

The Undying Quest to Impress Others

Robert Wanyama

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Why this book?

After years of spending money to impress others and neglecting the important aspects of life, I found myself in financial ruin. It was a wake-up call that led me to reflect on my choices and priorities. In the aftermath of going broke, I made the decision to write this book.

Through my experiences, I aim to share valuable lessons about the pitfalls of seeking validation through material possessions and social status.

This book is meant to inspire others to focus on what truly matters, such as personal growth, meaningful relationships, and financial responsibility.

This book is not just a recounting of my journey; it's a roadmap for anyone seeking to break free from the cycle of empty spending and embrace a more fulfilling life.

Who is this book for?

This book, "The Undying Quest to Impress Others," is a beacon of insight and guidance crafted specifically for the youth and anyone grappling with the pressures of trying to impress others. It is for those who have felt the weight of societal expectations, the allure of materialism, and the constant urge to seek validation through external means. Whether you're a young adult navigating the complexities of peer pressure, or an individual caught in the cycle of comparison and insecurity, this book offers a roadmap to understanding the detrimental effects of this quest for approval. Through relatable anecdotes, practical advice, and empowering perspectives, this book aims to empower readers to break free from the shackles of external validation, embrace authenticity, and cultivate a fulfilling life grounded in self-worth and purpose.

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Introduction

*But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;
11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own
business, and to work with your own hands, as we
commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those
who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.*

- 1st Thessalonians 4:11

In this verse there's a powerful message urging believers to continuously improve and aspire towards a quiet, purposeful life.

The emphasis on increasing more and more suggests a trajectory of personal growth and development.

Leading a quiet life isn't about isolation or withdrawal from the world but rather about finding inner peace and contentment amidst life's challenges. Minding your own business encourages focus and diligence in one's pursuits, avoiding unnecessary distractions and gossip.

Working with your own hands signifies the value of honest labor and self-reliance, contributing positively to society and earning a livelihood through honorable means. These principles are not just for personal benefit

but also for maintaining a good reputation and earning respect from those outside the community of faith, ultimately leading to a life of abundance and fulfillment where nothing essential is lacking.

Ultimately, true wealth and fulfillment come from within, not from external validation or the approval of others. Focusing on personal growth, living within one's means, nurturing authentic relationships, and prioritizing values over appearances can lead to a more fulfilling and financially secure life.

In essence, living a quiet life while chasing your dreams allows you to cultivate a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and inner peace. By embracing simplicity, mindfulness, and authenticity, you can create a life that reflects your deepest values and aspiration.

A pursuit of impressing others deters one from progress and puts much pressure on seeking validation from the outside world. You lack the focus and clarity to concentrate on meaningful things in life that truly matters to you.

Embracing a quieter lifestyle encourages mindfulness and presence in the moment. You can appreciate the small joys and experiences along the journey toward your dreams, fostering a sense of gratitude and fulfillment.

Quiet living often involves simplifying your surroundings and routines, which can lead to reduced

stress and anxiety. By prioritizing your mental and emotional well-being, you can approach your dreams with a clear and calm mind.

Living quietly allows you to connect with your authentic self and discover what truly brings you joy and fulfillment. Without the pressure to conform to societal expectations or chase external validations, you can pursue dreams that align with your values and passions.

Striving for a quiet life promotes a healthy balance between work, leisure, and personal pursuits. By prioritizing self-care and relaxation, you can sustain the energy and motivation needed to pursue your dreams in the long run.

Solitude and quietude often spark creativity and innovation. When you give yourself the space to think deeply and reflect, you may uncover new ideas, insights, and solutions that propel you closer to your dreams.

Quiet living cultivates inner strength and resilience, equipping you with the determination and perseverance to overcome obstacles on your journey toward your dreams. You learn to embrace setbacks as opportunities for growth and continue moving forward with unwavering resolve.

While living quietly, you can nurture meaningful connections with like-minded individuals who support and encourage your dreams.

These authentic relationships provide invaluable emotional support and camaraderie as you pursue your aspirations.

Financial Drain

Constantly trying to keep up with appearances or impress others often involves spending money on material possessions or experiences beyond one's means. This leads to debt, financial instability, and inability to achieve long-term financial goals. Most people want to feel and appear successful, and it is in this quest that people have been led to debt.

According to a new LendingTree survey done in 2022 of nearly 1,600 U.S. consumers, almost 40% of Americans have overspent to impress someone else, especially on clothes, shoes, or accessories. 27% who spent to impress others are now in debt and 77% are currently in regret.

Nearly 30% of Americans feel financially pressured to keep up with others, mainly their family (17%) and friends (13%). Gen Zers feel the most pressure (51%). By income, higher income earners feel more pressured than those who make less. 55% of Americans say they've hesitated to ask someone to send their share of money owed, including 28% who didn't ask to be paid back.

By gender, women (32%) were more likely *not* to request money owed than men (23%).

"It's certainly a cliché, but as you age, you're often less concerned about what other people think of you," "You get more comfortable with who you are and spend less time worrying about other people's perception of you."

-Matt Schulz

With the high unemployment rate in Africa, most youths have ventured into business across manufacturing, agriculture, creative space, and tourism in quest for money but there is a struggle on how to manage the businesses as the failure rate is on the increase, 80 percent within the first five years.

Many get the money from the business but instead of investing it back they dwell more on impressing others with the weekly money gained from the business. Amidst life's grand stage, everyone yearns to dazzle, to prove they're thriving in their own spotlight.

The profits from businesses have been channeled to impressing other people by buying more alcohol, shoes, cars, etc. This character has led to business failing and a depressed nation who indulge more into drugs. In the theater of life, we all seek the brightest spotlight to showcase our flourishing chapters, but at what cost?

Those in the creative industries working as influencers, content creators have had to compete for likes on social media to show they have a better life, a lifestyle that has led many of them into financial struggles

dragging most of them into poverty that citizens have had to fund raise for them.

They have no ability to save as they must work more on spending on the next clothes to wear, cars to hire and flashy restaurants to visit and take photos. As time goes by it dawns on them that they can't keep up with the lifestyle as they are in debt.

The pressure to constantly impress others can lead to unsustainable standards of living and behavior. Whether it's maintaining a certain image or meeting others' expectations, the pursuit of external validation results in stress, burnout, and financial strain.

A societal culture has driven men to impressing women to get sex. Men working hard to impress women in exchange of sex has dragged many men to languish in poverty and some in prison.

A man must provide for his family, but it is not a case of allowing many women in your life to squander the little income that you have. In the same token, women have spent to impress their friends as well as their partners and have ended up in debts.

Impressing someone solely to initiate an intimate relationship culminates to superficial connections based on external factors rather than genuine compatibility or mutual respect. It may contribute to a transactional approach to relationships, where individuals seek validation or material benefits through romantic

interactions. A woman sees something good in a neighbor's family and wants to put the husband in pressure to buy something classier to outdo their neighbors. This has led to a financial drain and emotional toll among many families.

The repercussions of acquiring a car or renting a property in a lavish area primarily to impress others can have both financial and emotional consequences.

Once a young person gets a job, the financial institutions quickly reach out to give him a loan to buy a car, land, or house and because of the undying quest to be successful most have ended up in expensive loans with cars that they can't fuel. At the end, the financial institutions have auctioned these cars and left many people depressed.

It's important to know that after all this, you will suffer alone, no one will care about you. Your friends will be gone.

