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THIS DAY

Style

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2025

**CHUDE
JIDEONWO**
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COVER NOTE



When you hear the name Chude Jideonwo, what comes to mind? For many, he's an enigma—a man whose name is synonymous with media innovation, social change, and storytelling that touches the soul. To others, he's the quiet force behind some of Africa's most impactful movements, a man who has spent 25 years reshaping narratives across advertising, public relations, television, radio, print, and digital media.



Society

THE BALVENIE 60-YEAR-OLD WHISKY DEBUTS IN NIGERIA WITH A NIGHT OF ELEGANCE

The Balvenie, renowned for its dedication to craftsmanship and heritage, recently introduced its rare 60-Year-Old whisky to Nigeria in a celebration of luxury, fine dining, and artistic brilliance. In partnership with Providus Bank, the exclusive invite-only event brought together an elite circle of guests for an evening that seamlessly blended rare whisky, refined pairings, and timeless artistry.

3

EDITOR'S LETTER



EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I am because I am pretty

The other day, I was sitting with friends when the conversation took a rather interesting turn. Someone mentioned how they had just waltzed past a queue at an event because the bouncer found them "pretty." That set off a debate about pretty privilege—those small, everyday advantages that "attractive people" enjoy without even trying. The free drinks, the unnecessary "let me help you" gestures, the leniency at work or in social situations, the general assumption that you're somehow more deserving just because you look a certain way.

But then, as we talked about it, I realised something: pretty privilege isn't as powerful as it used to be. Yup. You probably don't agree with me, but that's how I see it.

Think about it: we live in an era where beauty is no longer exclusive. It has become accessible, even manufactured. With the right filter, the right contouring technique, or the right procedure, the girl next door can now look like a supermodel. And if everyone is beautiful, is anyone really benefitting from pretty privilege the way they used to?

But that's only one side of it. The other reason I believe pretty privilege is waning is that people have simply become more practical. Yes, you're beautiful, but what else? What do you bring to the table beyond the aesthetics? That's a valid question, and in a world where opportunities are harder to come by, where people have become more intentional about their choices—be it friendships, relationships, or business partnerships—beauty alone isn't enough. Looks may get you in the door, but they won't keep you in the room.

I went a bit deeper into this conversation with my article, "Pretty Privilege: Does It Still Exist in Today's Nigeria?" It's a thought-provoking read that explores whether good looks still carry the same currency they once did or if society has moved on. I would love to hear your thoughts on this—does pretty privilege still work for you? Or have you found that lately, people have become more interested in substances than surfaces?

And while you're here, there are some other must-reads I think you'll enjoy.

For those navigating relationships, The Most Important Green Flags in a Relationship is a piece you don't want to miss. We spend so much time talking about red flags—those warning signs that tell us when something is off. But what about the good things? The signs that tell you that you're with the right person, someone who is emotionally mature, kind, and truly invested in you? Sometimes, we overlook the green flags in the pursuit of something more dramatic, but this article reminds us why those little acts of kindness and consistency are what really matter in the long run.

And then there's The 10 Most Important 'Girl Code' Rules You Should Never Break. This one is for the ladies. Because, let's be honest, girl code is sacred. There are rules—some unspoken, some loudly declared—that every woman should know and respect. Whether it's about friendship, dating, loyalty, or just basic decency, there are certain things you just don't do. But in an age where friendships are tested by social media, relationships, and the pressures of modern life, how many of us are still following the code? Are we still holding ourselves accountable? This piece is both a reminder and a conversation starter.

And before I go, I have to check in. How are you doing? No, really—how are you doing? The year is already moving fast, and sometimes, we get so caught up in the motions of life that we forget to pause and ask ourselves how we really feel. So, here's me asking: Are you okay? Are you taking care of yourself?

For those observing Ramadan or Lent, I see you. Fasting, reflection, and discipline take strength, and I hope this season brings you clarity, peace, and fulfillment in all the ways you need.

Wishing you all the best week ever.

Love,
Konye



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The Balvenie 60-Year-Old Whisky Debuts in Nigeria with a Night of Elegance

The Balvenie, renowned for its dedication to craftsmanship and heritage, recently introduced its rare 60-Year-Old whisky to Nigeria in a celebration of luxury, fine dining, and artistic brilliance. In partnership with Providus Bank, the exclusive invite-only event brought together an elite circle of guests for an evening that seamlessly blended rare whisky, refined pairings, and timeless artistry.

Hosted by the iconic Frank Edoho, the evening unfolded at the sophisticated DANI restaurant within the Delborough Hotel. From the moment guests arrived, they were ushered into an extraordinary journey through The Balvenie's rich legacy, a night where every detail spoke of elegance and exclusivity. The highlight of the event was an intimate whisky tasting and the unveiling of The Balvenie 60-Year-Old expression—one of only 71 bottles in existence globally and the sole bottle allocated to Nigeria, secured by Providus Bank. This momentous occasion underscored the rarity and prestige of the whisky, drawing admiration from the distinguished audience.

The night was a masterful orchestration of craftsmanship and artistry, featuring a meticulously curated gourmet dining experience by The Balvenie Maker, Chef Stone. Each dish was designed to complement the whisky's profound depth and complexity, creating a symphony of flavours that delighted the senses.

As the guests savoured the exceptional pairings, the atmosphere was elevated by performances that added depth to the experience. Spoken word artist Bashiru Amuneni captivated the audience with his evocative poetry, while The Blues Project filled the room with soulful sounds, blending seamlessly with the refined ambience of the evening.



EDDIE MADAKI



CHEF STONE

RITA DOMINIC



LOTI ANNA OKAFOR



WAJE



ANITA EKENIMOH



LATASHA LAGOS



AYINNA NWIGWE



SPEAKEASY BLUES PROJECT



THE BALVENIE 60-YEAR-OLD EXPRESSION



R-L LANRE OGUNDARE, JIMMY ANTHONIO, FRANK EDOHO, EDDIE MADAKI AND A GUEST

Lifestyle & Fashion

- The 10 Most Important Girl Code Rules You Should Never Break 4
- 7 Empowering Female Movies Every Woman Should Watch 5
- 'Talking Stage Culture' Why Are Modern Relationships So Confusing? 6
- Pretty Privilege: Does It Still Exist In Today's Nigeria? 8
- A Celebration of Power, Beauty & Sisterhood 9
- 10 Minimalist Rules That Actually Work 10
- Omoni Oboli's 'Love In Every Word' Explores Love in the Modern Age 17
- Soft Life Starter Pack: The Fashion Edition 18
- When Love Feels Right: The Green Flags You Should Look For 20
- 10 Tiny Things You Can Do To Make Your Hair Grow Faster 21
- Hyperpigmentation 101: What You're Doing Wrong and How to Fix 22



'TALKING STAGE' CULTURE: WHY ARE MODERN RELATIONSHIPS SO CONFUSING?

