agree to proceed with honour and dignity, you can be as creative as you wish. Powerful ideas come from kinds places. Seek and accept feedback from one another, no one has all the answers.

Review and write down your goals, if you are comfortable, post them somewhere you can see them daily.

Everything you do together have twice or more the power than when you do it alone. It is fun when you do things together, it builds bond. Once you have accomplished a goal, set out for a new one. It makes you happy.

Don't be in a relationship because it is the norm, make a difference. There is a purpose for your life.

RESPECT EACH OTHER

Before we talk about respecting each other, respecting yourself first is very important. You can be single or dating, you need to show respect to yourself. It helps build confidence and maintaining healthy relationship with other people throughout your life.

Accept yourself as a whole person. This doesn't mean you are perfect but that you accept who you are. We all deserve respect regardless of our imperfections. You hold yourself to your own standards and you try not to worry about what other people think of you.

In a dating relationship, partners are equal, which means that neither partner has "authority" over the other. You need to respect each other in every way you can think of, emotionally and physically. Respect in this context means that, while we may not always agree with our partners, we choose to trust them and put faith in their judgment. As you learn more about each other, you build trust.

Respect is reflected in how you treat each other daily. Even if you disagree or have an argument; you should respect and value each other's opinions and feelings by fighting fair.

Respect is not about controlling someone or making them do what you want them to do. Respect is actually about the freedom to be yourself and to be loved for who you are. Love is respect.

Respect your partner in public, respect your partner in private, and respect them anywhere you find yourself.

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

The intensity of the spoken word leaves an enduring resonance on you, on others and on the universe. You should be conscious of the impact of your words and its legacy. You may recollect a sentence, addressed towards you that has remained with you and changed the course of your life.

Be careful what you say to your partner in all cases especially when you are upset, words are like eggs, and you can't put it together when it is broken.

Statement like "shut up" should be avoided. It spills out in the middle of a fight or when a partner is upset or annoyed. Shut up is highly aggressive rather deliver the same message in a calmer manner that doesn't feel so violent.

When you say you are sorry, do not follow the statement with "but", it negates the sorry you said earlier and its equal to no apology.

Any kind of personal insult is an act of emotional violence, belittling is especially destructive so never use abusive phrases. Sometimes we think when we say angry words we ease ourselves of the tension in the short term but it can also erase the connection you have worked so hard to build and make it harder to reconnect. Speak respectfully. You can't take your words back.

COMMUNICATE YOUR DISSATISFACTION NICELY

If you are not satisfied about something, you are allowed to communicate it, but not rudely.

Your partner gained weight and you don't like it, communicating it rudely might damage his or her self-esteem and it will forever make them feel self-conscious. If you are seriously concerned about your partner's health, a better way to say it is recommending healthier meals to eat together, taking long walks together on weekends, going to the gym together. This will encourage weight loss for both parties without hurting anyone's feelings.

Even when your partner does something nasty and weird to you, it is wise to communicate it nicely. When you have a lot of arguments in your relationship, it drains you and sometimes you don't look forward to spending time with your partner. You can create a romantic atmosphere and communicate a thing that dissatisfies you.

BE ACCOUNTABLE TO SOMEONE WISER

Submit your relationship to a wise person after God, you should also ask God for direction before you pick the person or couple. Look for someone who both of you respect a lot and you know they are doing well in marriage, someone who is very objective about your relationship and will advise you according to the scripture. This is important because, this person has walked the path you both are walking now and can share view and experiences with you and your partner.

Reduce asking your mates or your single friends for direction especially those who are not in Christ. They might mislead you. I am telling you to submit it to them so they will monitor and mentor you.

Be opened and real with them because the truth is if the relationship goes south, God will hold them responsible. Truth is that what worked for **A** might not work for **B**, but having an idea of what to do when a situation comes up would be a smart move. Be humble; be willing to learn even from seemingly little things.