This is why if you are used to paying bills for your friends at entertainment joints and you stop, they no longer call you, for you no longer meet their interests. Purchasing an expensive car or renting in an upscale neighborhood often comes with higher costs, including monthly payments, insurance, maintenance, and property taxes.

This strains one's budget and financial stability, leading to potential debt or difficulty meeting other essential expenses.

The motivation to impress others through material possessions leads to a cycle of comparison and insecurity, as the satisfaction derived from external validation is often temporary and superficial.

It contributes to feelings of inadequacy or a constant need to keep up appearances, impacting mental well-being and overall life satisfaction. Prioritizing material possessions to impress others detracts from pursuing meaningful experiences, personal growth, and investments that contribute to long-term financial security and happiness.

It may also strain relationships if financial decisions are driven primarily by the desire for external validation rather than practical considerations and shared goals. The implications of seeking validation through material possessions include financial strain, emotional dissatisfaction, strained relationships, and a lack of fulfillment in life's meaningful pursuits.

Most people are used to a certain amount of money in their accounts so that when there is any increase in money, they feel the need to spend the surplus. This is called the financial comfort zone or money set point where individuals have a psychological threshold for

how much money they feel comfortable having or keeping.

Once the financial situation surpasses this threshold then they experience discomfort or the pressure to spend the surplus money.

A young man will apply for a loan to start a business but immediately the money hits the account, the priorities change. He can't even stay in one place; he will take leave from work and start planning activities to spend the money majorly to impress other people.

Later, the money ends without starting the business. The next thing is now the pressure to pay the bank loan. Poverty is not only the lack of money but also the ability to not retain the money that you get.

Even if money is earned or received, the lack of financial management skills and resources can result in it being quickly spent or mismanaged, leading to persistent financial struggles.

By addressing both the lack of money and the ability to retain and manage money effectively, we can work towards breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting financial stability and independence for individuals and communities.

Money matters are sensitive and need good decision making attributes. Changing ingrained financial behaviors takes time and effort but with patience and persistence, it is possible to break free from the cycle of

feeling pressured to spend when the money exceeds a certain threshold.

The allure of impressing others always leads to financial pitfalls. Take, for instance, Betty, who decided to take out a substantial loan to keep up with the lavish lifestyles of their peers.

Initially, it seemed to work like a charm—luxurious dinners, extravagant trips, and all the latest gadgets were at her fingertips. However, as time went on, the burden of debt became increasingly heavy. The pressure to maintain appearances overshadowed the reality of financial responsibility.

Soon, Betty found herself struggling to make even the minimum payments, juggling bills, and living in constant stress. The desire to impress others had morphed into a cycle of debt and regret, a cautionary tale about the perils of prioritizing perception over prudence.

Black Tax is having detrimental effects on many people. Supporting extended family members or contributing to family expenses places a significant financial burden on individuals.

Black tax can limit individuals' ability to save for emergencies, invest for the future, or pursue personal goals such as buying a home or starting a business. Black tax perpetuates a cycle of financial dependency within families, where individuals feel obligated to support their

relatives financially, even at the expense of their own financial stability.

This cycle may continue from one generation to the next, making it difficult for individuals to break free from the cycle of poverty or financial struggle. Some individuals may prioritize fulfilling their obligations related to black tax over advancing their careers or pursuing higher education.

This can hinder their professional growth and limit their earning potential in the long run. For some individuals, the financial burden of black tax may limit their ability to pursue opportunities for social mobility, such as higher education or relocation for better job opportunities.

Amidst the glitz and glamour of clubs filled with flashy cars and expensive drinks, there's often a stark reality hidden in plain sight. It's not uncommon to discover that many of the same people reveling in luxury one night are struggling to make ends meet the next day.

This paradox serves as a sobering reminder of the fleeting nature of material wealth and the importance of financial prudence.

It highlights the disparity between appearances and reality, showcasing how external displays of opulence can often mask internal challenges and financial instability. It's a cautionary tale that prompts us to question the true value of material possessions and to

prioritize financial responsibility and long-term sustainability over short-lived extravagance.

The urge to be wasteful with money and to impress others lands many people in a financial drain. Money exhibits a peculiar loyalty—it tends to linger where it feels esteemed. It gravitates towards environments marked by stability, transparency, and trust.

Nations and institutions that uphold the rule of law, safeguard property rights, and foster economic freedom often find themselves as magnets for capital. Conversely, regions rife with corruption, arbitrary regulations, or political turmoil repel investments and capital flight becomes a norm.

Therefore, nurturing an environment of respect for money entails more than just economic policies; it demands a culture of integrity and accountability, where financial commitments are honored, and prosperity is seen as a collective endeavor. In essence, money flourishes where it finds respect and security.

Enrolling children in international or expensive schools solely to impress others always has detrimental financial consequences for parents. While providing children with access to quality education is undoubtedly important, doing so at the expense of financial stability leads to long-term struggles with debt and financial insecurity.

The pressure to maintain a certain social status or meet societal expectations is driving parents to make unsustainable financial decisions, such as taking on high levels of debt to afford tuition fees and other associated costs.

It's crucial for parents to make educational decisions based on their financial means and the genuine educational needs of their children, rather than succumbing to external pressures or the desire to impress other.

The allure of quick-fix schemes or "wash-wash" methods to make money faster stems from the desire to achieve success or impress others without putting in the necessary time, effort, or ethical considerations.

It's a seductive notion fueled by the belief that shortcuts exist to bypass the arduous journey towards financial stability or social status.

However, these ventures typically lack substance and sustainability, often leading to disappointment, financial loss, and even legal consequences.

Moreover, the pursuit of quick fixes distracts individuals from cultivating genuine skills, fostering meaningful relationships, and pursuing fulfilling endeavors.

Instead of focusing on long-term growth and personal development, the emphasis shifts towards instant gratification and superficial gains. Ultimately, the

undying quest for shortcuts undermines the value of hard work, integrity, and perseverance, perpetuating a cycle of dissatisfaction and unfulfilled aspirations.

Many of those who have gone for shortcuts have ended up with legal issues such as fraud or breach of trust, leading to financial penalties or even imprisonment.

“Balancing your money is the key to having enough.”

-Elizabeth Warren Amelia Warren Tyagin

Living within your means is critical for your financial stability, debt reduction, saving, investments, developing discipline and ultimately building wealth. In essence, living within your means is not just about financial success; it's about creating a mindset and lifestyle that fosters overall well-being and prosperity. It's about prioritizing what truly matters and making conscious decisions that support your long-term goals. “Beware of little expenses. A small leak will sink a great ship.” – Benjamin Franklin

Financial discipline is a cornerstone for both success and peace of mind. By practicing disciplined financial habits, you can work towards your goals, build your financial security, and enjoy greater confidence and tranquility in your financial realm. Resist the temptation to pay bills for others and give away money from your

business. Business money is business money, any mistake you make with it will sink your business. Managing business finances requires a high level of responsibility and strategic decision-making, as any misstep can have profound consequences for the business's success. Business funds must be allocated judiciously, with a keen focus on maximizing growth and profitability while mitigating risks.

Even personal emergencies, such as a family member's illness, must be carefully considered in the context of business finances, as diverting funds for personal use can impact the business's financial stability and growth trajectory.

This is too serious as even business money doesn't care if your parent has cancer, if you take the money to pay for the hospital bill, the decision will have major repercussions on your business.

Every decision regarding business money must be weighed thoughtfully, considering both short-term needs and long-term objectives to ensure the sustainability and prosperity of the business.