There was a time when relationships followed a predictable script—boy meets girl, they date, get engaged, and eventually get married. Simple. Straightforward. Everyone knew the rules. Fast forward to today, and things are not so black and white. Welcome to the era of the talking stage, where relationships exist in a hazy, undefined space. It's not quite dating, but it's more than friendship. It's a phase where you're "getting to know each other," but somehow, it can last for months or even years without clarity. For many young Nigerians, this talking stage culture has become the default setting of modern relationships. And let's be honest, it's exhausting. Why is it so difficult for people to define their intentions these days? Why does asking "What are we?" feel like you're suddenly auditioning for a role you didn't even know existed? Let's unpack the confusion.



The Talking Stage: What is it really?

The talking stage is that murky period before a relationship is officially defined. It's when you're chatting every day, going on dates, maybe even acting like a couple—but no one wants to admit what's happening. You text "Good morning" and "Have you eaten?" religiously, you FaceTime until your phone overheats, and yet, there's no official commitment.

This is the stage where people claim they are "just seeing how things go." It's an unspoken trial period, but the problem is, sometimes, no one knows when the trial ends—or if it even began in the first place. You could be stuck in the talking stage indefinitely, just vibing, without progress.

Why does the Talking Stage last so long?

1. Fear of Commitment

Many people enjoy the benefits of a relationship without actually committing to one. At a time when independence and "soft life" are glorified, some don't want the pressure of exclusivity. They want companionship, but they also want the freedom to explore other options.

2. Too Many Options

Dating apps, social media, and even the rise of "networking" have made it easier than ever to meet new people. You're talking to someone today, but in a few days, they're suddenly "focusing on themselves" or "not in the right headspace." In reality, they've likely met someone else. This culture of keeping options open means no one wants to lock themselves down too quickly.

3. Situationships as the New Normal

Gone are the days when people outrightly asked, "Will you be my girlfriend/boyfriend?" Now, it's all about "vibes." Many Nigerians have found themselves in full-blown relationships without an actual conversation to confirm it. And just like that, people can ghost or claim, "I never promised you anything."

4. The "No Pressure" Movement

A lot of people now pride themselves on not taking things "too seriously." Statements like "Let's just see where this goes" and "I don't like labels" are red flags disguised as non-chalance. It's a way to enjoy the perks of a relationship without taking responsibility for it.

The Frustration of being in limbo

One of the biggest issues with talking stage culture is the emotional toll it takes. You're investing time, energy, and emotions, yet you're never really sure if it's leading anywhere. Do you act single? Do you wait for a sign? Do you bring it up and risk "ruining the vibe"?

For many Nigerian women especially, there's an added layer of societal pressure. Family members start asking, "So who is he?" But what do you say when you yourself don't know? Meanwhile, for men, the fear of being seen as too serious too soon means they often avoid defining things until they absolutely have to.

Can we fix this?

The talking stage isn't inherently bad—it's important to get to know someone before committing. The problem is when it drags on endlessly with no direction. So, how do we make modern dating less confusing?

1. Be Clear About Intentions Early On

If you're looking for a serious relationship, say it. If you're just having fun, be honest about it. The problem often lies in people pretending they want something casual when they know they want commitment—or vice versa.

2. Set a Timeline

If you've been talking for over three months and there's no clarity, you probably need to have a conversation. If they panic at the question, "Where is this going?" then you already have your answer.

3. Watch Actions, Not Just Words

Someone can say all the right things and still waste your time. If they're inconsistent, avoid talking about the future, or always leave things vague, they're likely not serious.

4. Don't Settle for Less

If you want commitment, don't accept half-baked efforts. If they like you, they will make it clear. If they don't, you'll always be left second-guessing.

So, what next?

The talking stage doesn't have to be an emotional rollercoaster. It should be a phase of intentional connection, not confusion. At the end of the day, relationships—whether casual or serious—thrive on clarity. The more we normalize direct conversations, the less we'll find ourselves stranded in yet



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THE 10 MOST IMPORTANT 'GIRL CODE' RULES YOU SHOULD NEVER BREAK

There's an unspoken rulebook that governs the sisterhood—a silent agreement between women, stitched together with loyalty, trust, and a deep understanding of what it means to have each other's backs. It's called Girl Code, and while the world changes, some things remain sacred. From friendships to dating, support systems to tough love, these rules are the foundation of strong female bonds. Break them, and you risk the ultimate betrayal. Respect them, and you'll have a sisterhood that stands the test of time. Here are the 10 most important Girl Code rules you should never break—because some things are simply non-negotiable.

1. Exes Are Off Limits—Always

This is the golden rule. If your friend dated him seriously, he's permanently in the off-limits zone. No excuses, no justifications. It doesn't matter if "they were only together for a few months", "it was years ago", or "we just clicked." The emotional history your friend has with him is reason enough. There are billions of other men in the world—find another one.

2. If She's Not Feeling Safe, You Stay

Whether it's a party, a bar, or even a first date if your friend says she's uncomfortable, you do not leave her behind. No, "but I really like this guy" or "she's probably fine." If she's giving you that look or texting you the emergency "help me" message, you drop everything and stick by her side. Her safety (both emotional and physical) is more important than any social scenario.

3. You Defend Her When She's Not Around

It's easy to be a good friend when someone is watching. But the real test of loyalty happens when she's not in the room. If someone is gossiping about her, calling her names, or spreading rumours, you shut it down. If she trusts you, she shouldn't have to worry about what's being said behind her back. Protect her name like you'd want someone to protect yours.

4. No Public Shaming—Ever

Had a fight? Cool, work it out. But under no circumstances do you drag her name through the mud publicly. Posting about it online, sharing screenshots, or airing dirty laundry for an audience is the ultimate betrayal. Disagreements happen, but keep it private. If you truly valued the friendship, you'd respect the history you shared enough to handle things maturely.

5. Be Brutally Honest—But With Love

If her dress isn't flattering, tell her. If her boyfriend is shady, definitely tell her. If she's making a terrible decision that could hurt her, speak up. Being a real friend means being honest, even when it's uncomfortable. But there's a difference between honesty and cruelty.

If your words are going to hurt, deliver them with care. The goal is to support her, not tear her down.

6. Don't Compete, Celebrate

Society already pits women against each other enough—don't do it within your own circle. If your friend gets a promotion, launches a business, or even just looks stunning in a new outfit, hype her up. Her success doesn't dim your own light. The strongest friendships are built on mutual celebration, not silent competition.