DO SOMETHING

So you got the girl and you think it is appropriate to relax or stop chasing? Or your long time crush is now your boyfriend and you think you can cross your legs and watch only him chase in the relationship. No! If you are sure this is the person you want to spend the rest of life with, **Do something**.

Let your action love not just your words. Both parties should chase after each other even after kids come. Show love to one another like you have never experienced it before.

Tips

- Look into his or her eyes while having a conversation.
- Hold hands to pray.
- Eat once in a while from the same plate.
- Randomly say “I love you”.
- Send gifts just because. (Just because its Wednesday, just because I woke up with you on my mind, just because you called last night, just because you made me smile, just because you wore a red tie and so on).
- Drop love notes: in her bag, in his pocket, in his shoes, in her makeup purse, in his car, her car...etc.
- Write love letters, take it back to the old days. This is another way to express your feelings.
- Make a phone call randomly, just to say how much they mean to you.
- Say sweet words to each other randomly.
- Get a name for each other.
- Send text messages randomly (not whatsapp): a word of prayer, a love message, a smiley, a word, a picture, something funny etc.
- After every phone call, say “I love you”.
- After every fight say “I love you”. This is hard but it melts your heart.
- Dress up and go on dates together.
- Surprise visits: to their place of work, place of worship (*if you don't attend the same church yet*), their school, their homes etc...
- Understand their needs and meet it.
- Listen to understand.
- Do not let the sun go down on your anger. Trash it out.
- Talk, grieve and laugh.
- Take long walks.
- Express your true emotions with each other.

DONT'S

NO SECRETS

Secrets are like stones that sit in our pockets. These stones weigh us down. Secrets, either small or big have a profound effect on you and your relationship, whether you notice it or not. In a relationship, you don't keep secrets from each other.

Relationship is a bond between two people built on a foundation of trust. If we keep secrets and lies, we risk damaging that foundation of trust. Without trust, the relationship has little chance of survival. You are in a relationship to grow closer together, not hide things and ruin trust. It is advisable to avoid creating an environment of suspicion in a relationship. When your partner is kept in the dark about something it hinders the growth of your relationship. You build a healthy relationship when you are completely opened with each other.

We all want to build a relationship with someone we can trust and confide in. Our home is our castle; castles are supposed to be safe, the same goes for our relationships. Once there is uncertainty amidst the relationship, we truly are left with no other option than proceeding with caution. We start to question ourselves at every point and every move. We are supposed to love and adore our partner; this implies we don't want to see any harm done to them by anybody including ourselves.

Secret and lies are very similar and destructive. We lie because we are trying to avoid punishment in some form or to sound better than we are. Some people lie in a bid to gain trust but the trust is often temporary. Lying in a relationship will risk losing peace in that relationship.

Break ups often begin with a partner keeping secrets from the other, As much as relationships can't tolerate secrets and lies, secrets and lies are generally forgivable and should never happen again.

DON'T TAKE LITTLE NEGATIVE SIGNS FOR GRANTED

There are a lot of signs we ignore because we want to by all means get married. It is however advisable not to ignore some signs. A broken relationship is better than a broken marriage, if you see some signs you don't think you can move on with, either you talk about it, look for ways to make it better or end it if there are no other options. You simply can't patch marriage.

These are few signs; when you are making excuses all the time for your partner's wrong, when you think without him or her you can't fulfil your purpose, when you lose yourself worth with this person, when it is becoming a parasitic relationship, when you are given all but receiving nothing in return.

Any relationship that creates a gap between you and God is a wrong relationship. You should actually stop creating excuses for someone who is abusing you.

NOBODY IS SUPERIOR

One amazing thing that gets to me is how a man (in this case) meets girl, become friends with the girl, he basically uses all the punch lines he has on the girl—some ladies take their time and might be referred to as hard to get. He is persistent, he knows what he wants, he is showing her love and affection, all of a sudden she agrees, they start dating and things get serious, they decide to go to the altar, suddenly he changes and starts to be “lord” over her.