You will have to make sacrifices; it won't be easy to be financially disciplined. Walk slowly so you never have to walk backwards, the little problems you ignore today may become your mountains tomorrow. The quest to impress others will have significant consequences for your future, especially in terms of finances. Learn to

budget, if you can't budget a hundred shillings then be sure you can't budget for a million shillings. We have people earning half a million but still struggling financially and we have those earning eighty thousand and making boss moves.

Your life choices will always affect your journey of wealth creation. A vast majority of us are in situations of poverty from the actions that we take, and the worst bit is some people don't think that they are suffering.

As we struggle with financial discipline and aspire to change, let's remember that behind the facade of success lies the untold story of strength found in silent battles.

In a world that often celebrates the end result rather than the journey, many struggle silently with challenges unseen by those around them. The pressures to maintain an image of prosperity can be overwhelming, masking the resilience and determination it takes to overcome obstacles.

Yet, it is in these hidden battles that true character is forged, where perseverance and courage shine brightest. Each triumph in the face of adversity adds depth to the narrative of personal growth, reminding us that strength isn't always loud; sometimes, it's found in the quiet resilience of those who dare to keep going despite the odds.

The financial drain is like a leaky faucet, silently dripping away our hard-earned resources, reminding us of the importance of mindful stewardship and wise investment.

Much like water seeping through unseen cracks, small expenses and unchecked spending slowly erode our financial stability over time. It serves as a gentle but persistent reminder to pay attention to our financial habits, ensuring that every coin is allocated thoughtfully and purposefully.

Just as fixing a leaky faucet can save gallons of water, managing our finances responsibly can lead to significant savings and a more secure financial future.

By practicing mindful stewardship and making wise investments, we can plug the leaks in our financial reservoir and ensure that our resources flow towards building a solid foundation for our goals and aspirations.

Emotional Toll

Fear is arguably our most powerful emotion. It is critically important in dictating how we think, feel, and behave.

Emotional toll is a phrase that refers to the mental suffering that something or a set of things may have on a person's state of wellbeing. It could also refer to the negative psychological effects of an action. This part will look at the emotional toll that the undying quest to impress others has on the individual by considering various aspects.

Seeking validation through impressing others can take a toll on mental well-being. The pressure to maintain a certain image or status leads to anxiety, stress, and a sense of inadequacy if expectations aren't met. Constantly seeking approval and validation from others can lead to heightened stress and anxiety.

The pressure to meet others' expectations and maintain a certain image takes a toll on your mental, emotional, and physical well-being. It's important to prioritize self-care, set boundaries, and cultivate self-compassion to navigate these pressures in a healthy and sustainable way.

When your self-worth becomes tied to others' opinions of you, there's a constant fear of rejection or disapproval. This fear can undermine your confidence and prevent you from being authentic in your interactions.

Relying on external validation for your sense of worth fosters self-doubt and insecurity. You may constantly question whether you're good enough or if your efforts to impress others are successful.

Trying to maintain a façade or meet unrealistic standards set by others will lead to exhaustion. The constant pressure to perform and live up to expectations can drain your energy and enthusiasm, leading to physical and emotional exhaustion.

Over time, the emotional toll of constantly trying to impress others may lead to feelings of resentment. You may resent others for their perceived judgment or expectations, or you may resent yourself for sacrificing your authenticity and well-being in pursuit of external validation.

Constantly feeling obligated to provide financial support to family members will take a toll on your mental health and emotional well-being. It may lead to feelings of guilt, stress, or resentment, especially if you feel overwhelmed by the financial responsibilities placed on you.

Impressing people comes with its fair share of psychological effects that it may have on an individual.

One such effect is the possibility of constantly living with stress and anxiety from the need to meet unrealistic expectations that the dominant person has on the individual as the individual lives in fear of being judged and being excluded.

It forces a person to put up a show where they must act in a certain way which in reality is wearing a mask and living a double life when in the company of others.

The long-term effect is that it takes away the true identity of the person and the individual begins to slowly lose themselves through this new identity that is created in a bid to belong.

Suffice to say, the result would be identity crisis where the person will ultimately be unable to distinguish between the real them and the fake personality as the lines become blurred.

Over time, prioritizing the impressions you make on others will lead to a loss of identity as you may lose sight of who you truly are. This results in feelings of confusion, emptiness, and a lack of fulfillment.

Despite outward success or admiration from others, the emotional toll of impressing others often leaves individuals feeling unfulfilled.

True fulfillment comes from living authentically, nurturing genuine connections, and pursuing

meaningful goals that align with your values and passions.

Tied to this aspect of stress and anxiety, pleasing others will bring about an inferiority complex where the self is in constant tension with external validation. The individual loses their capacity to grow, which is substituted by the need for approval.

They self-doubt every decision that they make out of fear of being rejected or ousted and are often not confident in what they say lest they are excommunicated from the larger group.

It is for this reason that they do not realize that they are getting into a co-dependency relation where they play second fiddle and are takers of decisions rather than givers.

In the long run they sacrifice their growth and development for the sake of maintaining relationships that are not meaningful to them in the first place.

Take an example of someone who sacrifices their finances for purposes of charity when they are struggling to make ends meet or even just for social purposes, which puts them in more debt.

Just because this person wants to belong, they will do everything in their power including borrowing more and getting into more debt just so they can be validated. For some men, they take out car mortgages just so they

can afford luxurious sports cars or even rent high rise apartments while sleeping hungry.

Women on the other hand are likely to invest in material things like designer shoes and clothes and hang out with men that appear rich just so they can maintain the rich outlook when in the real sense they cannot afford to sustain such a lifestyle. This is done so that they appear cool and well to do by their peers.

Let's not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives, and we obey them without realizing it.

-Vincent van Gogh

Vincent van Gogh's quote emphasizes the significant impact that small emotions can have on our lives, often without us being fully aware of their influence. This quote highlights how seemingly minor emotions or feelings can play a crucial role in shaping our decisions, behaviors, and overall well-being. It suggests that emotions, no matter how subtle or fleeting, can act as powerful forces that guide our actions and choices.

We need to pay attention to our emotions and their potential effects on our mental and emotional health. Even seemingly insignificant emotions can accumulate over time, contributing to stress, anxiety, or other negative states if not addressed or managed effectively. It underscores the importance of self-awareness and

emotional intelligence in recognizing and understanding our emotional responses, as well as taking proactive steps to maintain emotional balance and well-being. By acknowledging the impact of small emotions, we can better navigate life's challenges and cultivate healthier emotional habits.

Emotional toll steers people away from their purpose in life which often leads them to depression once they realize it is too late because impressing others only offers short term satisfaction.

At the end of the day, when the person is away from others and begins to introspect their life, they realize that there is a void that keeps growing because as they are filling others' cups no one is filling theirs. They keep pouring from an empty place with no place to turn to.

The people who are supposed to help them are the same people whose standards the impresser wants to achieve even when those standards conflict with their beliefs and values. A good example would be to consider this era of social media where everyone wants to be seen as the ideal model of luxury living.

If a person finds himself in a group or relationship where the goal is to idolize oneself through a luxe persona yet that is not something innately within them, then they would have violated their own privacy for the sake of others while deriving no joy from it. In the workspace one may also get depressed if they do not get

promoted yet they are always voicing their ideas to others who pass them on as their own without crediting them. The impresser will therefore remain in a low cadre position while others transition to bigger roles.

Emotional toll devalues the dignity of the individual who does not feel worthy of their true identity. The person thus becomes an object be it in the friendship circle or even in the workspace. Such individuals feel that there is nothing valuable in their persona that is unique to them if it has not been approved by others. It lowers a person's self-esteem even among peers by diminishing their self-worth.