7. You're Her Emergency Contact for Anything

It doesn't matter if it's 2 AM and she just got into a terrifying situation. When she calls, you pick up. No questions, no complaints, no hesitations. Knowing she can rely on you in her worst moments is what solidifies a true friendship.

8. Don't Let Her Go Back to That Toxic Ex

Love makes people blind, and we all have that one friend who keeps running back to the guy who broke her heart. You can't make decisions for her, but you can remind her of all the times she cried on your couch. You can be the voice of reason when she starts convincing herself he's changed. And if she insists on going back, don't abandon her—just be there to catch her if (and when) it happens again.

9. Keep Her Secrets, No Matter What

When a friend confides in you, that information is locked in a vault—no exceptions. Whether it's about a work crisis, a family issue, or a deep insecurity, you don't repeat it. Ever. Breaking this rule shatters trust instantly, and trust, once lost, is almost impossible to rebuild.

10. Always Fix Her Crown—In Private

If she's messing up—whether in her career, friendships, or personal life—you let her know. But you do it privately, with kindness and the intent to help, not humiliate. We all have moments where we stumble, but a true friend helps you stand tall again without making you feel small.



2016

WIVES ON STRIKE

Omoni Oboli delivers a bold, hilarious, and thought-provoking story in *Wives on Strike*. The film follows a group of market women—played by Omoni Oboli, Uche Jombo, Ufuoma McDermott, Chioma Akpotha, and Kehinde Bankole—who go on a sex strike after a young girl is forced into marriage. Their collective refusal to engage with their husbands becomes a powerful act of activism, proving that women are unstoppable when they unite for a cause.



2018

LIONHEART

Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart* is a masterclass in breaking barriers. She doesn't just direct the film—she leads it as Adaeze, a young woman thrust into running her family's transport business when her father falls ill. In a male-dominated industry, Adaeze must prove her worth while navigating obstacles that test her intelligence and resolve. *Lionheart* is a heartfelt story about determination, leadership, and female empowerment in a world that often underestimates women.



KING OF BOYS

Nobody does power like Kemi Adetiba, and *King of Boys* is proof of that. Sola Sobowale delivers an unforgettable performance as Eniola Salami—a business mogul and political powerhouse who refuses to be silenced in a world dominated by men. With gripping twists, political intrigue, and raw emotion, *King of Boys* is a must-watch for every woman who refuses to be boxed in.



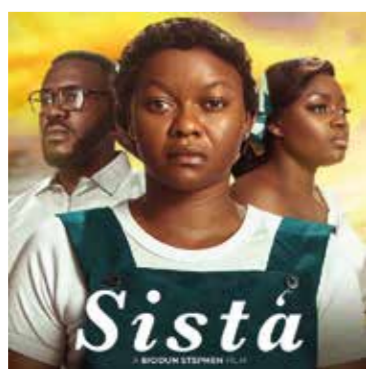
7 EMPOWERING FEMALE-LED MOVIES EVERY WOMAN SHOULD WATCH

It's still Women's Month, and we're not slowing down on celebrating incredible women in every sphere—including film. So, don't get tired just yet! From Hollywood to Nollywood, the movie industry has blessed us with powerful female-led stories that remind us of the strength, resilience, and sheer brilliance of women. And yes—Nollywood is absolutely thriving in this regard! More and more films are being created for, from, and by women, and interestingly, Nigerian female directors are outshining their male counterparts in terms of success. With that in mind, here are seven must-watch films that put fearless, inspiring women at the forefront.

2022

SISTA

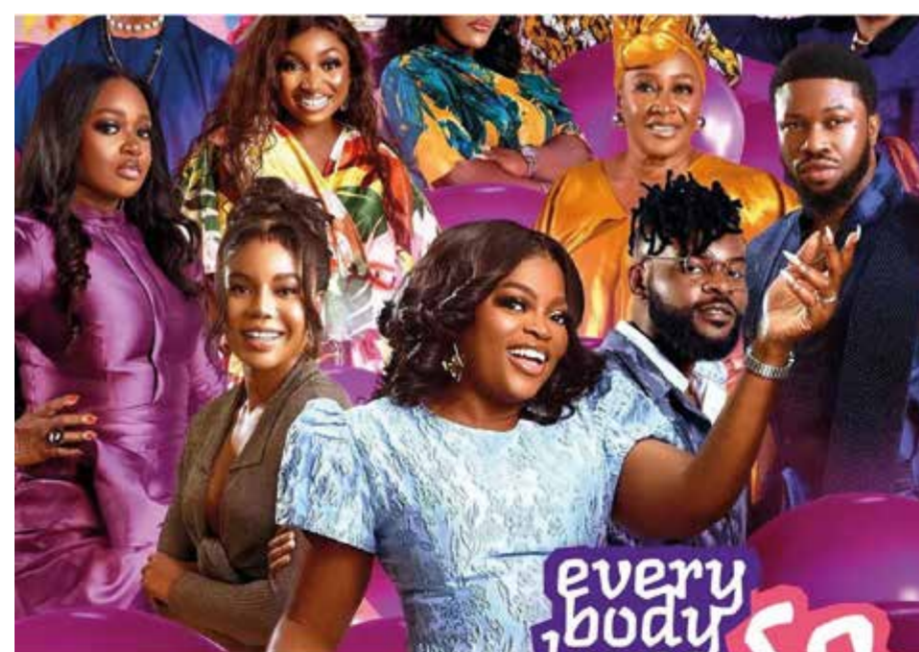
Biodun Stephen's *Sista* tells the profoundly moving story of a single mother, played by Kehinde Bankole, who will stop at nothing to provide for her child. It's a film that explores the sacrifices, resilience, and quiet strength of motherhood—an ode to every woman who has ever had to carry the weight of the world on her shoulders while keeping her family afloat.