I know the bible says a man is the head of the home but in this context I am writing about a man who all of a sudden forgets the role of friendship in his relationship and becomes a mini god. He literally controls how she breathes, eats, sits, smile, talks, thinks, walks, picks her friends, shadowing her from her family and being. It's confusing for me, why can't he be the same sweet man he was while dating? Or chasing her, why does he have to change? Why does it automatically become the job of the woman to sustain the relationship? While writing this, I wanted to refer to both party but it was a bit difficult to paint a scenario for the lady, I figured that its only men that show their superiority because of Ego.

Now, there are men who don't change, there are men who do not lord themselves over woman but become her backbone, there are men who become even better in showing affection when they have the woman they have been longing for. It is rather a disappointment for you to tell your woman you are the man so she should listen to you, your decisions and all you say. Actions make a man. You want her to live by your standards, you want her to dress the way you want, to speak the way you want, to eat the way you want, to mingle with the friends you pick for her, you never ask for her option and even when you ask, it is of no use to you because you have already made up your mind, you just wanted her to speak. You have forgotten that she is also a whole human being who had plans and a life before you came, why not understand her, fix her errors if need be, give your advice, support when she needs it and still remain each other's friends.

It's not your responsibility to change someone, the only person you owe responsibility to is God and life. The relationship that starts with God needs to be maintained with God.

You should also not make yourself inferior in this case. So because he has a job and you don't have, you start to serve him and worship him because he is “providing for you”, giving him the chance to boss you around because he is doing you a favour.

As a lady, you happen to be financially comfortable than your man and you think talking to him rudely is the next thing to do? It is wrong, it is considered riding and slavery.

You should never lift your hand nor lay your hands over your partner; I am referring to male and female in this case. If you hit your partner because you are angry then you need to break that relationship off before someone's life goes with it. You need healing of every kind, mind healing, emotional healing and spiritual healing. Be whole before you go into a relationship; don't pour your aggression on your partner, get over yourself, it is really not about you. Do not even claim you will be better if you're given another chance. No! Work on you, two halves in a relationship can't make a whole, you have to be whole. You are also not the parent so don't think you are trying to show "love" that is why you are hitting.

Don't force your decision on your partner all the time, give them a chance to contribute and understand. Men do this a lot, yes a lady likes to know her man has got a good head on his shoulder but it is good to get her involved in decision making when it has to do with your relationship or your future together. Key word: **TOGETHER.**

Don't go into a relationship with the idea that you are going to change the other person. This can come in two ways, you either feel the person is not up to your standard and you want to go into the relationship to change them and bring them up to your standard or you "like" this person so much but there is something opposite about them that doesn't seat well with you, you are hoping you can change things as you get closer. Be careful, you might either burn yourself, get burnt or burn both of you or win. So you have one in four chances to win.

The whole idea of changing someone comes because you either think you are better than the person in some certain way and it is not bad to say you want the best in your partner, but if you are focused on the bad side all the time and the plans on changing this person has become a priority, you might actually ruin the relationship and hurt yourself.

God is the only one that can change someone.

NO THIRD PARTY

I was having a conversation with an aunty some time ago about a past relationship and why it ended; she asked me “why didn’t you talk to someone before it became worse?” I told her “we created a no third party rule.” She smiled and said, she understood me and that it was a good choice but said, “if you knew you needed help, you should have spoken to someone you and yours trusted, someone who had experience and you respected.”

In this context the third party I am referring to is the third party that will give you negative advice. I mean, you can’t be talking to your single friends or broken hearted friends about your relationship problem because they might not be as realistic or as truthful as you what you need. You shouldn’t share details about your relationship with people, what is between you and your partner should stay between both of you except when it looks difficult and unresolved then you speak to someone higher, someone unbiased, someone who has not picked sides and someone who has a relationship with God.

I have heard people say they want to test their partners or they want to know if he or she loves them. Can I be blunt? That is the daftest thing I have ever heard, well you might as well be the angel sent to them. You can’t love someone and intentionally throw them out to wolves.