Such a person loses their sense of humanity and starts viewing the world from an abstract perspective and if not careful may also start treating others to an end.

This is because they already have a negative image about their true self that cannot co-exist with this other good person image that they have created for themselves. They avoid showing their weakness or vulnerability because the expectation is that they are tough and know how to weather the storm which goes to show the humanity is being taken away from them as they always need to appear to be on brand.

The desperation for women to secure employment by resorting to sleeping with managers is a distressing reflection of systemic inequalities and power dynamics within the workforce. While some may feel compelled to

take such drastic measures due to economic hardship or limited opportunities, the repercussions can be devastating.

Beyond perpetuating a toxic work environment rife with favoritism and exploitation, this behavior undermines the meritocratic principles of fair hiring practices and equal opportunity.

Moreover, it perpetuates harmful stereotypes and perpetuates the objectification of women in professional settings. Beyond the immediate consequences of compromising personal integrity and dignity, engaging in such transactions can have long-lasting emotional and psychological effects, including feelings of guilt, shame, and self-doubt. The pursuit of career advancement should be based on talent, qualifications, and hard work, rather than exploitation and coercion.

The pursuit of multiple partners in an endless quest for validation or pleasure indeed leaves a hollow feeling within. This hollow sensation often stems from a lack of genuine emotional connection and intimacy in these interactions. Engaging in casual or promiscuous behavior without meaningful connection or mutual respect leads to feelings of emptiness, loneliness, and disconnection.

Moreover, constantly seeking validation or fulfillment through multiple partners can contribute to a sense of inadequacy or insecurity. The temporary highs of physical intimacy may mask underlying emotional

needs, but they often fail to provide lasting satisfaction or fulfillment. This cycle of seeking external validation without addressing deeper emotional needs can perpetuate feelings of emptiness and dissatisfaction.

Individuals who live to impress others are usually trapped whether they know it or not. The trap is found in resentment and jealousy where they treat everyone else that is trying to get ahead or trying to break into the circle as a competitor or an enemy that should be eliminated. This is despite the fact that the third party is not aware of the internal battles that the individual is fighting.

They become suspicious of others and view them as people who are trying to steal their spot and take away opportunities that they have sacrificed themselves for. They also become envious of the success of others who out of merit are awarded based on their input and output because their thoughts are always around the fact that they will be replaced.

They also grow to resent those that do not recognize their efforts because their goal is to have their actions validated. This shows that at any given time they want the attention to be on them and would go as far as harming others just so they can eliminate them.

Emotional toll leads to burn out because of the inevitable exhaustion that comes with leading a double life. It is not an easy balance to strike because one side will one day take dominance over the other. The efforts

that one was making initially become daunting and wears over the person with time. Once the empty void continues growing so does the desire to do less because a person begins slipping away which usually manifests in neglecting self-care. The person will forego activities that make them happy like even preparing a good meal, reading a book, exercising, or catching up with family just so they can accomplish the tasks or roles expected of them. Over time, when the sacrifice does not pay off, the burn out starts rearing its ugly head.

People who constantly have a need to impress others cannot stay alone because they lose their validation. They are not ready to stay by themselves because they will need to ask themselves the hard questions and grapple with the reality of who they really are.

They are usually not ready for such kind of accountability. It is for this reason that you will always find them in social spaces which is an escape for them where they are getting their validation from external parties.

The emotional toll is a rabbit hole that just keeps going with a ripple effect on other aspects of a person's life from reinforcing strained relationships, financial burden, lack of standards to identity crisis.

The emotional toll of black tax can be profound, as it often entails a constant balancing act between fulfilling

familial obligations and pursuing personal goals and aspirations.

This burden can lead to feelings of guilt, stress, and pressure as individuals grapple with the expectations placed upon them to financially support their families while also striving for their own success.

The internal conflict between duty and personal fulfillment can contribute to emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and a sense of being trapped in a cycle of responsibility. Additionally, the strain of managing financial responsibilities alongside one's own needs and desires impacts mental well-being, leading to feelings of overwhelm and frustration.

Once upon a time in a bustling city, there lived a young woman named Nia. Nia was ambitious and hardworking, with dreams of building a better future for herself and her family. However, her journey was not without its challenges, especially when it came to the concept of "black tax."

Nia's parents had sacrificed so much to provide for her education and opportunities. They had worked tirelessly, often taking on multiple jobs to make ends meet. Now that Nia had found success in her career, she felt a deep sense of responsibility to give back to her family.

Every month, Nia would send a portion of her earnings to support her parents and siblings. While she was happy to help, she couldn't shake the feeling of being weighed down by the

financial burden. The more she earned, the more she felt the pressure of black tax, the unspoken expectation that she must support her family financially.

One day, Nia's friend Jamal noticed her growing exhaustion and worry. He listened as she poured out her heart, sharing the challenges of balancing her own dreams with the responsibility of supporting her family. Jamal understood all too well, having experienced similar struggles in his own journey.

Determined to help Nia find a way forward, Jamal shared his own story of navigating black tax. He explained how he had learned to set boundaries, communicate openly with his family about financial limitations, and prioritize his own well-being while still supporting his loved ones.

Inspired by Jamal's advice, Nia decided to have an honest conversation with her family. She expressed her love and gratitude for everything they had done for her but also shared her own dreams and aspirations. Together, they worked out a more sustainable arrangement that allowed Nia to support her family without sacrificing her own future.

As time passed, Nia found a renewed sense of balance and purpose. She continued to support her family while also pursuing her own goals and ambitions. Her story became a beacon of hope for many others navigating the challenges of black tax, showing that with open communication, boundaries, and self-care, it's possible to find harmony between family obligations and personal dreams.

From this story we learn the importance of balancing familial responsibilities with personal aspirations. It emphasizes the need for open communication, setting boundaries, seeking support from peers or mentors, prioritizing self-care, and finding a balance that allows individuals to support their families while also pursuing their own goals and well-being. The story highlights the emotional toll of black tax and the significance of navigating this complex dynamic with resilience, understanding, and self-awareness.

The emotional toll we carry is the weight of every experience, a silent symphony of joys and sorrows that shapes the melody of our lives. Each emotion, whether it be happiness or heartache, adds a note to the composition of our existence.

The highs elevate us to moments of pure bliss, while the lows teach us resilience and empathy. It's the delicate balance of these contrasting emotions that creates the intricate tapestry of human experience. Sometimes, the weight of our emotions can feel overwhelming, like a heavy burden we must bear.

Yet, it's this very weight that gives depth and richness to our journey, making each step forward a testament to our strength and capacity for growth. In the end, it's the sum of our emotional experiences that defines who we are and the path we choose to follow.

Shallow Relationships

"If you know how quickly people forget the dead, you'll stop living to impress people"

-Christopher Walken

Focusing solely on impressing others results in superficial relationships based on materialism or external appearances rather than genuine connections. This leads to feelings of loneliness and a lack of fulfillment.

It is quite unfortunate but not uncommon for some relationships to revolve around shared activities or material exchanges. When these activities or material exchanges cease, the relationship may experience strain or change.

Once your relationship is built on buying your friends alcohol, then it will only last as far as you keep providing the alcohol. In the same token, if your relationship with your partner is built on money provision then it will cease and have issues once you stop giving the money.

Humans may love you for as much as they can use you, their loyalty will end where the benefits stop. You can give and give but get nothing in return and later you will realize you were just being used for convenience.