2024

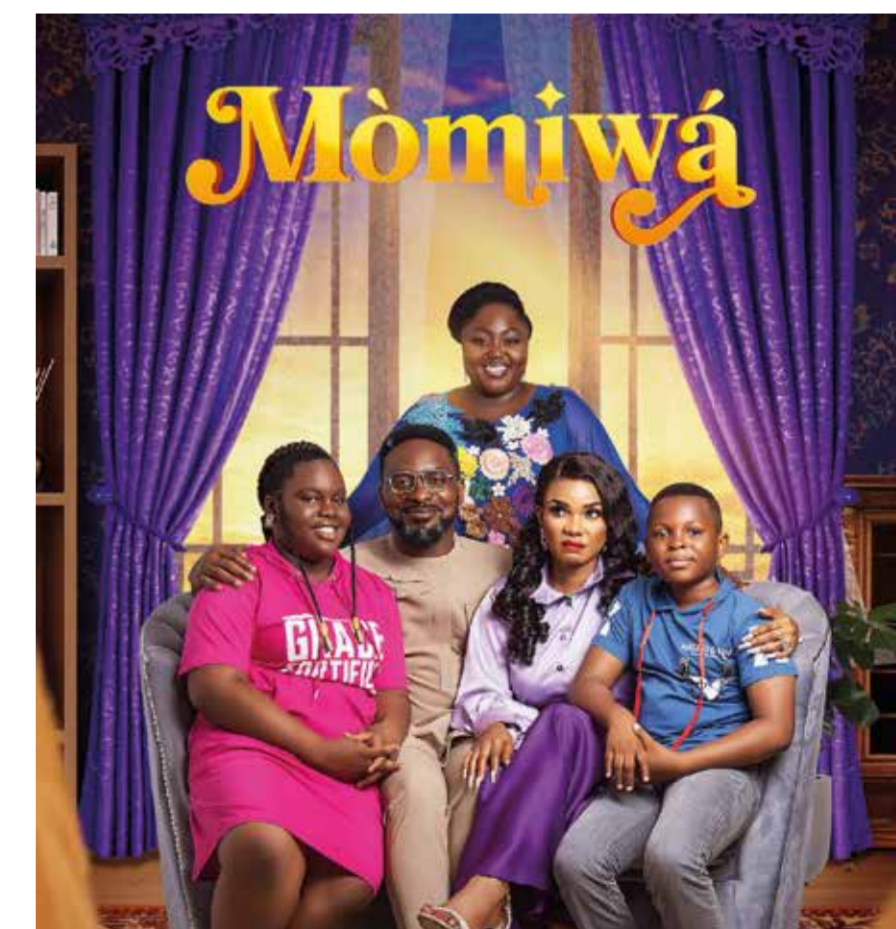
FUNMILAYO RANSOME-KUTI

Bolanle Austen-Peters takes us on a powerful historical journey with *Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti*, the true story of one of Nigeria's most iconic activists. Starring Kehinde Bankole in the lead role, the film highlights Funmilayo's relentless fight for women's rights, her role in Nigeria's independence struggle, and her fearless protests against unfair taxation. It's an inspiring watch that reinforces how one woman's courage can ignite change for generations.



EVERYBODY LOVES JENIFA

Funke Akindele is a force, and she proves it once again with *Everybody Loves Jenifa*. As the latest instalment in the beloved *Jenifa* franchise, this film sees Jenifa navigating a world where she is no longer underestimated but celebrated for her boldness and activism. Of course, in true *Jenifa* fashion, her nosiness lands her in a series of chaotic situations—but as always, she rises above it all, reminding us why we love her.



MOMIWA

Biodun Stephen gives us another heartwarming story with *Momiwa*, starring Blessing Jessica Obasi. The film follows a woman who becomes the backbone of a broken family, stepping in to support Naeto and his children after their mother leaves. Just when life seems to settle, the ex-wife returns, stirring up tension and old wounds. Through love, patience, and sacrifice, *Momiwa* beautifully showcases that true motherhood isn't just about biology—it's about love, commitment, and showing up when it matters most.



PRETTY PRIVILEGE: DOES IT STILL EXIST IN TODAY'S NIGERIA?

There is an unspoken currency in society that has existed for as long as beauty has been admired—pretty privilege. It is the idea that those deemed physically attractive are granted advantages in life, whether in careers, relationships or even day-to-day interactions. In Nigeria, where social structures are deeply ingrained, and beauty is often equated with worth, the conversation around pretty privilege remains relevant.

By **Konye Chelsea Nwabogor**

To say that beauty opens doors in Nigeria is an understatement. From job opportunities to social invitations, the advantages of being conventionally attractive are evident. We see it in workplaces where a “fine girl” gets preferential treatment from male bosses or in social settings where an attractive woman might receive a free meal, an Uber ride, or even a surprise credit alert from a generous admirer. It is in the everyday scenarios—how a light-skinned, well-dressed woman is treated differently at a bank compared to someone perceived as less attractive. It is in how customer service is suddenly exceptional when an attractive person steps forward.

Beauty as a currency is particularly visible in the entertainment and media industries. There's a reason why beauty queens effortlessly transition into Nollywood or why certain influencers, regardless of their talent (or lack thereof), are given lucrative brand deals. In a space where visibility is everything, beauty can fast-track success. Even in corporate Nigeria, there is a silent understanding that looking “put together” can determine how seriously one is taken. As a hiring manager for a Lagos-based company once bluntly admitted, “We don't want ugly people at the front desk.”

But the real power of pretty privilege is not just in its ability to open doors—it is in how it shapes perception. An attractive person is often assumed to be smarter, more competent, and even more deserving. It is why during elections, we see people commenting on how “fine” a candidate is rather than their policies. It is why a CEO's looks might be analysed as much as their business acumen. It is why some women who marry wealthy men are accused of securing their place based on looks alone and why men who are conventionally handsome are given unwarranted credibility.

However, the dynamics of pretty privilege in Nigeria have evolved. While it remains a potent tool, it now competes with other factors like wealth, influence, and digital presence. In the past, being physically attractive was enough to elevate one's social and economic standing. Today, beauty alone may not be sufficient. Social media has democratised attractiveness—filters, surgery, and makeup have blurred the lines between natural and enhanced beauty. The girl next door can now look like a supermodel with the right editing skills. In a way, beauty is no longer exclusive; it has become accessible, even manufactured.

Additionally, the rise of influencers and digital personalities means that power no longer belongs solely to the traditionally beautiful. Being engaging, funny, or having a compelling personal brand can



SHATU GARKO 44TH MISS NIGERIA



Social media has democratised attractiveness—filters, surgery, and makeup have blurred the lines between natural and enhanced beauty. The girl next door can now look like a supermodel with the right editing skills. In a way, beauty is no longer exclusive; it has become accessible, even manufactured.

as it does, the privileges that once came with it may also diminish. This is why many people who have benefited from their looks actively work to establish themselves beyond their physical appeal. Whether through business, media presence, or skill acquisition, they find ways to remain relevant even when their looks are no longer their primary asset.