NO BREAKS

Amazingly, this is one mistake people make but knowingly or unknowingly. If you are in a relationship, you love this person and you are convinced in your heart, mind, soul (laughs) that this person is the one, why take a break when you have a misunderstanding? I am referring to “times when, you might have had a very big argument and have exchange words or shouted at each other or times when are you actually stressed out.

Don't take a break at all. Work things out together if it is not workable then make a final decision and leave each other or pray about it. Breaks are not advisable. The Yoruba's have a saying **Bi ogiri o ba la nu, Alangba o le wo ogiri** which means **if there is no a crack on the wall, Lizards wouldn't come in.**

Don't stop communicating; you can do the little ones, maybe a text a day, or a phone call. Breaks can be referred to as opened relationship; at that point will you say you are in a serious relationship? Just imagine you are in a relationship and both or one person decide to take a break and you don't call each other for 2 months or even a text, will that be classified as a relationship? I don't think so.

You didn't break up, you are on a break. You don't know if after the break, one party will be interested, you don't know the aftermath of this break.

The lizards that are roaming around can go through the wall, and this “lizard” might make a difference or distract you from the relationship and next thing you know, you are either cheating or moved on with a new person. Stay and resolve things together, if you are truly meant to be. Don't keep malice. Personally, I don't know how to keep malice, I consider it so stressful.

I read a quote once that says, “**forgiveness is setting the prisoner free and knowing the prisoner was you.**” I hate to feel chained, that's why I personally don't keep malice. If you are in a relationship with someone you love, I see no reason why you should keep malice, it breeds a lot of negative vibes and thoughts and further builds distrust, in fact you are releasing your partner to a new relationship.

The annoying one is the people who have been apologized to but have decided to stay upset and not speak to their partner all in the name of been upset and proving they can be upset in a bid to punish their partner, that's purely wickedness. If you know your partner is genuinely sorry; **forgive**, we don't even have to pray or beg Jesus over and over again before he forgives us. He loves us that much and He has already forgiven us long before we thought.

It is considered as emotional abuse when your partner keeps apologising but you decide to ride or punish them because you feel you can or worse still, you are forming hard to get. If you don't want the relationship and you are pissed, break it off and move on. Don't punish people.

I was on my way back from work some months ago in Lagos, Nigeria. This was around 10:30pm, I saw a lady crying and running after a car. I stopped and looked at her, I was very shocked, I moved on. Minutes later, I heard her crying behind me, I stopped to ask her what happened as I couldn't resist her noise and sniffing. She explained to me that the car she was chasing was her boyfriend's car; she said he called her at 8pm that he was coming to see her, she was waiting and she called him by 9pm he said he was still going to come, she was tired she had got in from work and Lagos traffic and freshened up, she was laying on the couch with her phone on her chest waiting for him, she slept off and her phone rang and she picked it but initially she was sleep talking because she just woke up, she then realised it was him and she called back immediately, she ran out of her gate to meet him as fast as she was running he was ignoring her calls at that time of the night, you know how weird streets are in Lagos. Yes, she was running and he knew but he still drove off. She told me they had an argument two months earlier and he hadn't spoken to her for a month, so this day he decided to talk to her she messed up, she slept off, she was tired. She cried so hard and blamed herself, for a second I wanted to tell her to forget the guy but I had to console her first. When she was better and got home safe, I got her number and we became friends. She isn't with the guy anymore. I don't think a woman should be treated that way. That to me is wickedness, if you are done with the relationship break it off, don't keep malice or lead the person on. If you don't know it is emotional abuse.

WIFE ON CREDIT

Someone shared a view with me and it made so much sense. “If you have what he needs, he will not waste your time, every man knows what he wants. You wouldn’t need to wait several years to be the one”. Most time, women assume or place men in the image of what they want and see them through those eyes only.

Take note of the word man, not boy. A man knows what he wants not a boy. It is advisable to know the difference on time.