There was absolutely no growth for you, but you put in so much effort and time into other people's happiness.

"I had been gullible, naive, soft, pliable. That's why I got taken advantage of. To survive, you have to have a tough skin."

– Tia Carrere

Transactional relationships are majorly based on exchange of goods, services, favors or other benefits. In these relationships, individuals normally engage with each other with the expectations of receiving something in return often in a quid pro quo manner.

These relationships are common and serve practical purposes in several contexts though they may lack depth, trust and emotional intimacy found in more relational or reciprocal connections. It is very important for one to recognize the nature of these relationships and assess whether they meet your needs and values in terms of meaningful connection and mutual support. If you don't do these then you may be used.

Mismatched priorities are a major cause for concern among the youth as differences in priorities and lifestyles culminate into shallow relationships.

If one person opts to cut down on drinking and focus on other aspects of life and the other persists in drinking, then there will be disconnect and strain on the relationship.

Relationships can derail the pursuit of your dreams. A partner, a family member or a friend who believes in

your goals can be a valuable source of inspiration and can help you stay focused and resilient during challenging times.

However, relationships that are built on mischief, one person being used, and poor communication have detrimental effects on people as you end up focusing more on providing for someone else and forget building yourself up. In the long run, you realize the other party is growing but you are stagnant in your pursuits for development.

Finding a balance between relationships and pursuing your dreams requires self-awareness, effective communication, time management skills, and a supportive network.

By nurturing healthy relationships, maintaining clear priorities, and staying committed to your aspirations, you can navigate the complexities of life's pursuits while fostering meaningful connections with others.

Relationships, while undoubtedly enriching our lives with love, companionship, and shared experiences, can present challenges that divert us from our individual life purposes.

The journey of intertwining lives often involves compromises, sacrifices, and adjustments that may lead us away from our original goals and aspirations.

However, it is within this delicate balance that lies the opportunity for profound personal growth and shared fulfillment. Nurturing a healthy relationship means finding harmony between nurturing our individual passions and fostering a strong bond with our partners.

It requires ongoing communication, mutual respect, and a commitment to supporting each other's dreams while staying true to our own paths. In this intricate dance of love and self-discovery, finding that equilibrium allows us to navigate the complexities of relationships while remaining aligned with our life's purpose.

Shallow relationships act as deceptive mirages, luring us into hasty marriages with a facade of superficiality.

When connections are built on fleeting emotions or surface-level attractions, they lack the foundation of depth, sincerity, and shared values essential for lasting partnerships.

This hollowness can lead to disillusionment and dissatisfaction, pushing individuals towards rash decisions like marriage without fully understanding each other's core values, aspirations, and compatibility.

Consequently, such unions often unravel, exposing the chasm between initial infatuation and enduring love. In contrast, relationships grounded in depth, sincerity, and shared values form a sturdy framework that sustains

the trials of time. They guide us towards partnerships that align with our life's true purpose, fostering growth, understanding, and lasting fulfillment.

The rise of social media and technology has made it easier to maintain a large network of acquaintances without investing much time and effort. This has contributed to the increase of shallow relationships.

The undying quest for people to have many followers on social media platforms to be known by many but does not translate into any meaningful relationship.

There is a habitual behavior of the current age being accustomed to constant connectivity through phones and even when they meet face to face, they instinctively reach out to their phones. Some individuals have the fear of missing out on some important updates or information which drives them to stay connected to their devices even in social settings.

To some, they use this as a distraction to avoid deeper engagements with others. There is need to set boundaries, practice mindful communication and prioritize face to face communication to foster meaningful connections.

The fear of vulnerability plays a critical role in shallow relationships as people fear deep conversations that may lead to strong bonds.

They prefer keeping things light and at surface-level to protect themselves from emotional pain. It's important to note that while shallow relationships may provide a sense of safety and protection, they often lack the depth, intimacy, and emotional fulfillment that come with more meaningful connections.

Overcoming the fear of vulnerability and allowing oneself to be open, authentic, and vulnerable in relationships can lead to richer and more rewarding connections with others. This process may involve self-reflection, therapy, and gradually stepping out of one's comfort zone to build trust and intimacy with others.

It takes a lot of energy and time to build strong and meaningful relationships. In today's fast paced world, people are busy with work, social obligations and other responsibilities and may not have the time and energy to invest in deeper and meaningful relationships. Shallow relationships therefore are majorly for convenience, avoiding emotional risk, socializing, and networking, entertainment and fun, flexibility, and freedom.

Dating today can be challenging due to various societal and technological factors. The prevalence of online dating apps has expanded the pool of potential partners but also introduced issues like ghosting, flakiness, and unrealistic expectations. Social media can create pressure to present an idealized version of oneself, leading to misunderstandings and insecurity. Moreover,

the fast-paced nature of modern life often leaves little time for meaningful connections, and individuals may struggle to balance career demands with personal relationships. Additionally, cultural shifts have altered traditional dating norms, leading to confusion about roles and expectations.

There is no clear purpose why partners are getting into marriages. There should be clear terms of engagement. The idea of marrying for love especially for someone you recently met has led to a higher divorce rate of around 60 percent in the United States of America.

In Kenya there is an epidemic on single mothers as most people get into relationships without a clear plan and only focus on appearance and lifestyle. Within one month of knowing each other, a lady is already pregnant and in a short while the man has walked away leaving the lady to take care of the baby alone.

Good parenting for our children may help us address this issue. The quest to impress women with money and flashy lifestyle then end up in marriage is dangerous.

There is no discussion on why you really want to be in marriage, you are not discussing how the future will be and how you will both provide for the family.

Finances, which is the major reason for divorce, becomes the responsibility of the man who suffers stress and other mental health issues. Statistics show 64 percent

of men die earlier than women in marriage because of such issues.

Arranged marriage like what Indians and Arabs do is often viewed as advantageous to marriage for love. Firstly, it tends to prioritize long-term compatibility and family harmony over immediate romantic feelings, which can fluctuate over time.

Families involved in arranging marriages often consider factors like cultural background, values, and financial stability, which can contribute to a more stable and enduring relationship. Additionally, the support and involvement of families can provide a strong foundation for marriage, offering guidance and assistance during challenging times.

In contrast, marriages based solely on love may overlook important compatibility aspects or face difficulties when romantic feelings wane. However, it's crucial to note that the success of any marriage, arranged or for love, ultimately depends on the individuals involved and their commitment to mutual respect, communication, and understanding.

Comparison poses a significant challenge in relationships, often leading to feelings of inadequacy, resentment, and insecurity. In the age of social media and constant connectivity, it's easy to compare our relationships to curated glimpses of others' lives, which can create unrealistic expectations. This constant

comparison can overshadow the unique strengths and joys within our own relationships, causing unnecessary strain.

Moreover, comparing our partner to past relationships or idealized notions can prevent us from fully appreciating their individuality and the dynamics that make our relationship special.

Overcoming the challenge of comparison requires mindfulness, open communication, and a focus on cultivating gratitude for the strengths and experiences unique to our own relationship journey.

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.'

-Adam Smith

Adam Smith's quote can be interpreted in the context of impressing others as recognizing that individuals are often motivated by self-interest rather than purely altruistic intentions. In terms of impressing others, this quote suggests that appealing to people's self-interest and highlighting the advantages or benefits they would gain can be more effective than appealing to their sense of humanity or compassion.

While shallow relationships are sometimes important to achieve our own interests, we must be intelligent enough to recognize their limitations and consider what you might be missing out in terms of deeper emotional connection, intimacy, and fulfilment.

