

ATTITUDES ARE CONTAGIOUS; IS YOURS WORTH CATCHING?

"Back in the day", our teachers, when they wanted us to debate an issue would present us with a statement and then say "**DISCUSS**". (e. g. "Technology has done more harm than good." DISCUSS!) When they did that, their intention was to get us to closely examine an issue that clearly had two worthy yet opposing sides to it, and we were expected to "extrapolate", giving arguments to support both sides of de matta, before finally arriving at a conclusion.

My Sisters, I don't know about you but, as ah shiddon so, if someone were to give me the topic: "UPSIDE DON REALLY TURN NJINJA" and ask me to "discuss" it, my 3 word answer would have to be "YOU SAY WHAT?!" just like in the Pierre de Moussy song, (Ndolo L'Amour), because I would be very hard pressed to come up with an argument to refute that statement!! Forget about "people dem"; the number of our own Saker Sisters who have lost their jobs, their means of transportation, their homes, their 401ks and their marriages is not a short one, not to talk of those whose peace of mind is threatened by their own poor health, or the ill health of a close family member. Should I mention Immigration issues? As for bereavement, let us not even go there! It is "Cancer" here, "foreclosure" over there. "Repo" for dis corner, "pink slip" for de ohda side. HAITI neva finish, na CHILE dis don cam e own!!

We live in a fallen world and so we definitely have to deal with tests, trials and "tribulations". There is NO ESCAPING them! (Never mind what today's "Feel Good" preachers are saying all over de place!) Hopefully, some Sunday School teacher taught you the "God made deh "werld" (Yes!), in a holy and happy state" song, taking time to explain how "deh serpent took deh apple and gave it to Mohda Eve; and Mohda Eve took deh apple and gave it to Fahda Adam; and Fahda Adam took deh apple, and passed it to deh werld"!! It has been sweat and labor since then and NO MORTAL MAN has ever been spared; not even THE SON OF MAN HIMSELF when, for 33 years, HE willingly relinquished his IMMORTAL & DIVINE PRIVILEGES and came down here to experience the NDON first hand! E hungry, e thirsty, e tire, e sweat, e cry, e vex, e skin duhty fine-fine like de rest of us, and NOT ONCE did he "cheat" or "cut corners" and perform a miracle to ease the many difficult circumstances he found Himself in, as in build himself some bettah "upstairs" wit plenty fan dem and window blind, and avoid having to "perch" or "squat" in other peoples' houses! Just look at Him; Creator of all the seas and oceans, the One who calmed those very seas and walked on their waters, sitting there by a jagga-jagga well, BEGGING for a drink of water from deh woman of Samar-i-a who went to carry wata!!

This is precisely de kind of "OGA" I can comfortably take my woes to, (as in "take it to the Lord in prayer"), because I know he **GETS IT**, as in "been there, done that and a bag of plantain chips"! Someone who, when I come to Him whining and wailing over one "ndutu" or the other, can look me straight in the face and ask me if I have ever been flagellated, crucified and pierced in the side, ALL for someone

else's sake, and I have to "shurrup" my mouth!! Someone who is more than qualified to be our PRIME EXAMPLE as far as transforming our **TESTS** into **TESTIMONIES** is concerned!!

Going through a trial is no pleasant experience but the Good Book makes it clear that trials do have their benefits! Here's what Romans 5:3-4 says:

"Not only so, but we^[b] also rejoice in our sufferings, **because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope.**"

This verse, (in my opinion), spells out the PERSONAL benefits trials have for those who go through them but then, an additional point worth noting is that, **OTHERS** can also benefit from our trials if they see us face them like True Women of Faith! Personally, nothing assures me more that I can, not just survive adversity, but actually come out of it victorious, than seeing a fellow Woman – especially one I know well, **STAND STRONG** through her trials! Even our traditions back home mirror this fact when a "seasoned" widow is "delegated" to "shadow" a recently widowed woman throughout the "die house" period. (The same is done for a woman who has lost a child!) Why? Because only someone who has walked in those same painful shoes can **EM**pathize; the rest can only **SYM**pathize or imagine what the pain must be like!