Wife on credit: a lady who is not married but has started living with her boyfriend assuming she is married to him. She doesn’t have the ring and most of the time her intention of doing all she does for him is because she is waiting for the ring. Often than none, these ladies get their heart broken because they give everything to sustain the man they are with; some spend years dating but have nothing to show for it.

The truth is, a woman has emotions tied to whatever she is involved in. An average lady has planned her wedding on the 1st date with a guy once she is love with him. The mistake ladies make is the chase for the ring and having to give it all because of the ring. She is basically doing everything her man wants and needs even before she is married. She is living with him, cooking his meals, calling to check up every other minutes or hour, doing laundry and dishes for him, having sex with him, showing up on every occasion he attends, so she will say she is marking her territory; you do not need to mark your territory if the territory belongs to you authentically, it would be written on the territory that it belongs to you. You can do all a man wants and needs and never become his wife and you notice that he meets a new lady in 2 months he is already on his knees. This is simply because he has seen what he is looking for, it’s not about your works, if you are the wife, you are his wife.

Another reason why it is advisable to avoid being a wife on credit is because you are basically spoiling the man. If he doesn’t end up with you, you are giving the next woman another job, if she doesn’t meet up with your “duties”, this spoilt man might be in for the shock of his life.

This mistake is something we ladies make because of our emotions. Before you start "investing" time and emotions in a place you need to know if the place is meant for you, this comes with knowing the Holy Spirit and functioning in the Holy Spirit. When you know who you are and whose you

are, there are some mistakes you wouldn't make. God loves us so much, His intention is to protect us, but we are humans and we make decisions even when we see the signs, we go through the heat and get burnt, because God loves us he comes to save us. His earlier intention is to protect us.

As a lady it is advisable to love yourself so much that you don't seek validation from men or attention from men. If you don't feel complete without been in a relationship or haven't had an attachment with a guy, then you might have an esteem issue which is not healthy for you as a woman. This esteem issue might lead you to place your foot where you shouldn't get to in the first place.

Allow God love you, find your purpose, ask God why He created you, love God, study His word, and literally hide your heart in God so if a man needs to find you he will find God first. I need to let you know that God loves His daughters so much and He is still in the business of showing love to His daughters.

I have a question for you; everyone you thought you could not live without, that left; are you alive? Well you are reading this now so I am very sure you are.

Avoid giving up yourself when you are not a wife, you are basically going to be a wife on credit, carry yourself with grace, with class and don't forget you have a price, you are so expensive that someone had to give His life for you. God's plan for you is good, He loves you so much.

DON'T COMPARE

Let's face it, not everyone ends up with their first love; some kiss a lot of frogs before kissing prince charming. The ones who get married to their first love and are living the best life right now are lucky. Needless to say others are not blessed and lucky but literally they didn't have to go through some stress. Well everyone's journey is different.

The stress of meeting a new person, loving afresh, understanding a new person and growing in love with the new person, it could take a while. You do not use old bricks to build a new house. What do I mean? These might not sound easy but it is advisable. Try your possible best to drop or avoid comparing your past relationship with the new one, try your best to avoid comparing the new person with the old person if you really want to get it right.

It is actually advisable not to jump from relationship to relationship, give yourself some time to breathe, to heal, to grow, to evaluate yourself and love yourself. Break ups leave marks or memories either the break up was from you or the other party, the best thing is to give yourself time if you want the best for yourself and the new person.

If you don't give yourself the breathing space, you might fall victim of comparison, either you compare or you might be compared; this might affect your relationship. Do not use old bricks to build a new house.

Sometimes you might compare and choose to either speak or not speak to your new partner about it, either way you are ruining your relationship. Drop all comparison and love this person for who they are, understand and know the person.

Understanding is two sided not just for one person in the relationship. Both of you can speak about your mistakes and agree on how to make this better than the last relationship. Comparing the persons is not advisable, if the ex was good enough for you, you wouldn't need a new partner or the relationship wouldn't be past.