In the end, the type of relationship you opt for should depend on what you want to achieve in life. This will be aligned to your personal preferences, values, goals, and social interactions.

Ultimately viewing life as a game of good decision making encourages individuals to approach life with a strategic mindset, resilience, and a willingness to learn and grow by making the right networks and relationships. By making thoughtful, informed choices that align with your goals and values, you can navigate life's complexities and achieve success and fulfillments.

Shallow relationships are like fleeting shadows, lacking the substance to withstand the test of time, leaving us yearning for the depth of genuine connection.

They often sparkle momentarily, catching our attention with surface-level charms, but soon fade into obscurity when faced with the realities of life's challenges.

These relationships, built on superficiality and convenience, fail to nurture the soul or cultivate meaningful bonds.

They leave us craving the authenticity of true connection, where mutual understanding, trust, and vulnerability form the foundation of lasting relationships. In the quest for depth and substance, we learn to value quality over quantity, cherishing the rare gems of genuine companionship that light up our lives with lasting warmth and meaning.

Loss of Authenticity

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? [37] Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul Mark 8:36-37

The Oxford English Dictionary defines authenticity as the quality of being genuine or not corrupted from the original, of having the same origin (or attribution, commitment, intention) or simply as claimed.

So, what is “to be authentic?” In answering this, a look at the Oxford English Dictionary offers much insight into the broad aspect of authenticity.

To be authentic is defined as to be of same origin as claimed, to be genuine. Perhaps the most outstanding definition is that that which is authentic is that which conforms to reality and accordingly worthy of trust, reliance, and capacity to be believed.

From the foregoing, the key takeaways from the concept of authenticity revolve around genuineness, originality, real and incorruptible. These are the ultimate tests of authenticity in everything be it an individual or an object.

In this chapter, we shall analyse the key attributes of authenticity, how authenticity can be lost and effects of loss of authenticity on an individual.

Key attributes

"Be yourself, everyone else is taken"

This quote by Oscar Wilde is perhaps the most apt rallying call for authenticity. In human beings, the measure of authenticity is the daring urge to remain true to one's genuine self-irrespective of other people's opinion on oneself, something, or a topic.

To be authentic is to be real. It is being genuine. It is to exhibit your true and accurate self and opinion without being fazed by what the reaction to it shall be.

In advocating for authenticity, it is imperative that one understands the tenets of authenticity. For starters, you cannot be yourself if you do not understand what to be yourself is. One can only understand their true self if they have enough self-awareness. It is only with this, that one can live authentically.

The true self and identity of any given person is not an abstract in isolation but rather a product of values, beliefs and principles developed and gained over a lifetime and thereby shaping an individual's views and perspectives. An individual's perception on any given

aspect is mostly a reflection of past discourses or interactions with the said aspect.

Further, self-awareness and identity are what gives rise to authenticity. For instance, if one is fond of action movies, he or she will most likely request or prefer action movies at any social gathering. If one is not fond of action movies, chances are that they would turn down an offer for an action movie date and ask for a different genre.

This is a true reflection of being self-aware and authentic to self. For you to be authentic to self, you must know what your desires, opinions or beliefs are.

A person lacking authenticity will more or less accept the offer for an action movie date, without any counteroffer, regardless of the fact that they are not fond of such movies.

To sum it up, if one knows and understands their preferences, desires, and perspectives, they can express them and thereby remain true to self. On the other hand, failure to know and understand what your preferences, desires and perspectives are, then certainly you are left with no option but follow other people's preferences, desires, and perspectives.

You can only consider yourself to be living an authentic life if you are aware of your identity and you remain true to it.

How can authenticity be lost?

“Unless you challenge popular opinion, you will be pulled by the masses.”

Self-awareness and passion to live by your true self are the keys to living authentically. They go hand in hand.

It is human nature to yearn for social acceptance and to be part of a societal group. It is this need that makes people to shed off their true identity in a bid to be accepted by the masses.

Many a people ignore their true identity in a bid to fit into a trend or a group that one loses authenticity. Losing authenticity can happen gradually through various factors and behaviors.

One common way authenticity can be compromised is by prioritizing external validation over personal values and beliefs. When individuals constantly seek approval or validation from others, they may suppress their true thoughts, feelings, or actions to fit societal expectations or gain acceptance, leading to a loss of authenticity.

The habit of striving for conformity is subconscious and stems from our need to fit in within a given subset and to evade criticism or avoid the fear of rejection. Fear of judgment or rejection contributes to a lack of authenticity.

People may alter their behavior or opinions to avoid conflict or criticism, sacrificing their true selves in the process. Similarly, societal pressures, cultural norms, or

peer influences can influence individuals to conform to certain ideals or standards, undermining their authenticity.

Perhaps an aspect that people do not appreciate at the onset is the irrelevance of cosmetic validation. If one abandons the need to prove themselves to third parties, it is only then that they can only achieve authenticity.

True validation comes from the core of one's being. Lack of self-awareness and introspection can hinder authenticity. When individuals are disconnected from their true desires, passions, and values, they may struggle to express themselves authentically in their actions and interactions.

The relentless pursuit of impressing others by altering one's skin tone, adjusting body parts, or undergoing cosmetic procedures exacts a heavy toll on both physical health and mental well-being.

From skin bleaching to invasive surgeries, these practices often come with significant health risks and complications, ranging from skin damage and infections to more serious medical issues.

Moreover, the constant pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty standards erodes self-esteem and perpetuates feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Despite the temporary satisfaction of meeting societal expectations or gaining approval from others, the pursuit of external validation through physical changes

ultimately leaves individuals feeling unfulfilled and perpetually dissatisfied.

True peace of mind comes from self-acceptance, embracing one's unique qualities, and prioritizing inner happiness over external validation.

The desire for men to be in a relationship with light-skinned women as a means to impress others reflects deep-seated societal perceptions of beauty and status.

In many cultures, light skin has historically been associated with privilege, wealth, and attractiveness, perpetuating the notion that lighter-skinned individuals are more desirable romantic partners.

This preference often stems from social conditioning and media representations that prioritize Eurocentric beauty standards, leading some men to seek relationships with light-skinned women as a form of validation or social currency.

However, this mindset reinforces harmful stereotypes and perpetuates colorism, further marginalizing individuals with darker skin tones.

Conversely, women resorting to skin bleaching to attain a lighter complexion in order to impress men underscores the pervasive influence of patriarchal norms and the objectification of women based on physical appearance.

In a society where women are often judged and valued based on their perceived attractiveness to men,

the pressure to conform to narrow beauty ideals can be overwhelming. Skin bleaching, while a dangerous and often ineffective practice, is sometimes viewed as a means to increase one's desirability and romantic prospects. However, this pursuit of external validation through altering one's appearance perpetuates harmful beauty standards and undermines individual self-worth and empowerment.

Constantly striving to impress others erodes one's sense of authenticity and self-worth. It may lead to sacrificing personal values, interests, and passions in favor of seeking approval from others.

In contrast, prioritizing authenticity, genuine connections, and inner fulfillment can lead to a more meaningful and fulfilling life. By focusing on being true to yourself and nurturing relationships based on mutual respect and understanding, you can build a support system that sustains you through life's challenges and brings genuine happiness and fulfillment.