Pretty privilege still exists in Nigeria. Absolutely, it does. But it has shifted. It is no longer the sole determinant of success; it now works alongside influence, digital savviness, and strategic positioning. Beauty still matters, but it is no longer enough. But let's not kid ourselves—life is still softer when you are easy on the eyes. Whether it's getting into an exclusive club without struggling at the door or receiving unnecessary favours from strangers, beauty remains an unspoken currency. And so, for those who have it, enjoy it. For those who don't, well, there's always personality, humour, and, most importantly, money. Because as our people say, “When money enters, beauty follows.”

sometimes overshadow physical beauty. There are many social media figures who do not fit conventional beauty standards but have built empires based on their relatability or charisma. However, even within this space, pretty privilege still lingers—an attractive woman will often get more brand deals, more likes, and more engagement simply by existing.

But what about men? Does pretty privilege apply to them in Nigeria? The answer is layered. While society has historically placed more pressure on women to be beautiful, attractive men do experience advantages. A well-groomed man with striking features is more likely to be taken seriously in high-powered meetings simply because he “looks the part.” However, for men, wealth is often the more defining factor. A man may not be conventionally attractive, but if he is rich, his appeal skyrockets. The same cannot always be said for women, who, despite being wealthy, may still be judged harshly if they do not fit the beauty ideal.

It is also important to acknowledge that pretty privilege can be a double-edged sword. While beauty can open doors, it can also lead to people being underestimated or reduced to just their looks. Many attractive women in professional spaces have to work twice as hard to prove they are more than just a pretty face. It is why actresses, influencers, or even female entrepreneurs often feel the need to emphasise their work ethic, intelligence, and talent—because society tends to assume that their success is solely based on looks.

Pretty privilege does not always guarantee long-term success. Beauty fades, and

A CELEBRATION OF POWER, BEAUTY & SISTERHOOD: INSIDE JOYCE JACOB BEAUTY X OZINNA DOT COM'S IWD COLLABORATION SHOOT



OZINNA ANUMUDU



JOYCE ANUMUDU

There's an undeniable magic that unfolds when women come together to uplift, celebrate, and empower one another. This International Women's Day, that magic was in full effect as Joyce Jacob Beauty and Ozinna Dot Com joined forces for a celebration of power, beauty, and sisterhood. The result? A breathtaking affair where glamour met confidence, and every woman in attendance radiated the essence of self-love and empowerment.

The setting was none other than the luxe Joyce Jacob Beauty Studios, an elegant haven that became a buzzing space of joy and anticipation. Phenomenal women—all clients and friends of the brand—stepped into the spotlight, not just for a photoshoot but for a moment that would leave them feeling as beautiful as they truly are. From flawless makeup to statement fashion and expertly styled hair, the entire experience was designed to highlight their unique essence and celebrate the diversity of beauty.

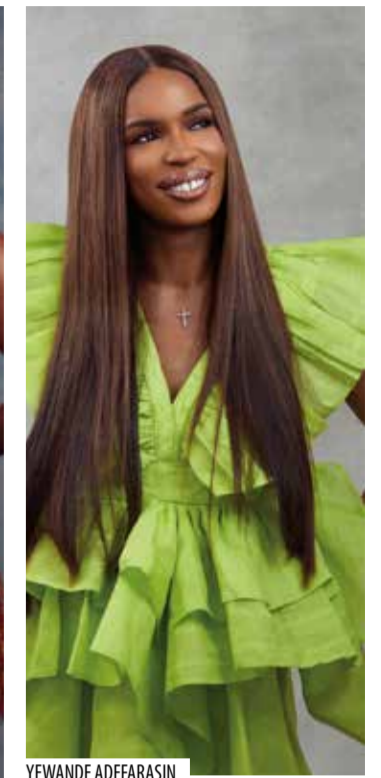
Joyce Jacob Beauty, synonymous with soft, luminous glam, worked its signature magic to enhance each woman's features perfectly. Skin glowed with an ethereal radiance, eyes shimmered with effortless allure, and lips spoke volumes in hues that ranged from sultry nudes to commanding reds. The glam was bold yet seamless, and it didn't stop there—Joyce Jacob Beauty also took charge of hair styling, ensuring that each woman's tresses complemented her overall look. Whether it was sleek and sophisticated, voluminous curls, or intricate updos, every strand was perfectly in place, adding yet another layer of confidence to the experience.

Of course, fashion played its part in this stunning collaboration, and Ozinna Dot Com brought the heat with an exquisite selection of pieces that exuded power, femininity, and grace. Each woman slipped into outfits that felt like an extension of her personality—soft prints, structured silhouettes, and dresses that struck the perfect balance between boss energy and effortless elegance. It wasn't just about clothes; it was about self-expression, about wearing something that made you stand taller and step into your power.

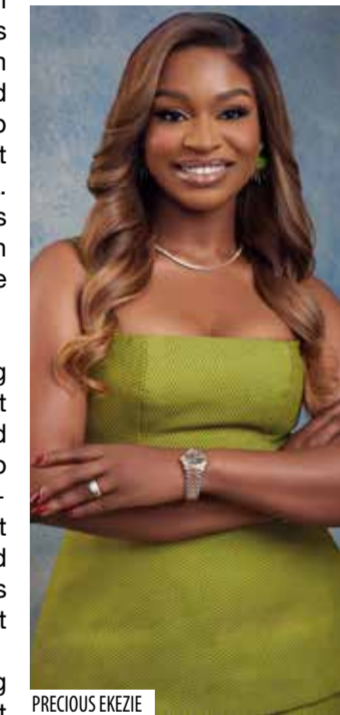
While the day was draped in glamour, the underlying message was just as powerful. This wasn't just about beauty or fashion; it was about representation. It was about creating a space where women feel seen, valued, and inspired. Joyce Jacob Beauty and Ozinna Dot Com didn't just curate a visual masterpiece; they curated a feeling. A feeling that whispered—and sometimes shouted—you are powerful, you are enough, you are worthy of celebration every single day.