Few months ago I listened to a podcast, the speaker shared her relationship story. She said her boyfriend told her that he got into the relationship with her and experienced a "relationship shock" this statement set me off. They had several issues, the time she decided to speak up for herself, and it became a relationship shock.

She went on by saying she had an awesome relationship initially which led to him popping the question but all of a sudden, it became sour. she said her boyfriend kept talking about how he had an angel in his former relationship, who would literally lick his feet as he walked, who has seen him cheat on her and more and decided to stick with him, he had a woman who couldn't challenge his wrongs or correct his wrongs, all he did to her was good and

perfect, basically he had the "best" girlfriend ever. They had planned a life together and she literally sacrificed everything to "serve" him. Serve is used here because being in a relationship doesn't mean you should switch off your brain, you ought to date intelligently.

So apparently, he met this new lady (lady on the podcast) and she was everything he was looking for in a woman but a bit independent and more outspoken than his current girlfriend, she was a lady who knew what she wanted for herself and her relationship which attracted him to her. He got close to the new lady (podcast lady) and they started a very good friendship, they started building feelings for each other.

He was ready to end his relationship because he had realised he wanted to be with her (the new lady), initially she was hurt, she wasn't in support of him leaving his relationship, she already "fell" in love and was ready to start a relationship with him. She avoided him for a while but her heart was with him and she decided to stick with him, he had begged her and was ready to do everything to be with her, he was basically all about her.

As she explained further on the podcast, she blamed herself, because she saw the big sign but she ignored, that foundation of the relationship was faulty. He should have stayed with his girlfriend or broken up if it was really that bad, taken out time for him instead of bringing a new person into his mess.

You know ladies, blinded by "love" and emotions, she foolishly jumped on his boat, hoping things turn around like he said, and he had already painted a new relationship to her so yes she really wanted to experience it. He had won her heart, swept her off her feet, he had ridiculed his old relationship so bad that she started to pity him.

Things started going well with them but once in a while, he tells her he was in an awesome relationship and the ex was so good and he wished he didn't have to hurt her. He told her all she did for him, months and years went by, he kept talking about how he wished he could make things better with the former relationship and still be in the new relationship, basically he was measuring the new relationship with the yardstick of the old relationship.

His moves sounded very selfish. the new lady (podcast lady) said the relationship ended because she figured she was loving him like another person, that he had literally rang it in her head how great this ex was and she became so confused and decided to do the same every times when he was wrong, she reacted like the ex would have reacted. She literally knew a whole lot about the ex which wasn't a bad idea since it was to make the relationship better.

You can share your past with your partner but do not force your past on them, move on and build something for both of you. She said it felt like they were 3 people in the relationship.

So the ex's benchmark became her starting point, she would ask herself "what will this babe do for him in this situation" she was. She was a "fool" for "love". She actually became the shadow of the old girlfriend in the relationship, if she wanted to show emotions as herself she would be afraid it might not get the response intended. She actually imprisoned herself by herself.

This is a relationship she could have ended before it started but it was sold to her as the best relationship ever, she said she actually would react to the mirror as herself but when he gets to him, she would give him what he wanted because she didn't want to hurt him, she would give him what he wanted. Time went by and the supposed beautiful relationship became very ugly.

One person was giving and another person was only receiving, she decided she needed to breathe and find herself, and then this became the relationship shock her ex was talking about.

She said her self-esteem was ruined, she was bullied, she was emotionally abused, he was abused too because he wasn't getting the real emotions from his new girlfriend.

He cheated himself, he wanted to eat his cake and have it, he was spoiled in his former relationship (see wife on credit) he wanted a new relationship and he wasn't willing to let go of the old one. He hurt himself because he could have built a rosy and strong relationship and stuck with one decision instead of complaining and comparing.

Love doesn't tease, it is pure, it is patient, and it is kind. He kept thinking he had a relationship but he had built a robot and he didn't love and he wasn't loved genuinely. He had love but decided to focus on the past which made the relationship crumble like ice-cream cone.