Constantly striving to impress others can lead to a loss of authenticity as you may feel compelled to present a façade rather than expressing your true thoughts, feelings, and values. This can create inner conflict and a sense of disconnection from yourself. Instead of comparing yourself to others, focus on your own journey and progress. Celebrate your accomplishments, learn from your setbacks, and cultivate gratitude for what you

have. Embrace your uniqueness, set meaningful goals, and strive to become the best version of yourself. Remember, success and happiness are subjective and can't be measured solely by external standards or comparisons to others.

Over time, prioritizing the impressions you make on others leads to isolation as you may neglect genuine connections and meaningful relationships. People may be drawn to the image you project, but they may not stick around when they realize it's not authentic or when they sense a lack of genuine connection. The loss of authenticity dims the vibrant colors of life, painting our experiences with shades of conformity and hollow echoes. When we stray from our true selves, conforming to societal expectations or wearing masks to fit in, we sacrifice the richness and diversity that makes each of us unique.

It's like viewing the world through a dull lens, where every interaction and moment lacks the genuine spark that comes from being true to who we are. In these moments, our experiences lose their depth and resonance, leaving us feeling disconnected and yearning for the genuine connections and meaningful experiences that only authenticity can bring. It's a reminder that staying true to ourselves is not just a personal choice but a vital ingredient for a fulfilling and colorful life.

Missed Opportunities

The time and energy spent on trying to impress others could be better utilized for personal growth, pursuing meaningful goals, and building genuine relationships that are based on mutual respect and understanding.

Missing out on opportunities due to pride and laziness rooted in the desire to impress others is a common challenge many faces. Pride leads us to turn down certain jobs or opportunities because we fear they may not align with the image we want to project to others.

This fear of appearing less successful or capable causes us to overlook valuable experiences and growth opportunities. Similarly, laziness driven by the desire to impress others manifests as a reluctance to actively pursue opportunities that require effort and dedication.

We may prioritize superficial appearances over personal and professional development, ultimately limiting our potential for growth and success.

Overcoming this mindset requires introspection and a shift in priorities. It's important to differentiate between actions that genuinely align with our values and goals and those driven by the need for external validation. By

focusing on personal growth and fulfillment rather than solely on impressing others, we can open ourselves up to a wider range of opportunities and experiences.

This shift in mindset empowers us to make decisions based on our own aspirations and potential rather than on external perceptions, ultimately leading to more meaningful and rewarding paths forward.

Self-betterment has its own perils. As we endeavor to make our lives better in all its segments, natural consequences attendant to such industry may follow.

In most instances, we suffer loss out of either neglect of a segment of our life or crumble in search of perfection.

While there are many variables that determine success and excellence, two remain important and universally applicable. Indeed, even the Bible elevates the two, time and chance.

Yet the two most vital factors influencing the prospects of success are God given, the human element of choice has remained a defining element.

The difference then between excellence and failure can easily be seen through the lens of the utility of time and chance the universe affords each of us.

As Aristotle once put it, "We are what we repeatedly do, excellence therefore is not an act, but a habit." We are what we constantly engage with the time and chance we have.

Habitual drunks, habitual offenders and abusers have one common denominator; they are in the constant state of enacting the vice.

The same analogy is applicable to normal living. Pursuit of goals, targets, visions are enhanced by habitual steps we take towards achieving such. The corollary to this is that the habitual steps in negative investment in oneself births self-destruction and doom.

One sure way to self-destruction is letting the urge to impress be the center piece of your living. Everyone has the desire to succeed. Success is associated with fame and pride.

The successful ones who constantly utilize their time and chance are admired. The converse is that unsuccessful people may not get the admiration of the masses but pitied and most people do not want to be associated with pity.

Nobody wants to stagnate in life. Everyone wants to be seen to be making positive progress even if the progress is not a true account of their lives. Subconsciously, people therefore tend to develop the habit of pushing for admiration to the extent of pleasing others to get approval.

It is more often the case that we are influenced in most of our decision making by the general perception people have about certain aspects of life. Students are influenced to pursue courses that are deemed to be

prestigious, people looking to start businesses tend to look out for what will be considered modern and trendy.

Seeking approval and status from others therefore becomes one of the most common rewards that people seek from their jobs, perhaps only second to money.

Entry level positions in jobs come with a level of excitement. Some get lucky to have a well-paying or moderately affordable lifestyle in the nascent stages of employment.

Watch most of these lucky chaps quickly rise through the social stratum, almost break even and then suddenly, hell breaks loose. The covid 19 pandemic taught us one big lesson. We are in a delicate burble that can burst anytime and spit us into misery.

The aftermath of the pandemic sobered most of us in different ways yet leaving us with lessons that are hard to forget. Health, family, and security are invaluable. Picture someone who is in pursuit of social status and approval but loosens his grip on these invaluable elements.

The status of such a person may rise, the approval may be loud, but the elementary building blocks, once lost will probably never be recovered.

The delicate balance remains how to attain personal growth and fulfilment amidst the ever present conformity standards. Most people end up trapped in the conformity standards and find it difficult to weave out an

escape route to attaining personal growth. Too late in the day, as is human nature, regrets abound.

In the era of social media and digital infirmity, the pull to impress others has become a thematic area in most of human life.

One wants to associate and keep a clique of people who you can impress and from whom you can get the affirmation that you are indeed punching below your weight and your status is right up there, a stark reminder thus you need to evolve as per the clique's standards.

Billy Joel, a classical musician in one of his best compositions, "Vienna" sings.

*Slow down you're doing fine
You can't be everything you want to be before your time
Although it's so romantic on the borderline tonight (tonight)*

The need to fit in and feeling the warmth of belonging is natural. Early in life, many develop the tendency of seeking approval, a habit that is hard to drop. Juveniles often want to be seen to belong, to be liked and therefore end up doing what they think will impress their audience, peers, and society at that stage of life. The same thing subconsciously influences us when in the adult stage to look to impress friends, family, and society.

So attached do we become to the routine of impressing others that we lose authenticity, credibility,

and dependability. We embrace fake and become phony. We tend to assert ourselves and expend our prime chasing impressions at the expense of natural progression.

Natural progression of life may have low returns, yet it remains assuring and certain. Breaking natural progress in pursuit of lofty ambitions may on face value promise high yield, yet the ever present high risk that is decimating and crippling cannot be ignored.

There is never a lasting impression that is solicited. To advise a man in love is a fool's errand. The same goes to a man in pursuit of fame, status, approval, and public acclamation. All are fleeting. In the fullness of time, you realize it was all Garbage In, Garbage Out.

First impressions are hard to make, little wonder people have found easy ways to leave a first impression. In the age of social media influence, many fit in easily by false opulence which in return attracts following. You attract what you are.

Let us troubleshoot. You make a decent salary affording you a comfortable life in the city. Your circle changes drastically and you start hanging out with the people you previously saw to be of a higher class. Most probably, you did not take time to sieve out the social thread of those you seemingly admired. Burning with the first impression syndrome, you plunge yourself amidst

the cohort, get a few push backs but finally warm embraces.

You have just entered a boiler room with no exit plan. The pressure slowly builds up. You repeatedly get into the rhythm of catching and keep up with the trend.

Your circle has ballooning ambition, and they are the talk of town. Top of the range cars, glamorous clubbing, expensive taste in virtually anything and once in a while, cameras in two, charity is thrown in to humanize the living.

With the normal elastic human ambition, the clique wants to climb the pyramid. All along, you have been laboring to catch up, many times foregoing your own needs to impress the clique and its fellowship.

Having failed the due diligence test on the clique from the beginning, the transition to higher levels of the pyramid takes a toll on you. Thinking that they will extend grace to you and pull you up the pyramid, the opposite happens. They step lively into the other life and leave you burdened by the fresh breath of reality.