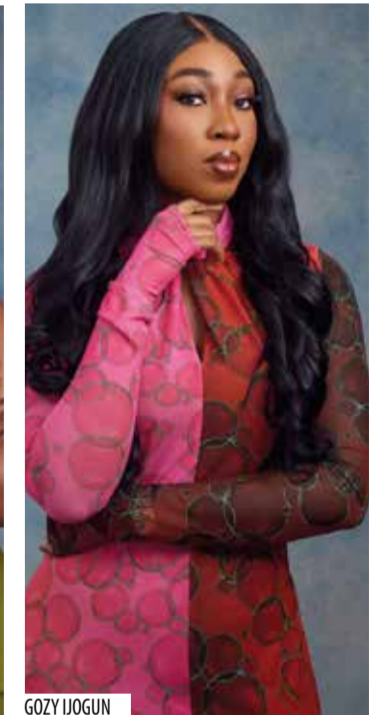
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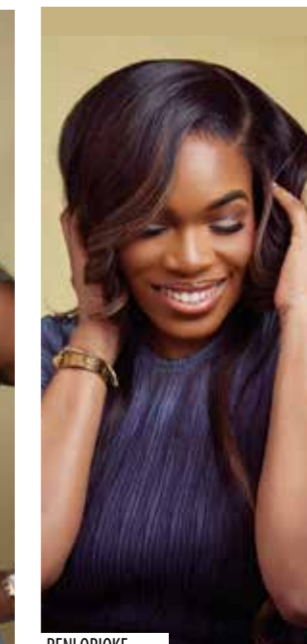
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10 MINIMALIST RULES THAT ACTUALLY WORK

Minimalism has been romanticised as an aesthetic—think clean white walls, capsule wardrobes, and perfectly arranged furniture. But beyond the Instagram-worthy spaces, minimalism is a mindset, a way of living with more intention and less clutter—both physically and mentally. It's about creating space for what truly matters. And let's be real: in a world where we're constantly bombarded with things to buy, tasks to process, and information to process, simplifying can feel like a radical act of self-care.

But how do you actually do it? More importantly, how do you make it work for real life—not just as a fleeting trend but as a sustainable lifestyle? Here are ten minimalist rules that aren't just feel-good advice but actually work.



1. The One-In, One-Out Rule

For every new item you bring into your life, let go of one. Bought a new pair of shoes? Donate or sell an old pair. Downloaded a new app? Delete one you never use. This prevents accumulation and keeps your possessions—and your digital life—from spiralling out of control.

2. Declutter by Category, Not Room

Instead of tackling your home room by room, declutter by category. For example, sort through all your books at once, then your clothes, then your kitchen gadgets. This method, popularised by Marie Kondo, prevents you from shifting things around and forces you to see how much of something you own.

3. Use the 90/90 Rule

If you haven't used something in the last 90 days and you don't anticipate using it in the next 90 days, let it go. This rule applies to everything—clothes, kitchen gadgets, and even subscriptions. It forces you to be honest about what's truly useful in your life versus what's just taking up space.

4. Set a "Maybe" Box

Sometimes, getting rid of things is tough because of the dreaded what if I need this later? syndrome. The solution? A "Maybe" box. Put questionable items in a box and stash it away for a few months. If you don't reach for them, you probably don't need them.

5. Digitise Where Possible

Paper clutter is one of the sneakiest forms of mess. Bills, receipts, notes, old documents—they add up. Scan important documents, opt for digital billing, and use apps for note-taking instead of sticky notes scattered everywhere. The less paper you have, the easier it is to stay organised.

6. Set a Shopping Rule

Before you buy something, ask yourself:

Do I really need this?

Will I use it regularly?

Do I already own something similar?

Can I afford it without stress?

If you hesitate on any of these, put it back. And if you still want it, give it 30 days. If you still need it after a month, go ahead. More often than not, you'll forget about it.

7. Practice the 5-Minute Declutter Rule

Decluttering doesn't always have to be a big event. Every day, set aside five minutes to tidy up a small area—a drawer, your bedside table, your email inbox. These small, consistent efforts prevent things from piling up and keep your space manageable.

8. Create a Uniform (Or a Capsule Wardrobe)

Decision fatigue is real, and it starts in your closet. A minimalist wardrobe makes getting dressed effortless. You don't have to go full Steve Jobs with a daily black turtleneck, but narrowing your wardrobe to pieces that you love and actually wear will make life easier.

A capsule wardrobe—a small collection of versatile, high-quality pieces—helps you maximise style with fewer items. Quality over quantity is key.

9. Be Intentional with Your Time

Minimalism isn't just about stuff; it's about time, too. Say no to things that drain you. Set boundaries on social media. Cut out unnecessary meetings. Create space for what truly matters—rest, hobbies, relationships, and the things that bring you joy.

10. Define Your Own Version of Minimalism

The biggest minimalist rule? Make it work for you. Minimalism isn't about living in an empty house with three shirts and one bowl. It's about removing excess and keeping what adds value to your life. If that means owning 50 books instead of 500, great. If it means keeping a large shoe collection because you genuinely love it, that's fine too. Minimalism isn't deprivation—it's about living with purpose.





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CHUDE JIDEONWO

CHOOSING JOY

When you hear the name Chude Jideonwo, what comes to mind? For many, he's an enigma—a man whose name is synonymous with media innovation, social change, and storytelling that touches the soul. To others, he's the quiet force behind some of Africa's most impactful movements, a man who has spent 25 years reshaping narratives across advertising, public relations, television, radio, print, and digital media. But to sit with Chude, even briefly, is to see beyond the accolades and the titles. It's to encounter a man of profound clarity, resilience, and purpose—a man who has chosen joy as his compass, even in the face of adversity.

Chude's journey is one of bold strokes and quiet revolutions.

From co-founding RED | For Africa, a media powerhouse that influenced national elections and social movements across Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Senegal, to launching Joy, Inc., a human flourishing company focused on mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, his career highlights the transformative power of storytelling.

Throughout his journey, he has used his platforms to amplify voices, challenge norms, and inspire change. As he marks his 40th birthday, it's a celebration of a legacy built over decades. His work has impacted millions, from the young Africans he has empowered through The Future Awards to the global audiences who tune in to his viral podcast, #WithChude. But Chude's story goes beyond a list of achievements—it reflects resilience, authenticity, and the relentless pursuit of joy.

By Ayo Lawal

The Early Years: A Childhood Shaped by Stories

Chude's story begins in Lagos, Nigeria, a city he describes as a vibrant chaos that shaped his worldview. Growing up, he was surrounded by the quiet wonder of books, thanks to his father, an avid reader who introduced him to the works of literary giants like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. "I was always fascinated by stories," Chude recalls, his eyes softening as he gestures with his hands as if painting the memories in the air. "Those early encounters with literature weren't just an escape—they were the spark that ignited my passion for media."

It was this passion that led him to the world of storytelling, where he quickly realised that media was more than just a tool for entertainment—it was a vehicle for change. "I don't know any other way media was used," he says with a gentle laugh as if the answer were obvious. He speaks fondly of the influential figures he worked alongside in his early days, like Funmi Iyanda, who used every platform to advocate for what was right. "Media was the tool that shaped my very being," he explains. "It taught me that every story has the power to change lives."

