

“Resisting Corruption as a Nigerian in Nigeria: Is it Impossible?” (IDEAS for Making Nigeria Better) – By Tayo K. Solagbade

Issue 7.0
(Thursday 6th
March 2014)

Once again it's been put in my face. And I just cannot let it pass. Nigeria's culture of corruption, has made too many Nigerians give up on themselves and others. This was why whenever I tried correcting others while I was still based there I kept getting told "Are you saying that in your own office or business you don't cut corners? Forget it jare!"

And since I began living and working from outside Nigeria, the same "subtle" insinuations have been made. It saddens me. But I've come to realize I need to offer myself as (to paraphrase Burt Dubin) as a "model of the possible human". Gradually, some will discover that I am who I say I am, and my example will encourage sincere others to emulate me by RESISTING corruption in ANY form. All that's needed is to ACT with REAL faith in the creator, like I explain here in this PDF. This is **Issue No.7** in the series. For past issue(s), Google this: *My Ideas for Making Nigeria Better, tayo solagbade.*

Someone posted the comments below in response to a post I made on my wall. It has a similar theme to the subject of issue 6.0 of this series. It made me realize I have a lot of WORK to do!

====Starts====

"...If you are an employee or even an entrepreneur in Nigeria, you are very probably as culpable and involved in corruption as a government official. The main difference would be a matter of scale and public limelight. There is very little space to hide, corruption here is almost a necessary tool for survival. Scarcely anyone will turn down an offer like that."

====Ends====

As happened last time, I tried posting my response, but it got too long. I also reasoned that since this was the 2nd time a YOUNG Nigerian was saying this, it was a sign that I needed to really offer useful feedback to re-orient them! See the post/comments at: <http://tinyurl.com/ResistingCorruptionInNigeria>

I'm trying to make it easier to refer people I engage with, to my thoughts and ideas. So I do NOT have to repeat myself each time. *More of us can do this!*

At some point, I'm hopeful that we can COLLATE all our ideas, to develop - **and IMPLEMENT!** - Useful actions plans that will change Nigeria for the better!

Why No Details (Even a By-Line!) About Me in this PDF?

Yes. Not even a by-line. This initiative is about Nigeria – not me. If you're keen, Google "**Tayo Solagbade**". *What you learn should make you take my ideas seriously ☺*

Here's what got my attention.

He wrote...

"...If you are an employee or even an entrepreneur in Nigeria, you are very probably as culpable and involved in corruption as a government official. The main difference would be a matter of scale and public limelight. There is very little space to hide, corruption here is almost a necessary tool for survival. Scarcely anyone will turn down an offer like that."

See <http://tinyurl.com/ResistingCorruptionInNigeria>

What follows below, is my response:

I enjoy reading from you <name>. I find you're open minded and willing to consider views contrasting with yours.

It's a good habit.

I must say you've made excellent points that I agree with fully. Your analysis of the Nigerian situation (or predicament?) - politically and otherwise is quite eloquent.

Let me put it this way: You have proven that you are a TRUE Nigerian. Gifted in the use of prose to explain the ills of society - especially the complexities and contradictions of the Nigerian people and their society.

However, as so often happens, it appears (or did I miss it), you've offered no specific "Way Forward" in terms of what can be done to change things.

Or are we to assume WE, the people (you, me, with like minded others) cannot change things if we KNOW a way that makes it possible?

I hope not!

Now, in making your "case" I noticed also subtle signs that you're letting "Nigeria and Nigerians" get to you, making you "think like them". This is the second time you've done this. And I find it quite amusing:

Consider your words on page 1...That block of text was weighty in it's implications. And I simply could not let it pass. I now realize someone needs to take a stand and say what needs to be said. Very clearly and unambiguously too.

That's why I've decided to publish this new issue of my "Ideas for Making Nigeria Better" series... dedicated to offering MY ideas for RESISTING temptations of corruption in Nigeria - by telling my personal and PAINFUL story - *in part...*

I must thank you for making me write it by making the above statements. Now I can simply send the PDF's link to any other person who needs ideas of what s/he should do to SAY NO, in Nigeria, and live to ENJOY the rewards of doing so!

By the way, my life is an open book. There are people right on Facebook and elsewhere that will confirm claims I've made in this PDF.

Cheers, my dear friend <name>, and PLEASE KNOW that you can be the POSITIEV exception, EVEN if everyone else is doing naughty stuff ☺

[NB: What follows is not an attempt at self righteous bragging. I honestly feel others will benefit from reading it, IF they keep an open mind.]

It's good you said "scarcely anyone", because I happen to be one such person who REFUSED to accept corruption as a necessary tool for survival, in Nigeria, from **January 2002 till March 2013**, when I finally relocated to Benin Republic.

And I paid a severe price for my stubbornness. In the process I exposed my wife and our little kids to great suffering for years.

Believe me when I say I have seen great suffering trying to make a living as a honest dealing entrepreneur in Nigeria.