You have got to open your mind to new gifts given to you. Make a decision on what you want in your relationship. Any decision made will either make or mar you and your relationship or a human being. Don't be selfish and stop comparing for all the wrong reasons.

NO PRESSURE

Please do not succumb to pressure together or individually, do not even pressure yourself. This is very important. Pressure reduces the excitement, it clouds your minds and you actually do not see the brighter side of the relationship or whatever journey you are embarking on. Pressure makes things look difficult, makes you over think and makes you react the opposite way. Pressure should not be part of a serious relationship and marriage, don't give yourself unrealistic deadlines or benchmarks. Just love as much as you can, share, grow, understand, discover, help, shine, do you as much as you can and enjoy life.

Pressure comes when you give yourself deadlines. "Oh! We should be married by this time." "Oh! My plan is to wait for this amount of time." "Oh! I should be in this position before getting married" and when you don't get what you plan for, you change, you are upset, and you start to react to everyone and everything around negatively. Yes it is good to plan but do not forget to enjoy life and leave things for God to bless and handle. You plan with God and keep reminding him of His words and plan for you. When you make all these deadlines for yourself and you don't meet up, it might affect you if you are not strong. Some people change or go into depression because they have literally built their lives around a plan and forcing it to happen; learn to plan with God and leave it for God and keep reminding Him

For people who change, they are upset; they start to react to everything and everyone differently.

A story was shared with me recently about a relationship. So earlier in the relationship the guy and his girlfriend took a purity vow till their wedding night. He proposed to her and they planned to stay one year before getting married, one year past and they were not where they wanted to be and things weren't going where they wanted to be and they had to take more time with their marriage and wedding plan. He told his girlfriend he couldn't wait again, he had a time line and since they are past his timeline he was ready to "unleash". This sounded funny to me and I was like this man sounds selfish, he didn't sound like he was focused on the beautiful journey they had.

He sounded like another confused guy; he literally started pressuring this lady for the wrong reasons and for selfish reasons. You can't control things happening around you, so if situations don't work according to your plan, you shouldn't make it a problem, go back to God and call him to fix it. The relationship started looking like it he was in it because of sex, even if he

wasn't in it for that reason, the wrong message was passed across with his actions and words.

As a lady, you have gotten your mind clouded by the gilts and glamour seen on social media and you are rating your readiness based on the fact that your wedding has to be on bellanaija or on top magazines even when you know you can't afford it, then you put pressure on yourself and people around you. The truth is, it is advisable to focus on having a beautiful future and ignore temporal enjoyment.

Social media is another place you can find pressure, unwanted pressure. Social media is not for the faint-hearted. You see your friends who have what you are looking for and they post pictures from their good time. If you are not wise and you make them your benchmark, you might get distracted from the goodness coming your way. Not everybody shares the behind the scene of a good picture.

The fact that your gift is coming late doesn't mean you have been forgotten. Put your eyes on the price (Christ) let him fill you and lead you. Put Him in the centre of all you do and want and focus on God as a couple and as an individual. He will settle your needs, stop pressuring yourself. Don't use someone else's clock to function, we have different destinies. What worked for A might necessarily not work for B.

Please be wise.

DON'T SEPARATE YOURSELVES FROM FAMILIES OR LOVED ONES

Never separate yourself from friends and families. It would be very wise to know that you are not an island, you are not alone in this world. God didn't create you to function alone, you need people. It saddens my heart when I hear people say "it is us against the world" as sweet and as romantic as it sounds, I do not think you should be against the world that is not fighting with you except you are looking for trouble. Another thing I hear that blows my mind is "when she started dating that guy, she stopped talking to us". Sometimes, there is a need to move on from some kind of people but not people that are important to you because of a relationship.

A friend once shared a story with me, about himself and his supposed "twin." He called this person his twin because there were very close and were in the company of each other almost everywhere, but once he started dating this certain lady, his friend started avoiding him. His girlfriend wanted her man to herself and her friends, because he loved her so much, he avoided his "twin." His "twin" was hurting all day because he missed his best friend so much, he just wanted to be involved and also wanted the best for his friend.