The RED Years: Crafting Movements and Shaping Nations

In 2005, Chude co-founded RED | For Africa, a media and communication company that would become a driving force behind some of Africa's most significant social and political movements. Under his leadership, RED crafted strategies that fueled national elections and social campaigns across

multiple countries, earning recognition as African Business of the Year alongside giants like Dangote Group and Chandaria Industries.

But for Chude, the success of RED was never just about the accolades. It was about the impact. "We weren't just telling stories—we were creating movements," he says, his voice resolute. From Nigeria to Ghana, Kenya to Senegal, RED's work redefined how media could be used to inspire action and drive change.

Yet, after a decade at the helm, Chude felt a calling to something deeper. In 2016, he stepped away from RED to embark on a new mission—one that would focus on uplifting the mind, heart, and spirit.

Joy, Inc.: A New Chapter in Human Flourishing

With no prospect of revenue or recognition, Chude founded Joy, Inc., a human flourishing company dedicated to creating safe, nurturing spaces for mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Partnering with organisations like Ford Motor Company and the Lagos State Government, Joy, Inc. has established itself as a transformative force for individuals seeking healing and growth.

"I entered this space knowing that creativity needs to be funded," Chude confides, leaning forward as if sharing a well-guarded secret. "Without money, creativity dies." For him, the balance between artistic vision and entrepreneurial demands is a delicate dance—one where he constantly adjusts his ideas to match the available resources. "Every project is scaled to fit the budget, but we never sacrifice its soul," he explains.



This pragmatic approach has allowed Chude to build a media empire without losing sight of the creative spark that drives his work. Whether it's Joy, Inc. or his viral podcast, #WithChude, every venture is a testament to his belief in the power of storytelling to transform lives.

#WithChude: A Platform for Healing and Resilience

Launched in 2020, #WithChude has become a cultural phenomenon featuring deeply personal conversations with African leaders and celebrities. Syndicated across five regional networks and hosted exclusively on the streaming platform withChude.com, the podcast has become a hub for exploring stories of healing, resilience, and growth.

"I found the greatest joy after depression," Chude admits, his voice wavering slightly with emotion. His forthcoming book, *How Depression Saved My Life*, is perhaps the most personal chapter of his story yet. "I want people to see that even in our lowest moments, there's a pathway to joy," he says, his hand unconsciously clenching as he emphasises the transformative power of adversity.

For Chude, the podcast is more than just a platform—it's a mission. "I believe everyone has a story worth telling," he says, his voice resonating with genuine warmth. "My goal is to create a space where people feel seen and heard."

Technology: A Tool for Human Connection

Technological advances may be accelerating, but Chude remains refreshingly indifferent to the gadgets themselves. "I'm not here to debate if technology is for us or against us," he says with a casual shrug. What excites him isn't the novelty of new devices—it's how people use them to create meaningful connections.

"Technology is just a tool," he explains. "What matters is how we use it to connect, tell stories, and amplify voices." Whether it's harnessing AI to refine storytelling or using innovative platforms to broadcast authentic narratives, his focus remains on the human element—the stories that bring us together.

Reflecting on his own journey, from the early days of RED to the global reach of #WithChude, he acknowledges how technology has transformed his work. "When we started, we didn't have the tools we have today," he says. "But even then, we understood that the real power of media lies in its ability to touch hearts and minds. Technology has simply made that possible on a larger scale."

A Global Vision Rooted in African Identity

Despite his global acclaim, Chude remains deeply rooted in his Nigerian identity. "I make stories for my African community first," he states firmly, a wry smile playing on his lips. He chuckles as he compares the "concrete jungle" of the urban world to the open lands that Africa holds, remarking, "Why is the concrete jungle better than the open land jungle?"

His words carry both humour and conviction, underscoring his belief that true inspiration comes from within one's own culture and lived experiences. From his work on platforms like Big Brother, The Apprentice, Idols, and Got Talent to his documentaries honoured at the Africa International Film Festival and the Africa Magic Viewers Choice Awards, Chude's career is a masterclass in versatility and resilience.

Legacy: A Narrative Written by Others

When it comes to legacy, Chude is refreshingly humble. "You can never really know your legacy," he muses, almost philosophically. He recalls a story about Oprah Winfrey, who once feared that her legacy would be defined solely by her school in South Africa, even though she had inspired countless others to follow their own creative paths.

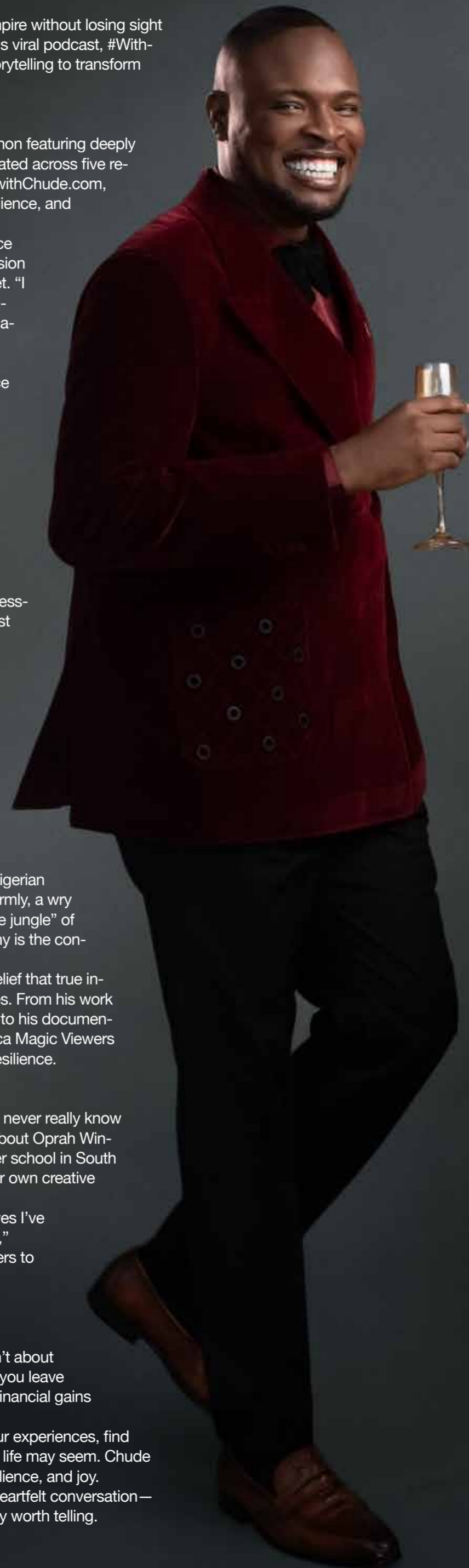
"For me, I've always hoped that my legacy would be about the lives I've touched—the people who felt seen and heard because of my work," Chude says, his eyes reflecting a quiet defiance. "But that's for others to decide."