Details, with names of people who helped out when I had to swallow my pride and do Bambiala repeatedly to provide for my family, will be in a full

disclosure video series I intend to produce as a teaching tool for dealing with adversity.

Do you know what it feels like to have your child ask you for N35 Indomie noodles and not be able to give it to her? I've been there many times, all because I was stubborn. To this day I RESPECT my wife for enduring those days with me...though I usually got an earfull...lol (story for another day).

I have many stories of clients who told me "**Tayo, you're good at what you do, but this insistence on not doing over invoicing that we do will keep you from getting enough business to sustain you. This is Nigeria they said. You can't fight corruption. It's too entrenched**" they advised.

That, <name>, is kind of what you also said in your comment, reproduced on page 1 above.

I cannot tell all here, but my video and book will.

But I'll offer a bit of my story:

There came a point when I was so hard up for money, having no clients or product sales, that I started improvising in crazy ways to save whatever cash I had. For instance, I began using groundnut oil as hair cream.

And I used bold face to make my kids do same!

My wife was LIVID.

But I ignored her – with the same bold face...LOL. (It was **not** funny then!)

I did that just so as to save N350 that would have been used to buy the big jar of vaseline we normally used.

[NB: A major setback had put me in that mess. And setbacks are often common in entrepreneur's lives]

That way I was able to give my wife the saved amount from N500 I had left. Then I pocketed the N150 balance and WALKED from my place near Alagbole (5.30a.m till about 6.45a.m) to Ogba area, where I went from office to office, business centre to business centre, marketing my ExcelVB Income and Expense Manager app.

I would give them time to open and settle in. Then from 9.30a.m till as late as 8.30p.m I would go round the different offices.

I did that every single day in that month of November 2007. And I made over N42,000 by the end of the month.

But it did not come in bulk at once.

Picture this: the app was a small, simple one and only cost N2,500!

So you see, I had to do a lot of walking, talking to sell. Then I had to install when they bought, and coach them to use it. All for N2,500 per client!

But I was happy to earn income that way though it was slow and painful.

["Mr Honest entrepreneur" like me tend not to have many viable business marketing opportunities open to us you see...it takes us longer to find buyers.]

Somedays I made only one sale. To avoid spending the N2.5k, I would walk back home (over 1 hour) at night without buying food. I'd stopped taking my car out because I did not have enough

money to buy fuel, and my family needed the little I made to feed!

By December 2007, I'd encountered hotels, hospitals and restaurants, and decided to build demo apps to offer them. My suffering had opened my eyes to smarter ways to getting better paying buyers. (That's why we're told every adversity has a benefit, IF you will just look out for it).

That marked the turning point in my fortunes.

I began going round doing demos. One day the CEO of a small hotel saw my demo customizable hotel management app and paid cash 70% advance, gave me daily meals, a workplace PC with Internet, to customize it for her company.

And others followed. Before leaving Nigeria I'd had clients pay me N200k 100% in advance, to build custom software for them. Some have used my apps for years now, and we're on great terms.

So you see, I learnt to target the CEOs of small and medium size businesses. I did that because I did not want to relate with the idiots in some big companies who told me to "put their own" before they would pass my demo to the boss!

I stopped marketing to big companies after 2 years as an entrepreneur i.e by early 2004.

I saw no point in wasting my time with them after months meeting with their naughty employees.

Many people who say it's not possible to survive in Nigeria without being corrupt are those who insist on chasing such companies where they have to pass through corrupt employees to get to the DECISION MAKERS.

People must realize they have a choice. There are alternatives. I realized that, and I took up the challenge. The MAIN reason I left Nigeria after I began operating the new way was because PHCN was making my life miserable. I needed steady power supply, and could not get it, YET I kept getting bogus bills while shelling our my hard earned income on generator fuel and servicing.

MTN is the only big company I ever did a job for in Nigeria.

NB: Don't get me wrong. I know stuff happens in the private sector too. But I'm saying that in the only contact I had with MTN, it all went the way it was supposed to go. No naughty stuff!

They were told about me by someone who knew about my advance Excel expertise from my time in Guinness. They simply called me and asked that I email them a demo.

The Logistics Director who reviewed my demo was South African. He wanted an Excel expert to train his National Distribution Manager.

When he saw my demo, I was told he simply said "whoever sent this should be given the training contract".

They asked me if I had a registered company. I said NO. They said MTN would not transact business with individuals.

The logistics boss said to tell me they would wait for me to get a company name registered.

It took 2 weeks for me to get that done, with my Abuja based brother's help. When I got back MTN was waiting, and I got the contract.

About 2 months later, I collected my full payment, of over N110k without hassling from anyone, via crossed cheque, from their VI office.

Now that's the way it should be! This happened in late 2004. But it has been more of the exception, than the norm, as hard experience has shown.

My experiences have taught me that if you know how to do your marketing, you'll easily gain access to the CEOs of small business.

They are not employees who will want a piece of the pie. No. They are the owners or decision makers looking for real solutions. When they see you can help them they'll jump at your offer.