An entire active phase of life has flashed right before your eyes, and you have utterly nothing of worth to account for. Regrets set in, and as they say, misery loves company.

You had no friends, took out facilities to finance your otherwise flashy lifestyle. The little investment you made is gobbled up by debt. Family was relegated and they too,

moved on save for your prayerful mother who in similar hope of the return of Christ, hopes for your return.

In the end, you realize you impressed no one. All you did was get swept by a moving wave of human desire, and your control failed you when you needed it most. The power to discern you wasted.

Be ambitious, limitless, but pursue fulfilling work and life. Ask yourself whether it is worth thinking about exactly what status means to you and what good it will bring to you, and what it is likely to snatch from you in the process.

Learn satisfaction. We are all made out different. Seek to know what satisfies you without the very need to look out for what the next person will feel about your status. Look up to people who have gone ahead of you but ape not life. The power to discern will easily enable you borrow the good or modify what you have borrowed to walk your own path.

As you repeatedly make it a habit to better yourself without the urge to impress, your self-worth grows. A sword needs a whetstone to keep it sharp all times, so does a good mind need books to have a better edge.

A good and successful life equally needs fueling with repeated efforts at betterment of oneself. Dream big without imagining that all will come true and waste no resourceful years chasing fleeting desires.

There is no conventional path to greatness. Antonio Machado in his famous writing "*Traveler, there is no path*" aptly puts it, 'Paths are made by walking'. Walk your path.

A life of approval can be burdensome. The wise step therefore is to ensure one divorces oneself from the burden of approval.

Accomplish life in the company of friends and relatives who do not find it necessary to pile unnecessary pressure on you to elevate your lifestyle to new levels that you are not personally ready for.

This way, you will need no excuse for the life you are leading or stress out yourself to attain lofty standards that are short lived and insidious.

Allow yourself to have a self-assessed view of life. Esteem issues are on the rise due to societal pressure to achieve. Many young people involuntarily struggle with the burden put on them by labels in society. Command your path.

Let the burden go. Many would have utterly failed in their lives had the approval of others been a decisive factor. Knowing your place, learning from others, having ambition, and understanding your personal limits will make life enjoyable.

Permit yourself to live. Be intentional in pursuit of goals, networks, and relationships. Don't be ahead of yourself to the extent of only seeking when you are right

and not when you are wrong. Allow critics to point out your weaknesses and work on them with clarity of thought.

Never apologize for your ambition, however striking they may appear. Slow down and stock take. Consume yourself with your needs and work towards your self-betterment and avoid the urge to be too polite and ever ready to help others and forget yourself. Altruism is a virtue that one develops through human interaction.

Develop the habit of self service, avoid misplaced criticism towards others and free yourself from the tensions of life which may make you assert pressure to others unnecessarily. Above all, be your own constant reminder that you do not live by others' approval.

Missed opportunities are the whispers of what could have been, echoing through the corridors of time, reminding us to seize the moments that shape our destiny.

They are like fleeting glimpses of potential paths, teasing us with the promise of what might have unfolded if only we had taken that chance.

These whispers serve as poignant reminders of the importance of being present and proactive in our lives, for it is in the choices we make and the actions we take that our future is molded.

Embracing opportunities with courage and determination not only opens doors to new experiences and possibilities but also allows us to craft a fulfilling and purposeful journey.

So let these echoes of missed opportunities be our guide, urging us to live boldly and grasp the opportunities that lead us toward our dreams and aspirations.

Conclusion

Sunsets are proof that endings can be beautiful too.

– Beau Taplin

When we stop striving to impress others, we liberate ourselves from the shackles of societal expectations and embrace the authenticity of our being. Much like the breathtaking beauty of a sunset, where nature simply exists in its pure form without seeking validation, embracing our true selves allows us to radiate our inner light with authenticity. We realize that true beauty lies not in conformity, but in the unique essence of our individuality, painted against the canvas of life's moments.

In this freedom from the need to impress, we find a profound sense of tranquility and inner peace. Like the tranquil stillness that envelops the world as the sun dips below the horizon, we too find solace in the quiet acceptance of ourselves. In this space, we can fully appreciate the beauty of our own journey, unburdened by the weight of others' opinions. Ultimately, stopping to impress others allows us to embrace the beauty of our own existence, unfolding like a serene sunset painting the sky with its vibrant hues.

Growth often springs from discomfort, like a plant pushing through hardened soil to reach the sun. It's in those moments of unease and challenge that we find the motivation to evolve.

The desire to stop impressing others can be a powerful catalyst for this growth. When we release the need for external validation and approval, we free ourselves to explore our true potential. Instead of performing for an audience, we can focus on genuine self-improvement and meaningful progress.

Embracing discomfort in this way will lead to profound personal development. It encourages us to confront our weaknesses, push past our limits, and step outside of our comfort zones. In these moments of vulnerability, we discover new strengths and capabilities that we never knew existed.

It's a transformative journey that requires courage and self-awareness, but the rewards are immense. As we let go of the need to impress others, we become more authentic, resilient, and fulfilled individuals, paving the way for continuous growth and fulfillment.

Change often brings disruption as it uproots familiar routines, processes, and expectations, unsettling the status quo. Whether in personal or professional realms, the introduction of change can provoke discomfort, resistance, and uncertainty among individuals and organizations. Disruption can manifest as challenges,

setbacks, or even failures, requiring adaptation, resilience, and innovative thinking to navigate through.

However, amidst the chaos of change-induced disruption lies the opportunity for growth, learning, and transformation.

Embracing change as a catalyst for progress can enable individuals and organizations to emerge stronger, more adaptable, and better equipped to thrive in dynamic environments.

The gateway to wealth creation often hinges on a fundamental understanding: you can't please everyone. This realization is crucial because it liberates individuals from the impossible task of trying to satisfy every person's expectation, preferences, and desires.

In the world of business and entrepreneurship, this concept is especially pertinent. Successful entrepreneurs and wealth creators understand that their products or services may not appeal to everyone, and that's perfectly fine.

Instead of diluting their offerings to cater to a broad audience, they focus on delivering exceptional value to a specific niche or target market, cultivating loyalty, and generating substantial wealth in the process.

Moreover, acknowledging that you can't please everyone fosters authenticity and innovation. When individuals are freed from the pressure of universal approval, they are more inclined to stay true to their

vision, values, and unique ideas. This authenticity often leads to the creation of innovative solutions, products, or services that resonate deeply with a devoted audience, driving success and wealth creation.

By embracing this principle, aspiring wealth creators can channel their energy into creating remarkable offerings that delight their ideal customers, paving the way for sustainable growth and prosperity.

Chasing after value rather than money and impressing others is a foundational principle for sustainable success and fulfillment. Value encompasses a range of factors, including the quality, utility, and impact of what you offer to others.

When individuals prioritize delivering genuine value through their products, services, or contributions, they create meaningful connections and build trust with their audience or clients.

This focus on value creation fosters long-term relationships and loyalty, leading to sustained success and financial rewards over time.

Furthermore, chasing after value aligns with a deeper sense of purpose and satisfaction. Instead of being solely driven by financial gains, individuals who prioritize value creation are motivated by the positive impact they can make in the lives of others.

This intrinsic motivation fuels creativity, innovation, and continuous improvement, driving individuals to constantly seek ways to enhance the value they provide.

Eventually, by chasing after value, individuals not only create wealth but also leave a lasting legacy built on meaningful contributions and positive change.