It is not wise to separate your partner from family and friends totally; you should create a balance if there is a need for separation.

When family and friends need you, be available and support as an individual or as a couple. Make your partner comfortable around your family and friends, build a good relationship between both parties, make it stronger, show love to others and don't throw people away.

Good friends are like pillars, if perchance you stagger and you're about to fall, they will support you. What if the relationship ends, who will you turn to? My advice is that you surround yourself with good friends. The decision to separate a person from friends and family is a big one; a whole person, who had a life before you and because you came, you just want to cancel and erase everyone, that is selfishness.

In a conference some months ago a question came up, "what if I am dating a guy, my family is not in support of our relationship, we plan to elope and get married and we want to be together?" Everyone laughed, it sounded like a Nollywood movie, some will say it is true love but what I can say is that, it is a trap. If this is your story, stop and ask yourself what everyone is seeing that I am not seeing because you might be blinded by love. You need your family, you need people, you need the blessings of your father, don't let the current

enjoyment destroy the future enjoyment. If both of you really want to be together and you know you are meant to be, wait, pray about it, God will make it possible and peaceful. You actually do not need everybody's approval but if everyone on both sides says **NO**, check yourself.

FORGET THE “I”

You should learn how to ignore the I's when planning a future. Yes, you had planned your life before this person walked in, you had planned how your marriage will be— “if you are like me”— and this is not a bad idea but the moment you don't know how to accommodate another person in your plan when you are ready to be committed, then you are not ready for this thing called marriage. Both of you need to get to a melting point, get a balance that will be favourable for both parties, both parties might not be 100 percent happy but make sure it is a favourable in one way or the other for both parties.

All the plans in a relationship shouldn't revolve around one person, for me, this is believed that you are the captain of the relationship and yes you can lead both of you, it is very amazing to have a good and focused captain but it is wiser when he asks for opinions, suggestions and approvals from his Co-captain because two heads are better than one. Don't force your opinion on your co-captain.

Another thing which is counted as selfishness is when you always want to be heard and drive in opinion or you always want your point understood all the time. Making statement like “you have been dating me for a year now and you don't know how things works with me”, “you should know by now that I wouldn't take that from you” “you don't talk to me that way, you know who I am” “I want it to go this way and only this way” “let me talk, just listen” “I just want your attention, when I am with you, be all about me and make everybody invisible” and many more.

You should know that the relationship is two sided and it is not advisable to make your partner forget or throw away their life plans because they are coming with you. They had a life before you came. It's either you join, support, refine but don't kill it because of your insecurities or fears that they might be greater than you. Allow her be purposeful, if you know your purpose, do yours and if your purpose is linked then combine forces together.

WRITE THE PLAN AND RUN WITH IT

Hey there, I am leaving few pages behind for you to write your plan and your guide in this new relationship you are in. I must tell you that there is no hard and fast rule in relationships but I will recommend the all wise one, JESUS and the Holy Spirit, submit to God and He will mind your business.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Lens: when a vision is blurry, sometimes you need “LENS” to “FOCUS” on the object. I have written some guidelines as a lens for you in your relationship. The whole idea is to put on your lens as you show love so you can focus on a glorious future “TOGETHER”.

My greatest desire is that our relationships make the world a better place.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthonia Oluwatuminiu Elemoso is a sucker for love and a growing Christian, she is passionate about people building godly and purpose filled relationships. She lives by the statement "love your neighbor as you love yourself".

This has propelled her to writing her debut book 'LENS'.

She holds a bachelors degree in Theatre arts from the Redeemers University Nigeria and MSc in Media and communication from Pan-Atlantic University Nigeria.

Also known as 'CEO' Chief Encouragement Officer, Anthonia loves, encourages and serve as a source of joy to people around her and the world.

Love is Christ, Love is life.