I found that if one does the above, corruption simply does not come your way.

Except for some CEOs who tried to educate me to do it to win bigger projects with larger companies. When I resisted they became antagonistic. So I gave them space, even though doing so implied a loss of future patronage from them.

I've lost count of the times my wife called me "mad" for my rigidity (who could blame her?).

But I always assured her that I was sure my creator would help me find a way to do the work I love without compromising my values or beliefs.

As the years went on I won better projects but the same pattern repeated itself. So I listened to my intuition and began channelling my efforts to sell my products and services 80% or more online.

It took a while. But today I've achieved that goal, and continue to earn income from buyers in and out of Africa, without meeting them in the flesh.

So you see <name>, we always have a choice. But it will always come with a price. Anyone unwilling to pay the price will conclude corruption is inevitable!

However, anyone who summons the courage to seek an ethically sound alternative, will discover that the creator really does reward those who walk their talk with faith.

My life story is filled with accounts of miracles the creator has performed that enabled me succeed. When those who knew me could (or would) not help me pursue my stubborn plans, TOTAL strangers from the USA and Canada came into my life at just the right time to help me keep going.

And all this from me...a guy who last attended church in 1989, and has practised no known religion since! So many doubters around me are wiser due to my achievements.

As I said, this is no attempt at bragging. Just statements of truths to inform and educate.

One Last Point: About Paid Employment

I spent 7 years in paid employment in Guinness (1994 to 2001).

In my last 3 years, I was promoted, and rapidly moved into senior positions that involved dealing with external contractors (e.g as Training Manager and Production Manager).

I negotiated rates with consultants who came to conduct courses for employees. I supervised recruitment interviews. I presided over issuing of slots to buyers of spent grains running into millions of naira.

Not once did I indulge in any wrong doing. And while I was there, my reputation was such that not one person made me a silly offer of any sort.

Yet I'd always heard from corporate rumour channels of different kinds of activities certain occupants indulged in!

My point?

Simply that WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT from each other, <name>, my dear friend!

Personally, I LOVE to be free to challenge any wrong doer I discover without fear or favour.

That makes me unwilling to do anything that will make me afraid to speak and act freely as I love to.

When people claim they BELIEVE in God, and still try to make excuses for not resisting corrupt advances, I get confused.

For me, my faith in my creator is what drives me. I know I may suffer deprivation and hardship for choosing NOT to give in.

But I am also confident that God will eventually reward me for keeping my faith in him, and believing that he will find me an honourable and dignified alternative way to get what I want.

Watch my posts on Facebook, and my articles on my website.

I have nothing to hide. I am afraid of no one or nothing. I am ready to take on ALL comers. My hands are clean, and my conscience is clear!

Quote me to anyone or anywhere. Like I said, even the story of my painfully humiliating journey to success that began in Nigeria and is now evolving here in Benin Republic WILL be narrated in full by me.

And I will be interviewing friends, relatives and acquaintances who saw me at my lowest, most humiliating moments STILL defiant, and insistent on following the course I'd plotted.

Many told me to consider doing anything else. I bluntly told them no. They asked me to consider my kids and wife who were suffering because of my pig headedness.

I REPEATEDLY told them I was confident that I would find success, and that in the meantime the creator would raise for me the support I needed to keep going.


Today, my profile as an **internationally recognised provider of a unique range or products and services** from right here in West Africa is rising fast. *I'm being courted and paid by clients from across the world.* Living my dream!

All I had to do was persist with faith.

That's what I ask any Nigerian who sincerely seeks a SOLUTION to do ***i.e. ACT WITH UNSHAKEABLE FAITH IN THE CREATOR.*** If s/he does so diligently and consistently s/he will successfully RESIST corruption in ANY form it presents itself to him/her. ***This is not a religious thing now. God rewards ALL who honour him!***

That, is a proven FACT.

I wish you well, my dear friend!


Tayo K. Solagbade
October 6th, 2014 at 10:00

*Chinua Achebe wrote...**

“Let me give one more dimension of what we were hoping to do in Biafra...”

See page 157 of his book titled “There Was A Country: A Personal History of Biafra”.*

Click below to purchase from Amazon.com!

www.amazon.com/There-Was-Country-Personal-History/dp/1594204829

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www.tinyurl.com/AchebeBiafraBook

Read “Biafra-Born Micro-Refineries Operating in Nigeria? Lessons for Nigeria/Africa!” – click the link below...

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Tayo Solagbade

21 hours ago via BlackBerry



Facebook can be a powerful weapon for making positive change happen in society. However, historical evidence strongly indicates that happens in cases when most of those who use it in a particular society walk their ONLINE talk, in their daily, personal and work lives OFFLINE. Hmm...

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Fred O Ehimika Jr, Abigail Olutusin and 2 others like this.



Edentu Oroso Food for thought there. I thought about this some time ago. If all the online preaching is anything to go by, Nigeria certainly will be a paradise. I share in your sentiment.

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