While no one in their right mind would go hunting for a trial just so they can have a testimony, I think it is a **PURE WASTE OF SUFFER**, if we don't use the trials we have already gone through, to inspire courage and hope in those who are going through the same "stuff", especially if we were able to take it all in stride, with the right **ATTITUDE!!!** (Talk about "I GOTTA TESTIFY", as Anita's CD says!)

Case in point: Here's a direct quote from Bea Tayui's email barely a week ago, regarding the ordeal she went through recently in the hospital with "little Baba":

"I couldn't believe the devil was trying to pull a Michael Jackson on us. My mind went from "Pull my kaba over my head and find the next ten staircases to roll down, or tie my headtie around my waist and make everyone in that room realize you don't mess with an African woman's child, **or go into intense prayer and ask for God's intervention while he is laying there on oxygen and eyes completed dilated.**" **Prayer won over my better judgment and it was not until 2pm that they were successful in waking him up. Cannot begin to tell you the agony of those four hours. We serve a mighty God!!!!!!!!!!**"

Sure, we all pray that we shouldn't have to go through such a nerve racking experience but if that should happen to be our lot at some point in our lives, it may help, just as we are contemplating "buttoning" the doctor, brandishing a cutlass and screaming "wuna back me mah pikin back as ah be bring e cam for dis wuna hospital" or "waka-ing naket for puplic", to think back to how this Sister – as well as Sister Ruth and Dolly Lambe before her, reacted!

We are **BLESSED** to have Women of Faith in our midst who have handled untold adversity and **BOUNCED** right back like an Indian Rubber Ball! You no go leff man rest wit your bangle wey e fall for latrine or your lappa wey pikin burn'am wit iron, blah, blah, blah; How for we sister wey e whole house be burn down for D.C., yet she was at the very next Convention to "Testify" about God's goodness, looking **FAB** as she did so?? How for we President and Auntie Jacky whose CATs have recently undergone surgery; which one of dem be "display" for Carrefour??

I have to SALUTE all you single mothers who are raising kids on your own in this country where the "village" it does take to raise a child is not really there. All you mothers of children with special needs who have your work cut out for you daily. All of you who are diligently searching for jobs in the midst of a very unfriendly economy. All of you who have gone back to school at age "none-of-anybody's-business" because your current paycheck no go 'nough, even if you and pikin dem drink only cold wata garri from January to December ...

In fact, to all who are going through one form of hardship or another, YET, keep a **POSITIVE ATTITUDE**, I have to say **THANK YOU FOR BEING SUCH AN INSPIRATION!**

- When the phone rings, we rush to take your calls instead of "dodging" them and quietly thanking The Almighty for Caller I.D. – especially de kind one wey e dey com'ot in High Definition for television!
- For work place, people take a number and stand in line to get encouragement from you, as opposed to other offices wey man get to "moof" shoe tiptoe by ("kunya-kunya"), because any conversation wit de sistah for inside go only bring depression where there was none before, or escalate any pre-existing condition!
- You do not give anyone the impression that you are ALWAYS on top of things because, who are we kidding?! No one is! Instead, you are not afraid to let your vulnerabilities and shortcomings show, fully aware that they are NOT what define you but what build you up instead and make you REAL!
- You are quick to stretch out a helping hand and come to another's aid even as you go through the exact same thing or worse!
- You always put things into perspective for us, show us the "bigger picture" and convince us that whatever we might be facing is really not as bad as we think it is, for "THIS TOO SHALL PASS"!
- In fact, You are the very reason many of us do not want to miss Conventions!! You just **ROCK** – literally and figuratively!

I think it would be appropriate to conclude with Reverend Hoffman's catch phrase when he led Dining Hall Devotions during the 70s in dear old SBC:

ATTITUDE CHECK: PRAISE THE LORD?!!

Blessings,
Egbe Mbiwan Monjimbo