The Future: A Vision of Hope and Creativity

As Chude steps into his 40s, he reminds us that true influence isn't about the noise you make; it's about the lives you change and the stories you leave behind. His path shows that success isn't just about accolades or financial gains but about inspiring and uplifting others.

In his every word and gesture, there is an invitation to embrace our experiences, find strength in vulnerability, and choose joy, no matter how challenging life may seem. Chude Jideonwo is more than a storyteller—he embodies authenticity, resilience, and joy.

And as his story unfolds—through each interview, initiative, and heartfelt conversation—one thing is clear: Chude's impact continues to grow, and it's a story worth telling.



Omoni Oboli's
'LOVE IN EVERY WORD'

Explores Love in the Modern Age

Omoni Oboli is back with another heartwarming romance, and this time, she delivers a film that effortlessly intertwines love, friendship, workplace struggles, and societal pressure—all wrapped up in an irresistibly fresh and relatable package.

Love in Every Word, released on Omoni Oboli TV via YouTube, has taken the internet by storm, amassing over six million views in just four days. That's right—everyone on Obasanjo's internet has been buzzing about it. Starring Bamiike 'Bambam' Adenibuyan (of Big Brother Naija 2018 fame) and the effortlessly charismatic Uzor Arukwe, the film delivers a delightful romance that feels both contemporary and deeply rooted in culture.

Plot Summary

Meet Chioma (Bambam), a whip-smart and talented marketing executive whose genius often goes unrecognised at work. On the personal front, she's finally had enough of her good-for-nothing boyfriend and calls it quits, hoping to re-focus on her career and side business. But just as she's navigating the single life, her mother decides to take matters into her own hands, introducing her to every eligible bachelor she can find. Cue the unsolicited matchmaking.

Enter Odogwu Obiora (Uzor Arukwe)—a kind, successful, and all-around perfect suitor. Everything about him screams husband material, except for one thing: his accent. Initially put off, Chioma ghosts him before realising that—despite her best efforts—she may have actually fallen for him. But is it too late? Can she see past her own prejudices and embrace love in its truest form?

What We Love

First off, Bambam and Uzor absolutely own their roles. Their performances bring an undeniable warmth to the film, and while their chemistry isn't always at a hundred, it's enough to make you root for them. Their romance, for the most part, feels authentic, giving us those heart-fluttering moments that make rom-coms so addictive. But let's talk about the scene-stealers.

Thelma Chukwunem, who plays Chioma's overbearing but well-meaning mother, is an absolute delight. Her comedic timing? Impeccable. Every scene she appears in is instantly elevated with humour and energy.

And then there's Inegbenebor Osereme, who plays Ify, Chioma's friend. She brings just the right amount of sass and wit to her role, making her the kind of best friend every lead character (and audience member) needs.

Beyond the acting, one of the film's strongest elements is its beautiful representation of Igbo culture. The dialogue seamlessly incorporates the Igbo language, and the film doesn't shy away from addressing (and sometimes de-bunking) stereotypes about Igbo men and their relationships. It's refreshing to see a movie that celebrates cultural identity while also challenging societal norms.

And can we take a moment to appreciate the makeup team? Whoever was in charge of Bambam's glam needs a raise! The makeup was flawless—enhancing her natural beauty without ever feeling overdone. It added an extra layer of character depth, subtly highlighting her transition from being unsure about love to fully embracing it.

Things Got a Little Sloppy...

As much as we love the film, we have to admit

that the romantic buildup felt rushed. While the chemistry between the leads was enjoyable, it lacked depth in some areas. The transition from *'Oh no, I can't stand him'* to *'Actually, I'm in love with him'* happened a little too quickly, making the romance feel a bit shallow.

Some scenes that could have added more emotional weight were either cut short or not explored deeply enough. It's understandable that the film needed to maintain a concise runtime, but a little more character development and slow-burn romance would have made the story even more compelling.

This is a recurring issue with many YouTube-released Nollywood films—a tendency to prioritise brevity over depth. While it works for digital consumption, it likely wouldn't hold up in a traditional cinematic release where audiences expect more layered storytelling.

That said, what *Love in Every Word* lacks in depth, it makes up for in vibes. It's the kind of feel-good movie that reminds you why we all secretly (or not-so-secretly) love romance films. It's sweet, lighthearted, and will definitely make you giggle, blush, and sigh for a solid 110 minutes.

So, if you're in the mood for a cheesy, warm, and comforting love story, grab your popcorn and settle in—because this one's worth watching!



SOFT LIFE STARTER PACK: THE FASHION EDITION

When it comes to the “soft life,” we’re all a little obsessed. Who doesn’t want to exude effortless luxury, float through life in a cloud of good vibes, and have their outfits scream “expensive” even if they didn’t break the bank? The soft life isn’t just a trend; it’s a lifestyle, and your wardrobe needs to match the energy. Whether you’re already living the dream or just starting your journey into this world of ease, we’ve got the ultimate Soft Life Starter Pack: The Fashion Edition to help you dress the part.



PATRICIA AND FELICIA OBOZUWA



KOYINSOLA AKINRELE



OSAS IGHODARO



EDOSE OKOJIE



SHERIFAT



LOEWE OVERSIZED ROUND SUNGLASS IN LIGHT BROWN ACETATE



HAVAIANAS-BONETE SUNGLASSES



HERMES SCARF



BOTTEGA VENETA



GUCCI



HERMES-CONSTANCE



CHLOÉ LAUREN LEATHER BALLE FLATS



ROGER VIVIER TROMPETTED ORSAY LEATHER BALLE FLATS



IFY OKOYE

1. Luxe Fabrics Are a Must

The first rule of dressing for the soft life? Fabric matters. Say goodbye to stiff, cheap materials and hello to silk, satin, cashmere, and high-quality cotton. These fabrics feel good on your skin and drape beautifully, giving you that “I wake up in a 5-star hotel every morning” aesthetic. Whether it’s a silky slip dress, a crisp linen set, or a buttery soft cashmere cardigan, the key is to look effortlessly put together—without trying too hard.

2. Neutrals and Monochrome = Instant Elegance

Soft life fashion isn’t about loud, chaotic prints (unless you’re going for the ‘rich aunty on vacation’ look, which we fully support). Instead, think elevated simplicity—creamy whites, soft beiges, taupes, greys, and chic monochrome looks. A head-to-toe neutral outfit, whether it’s an oversized blazer and tailored pants or a minimalist

knit dress, gives off that effortless luxury vibe. That doesn’t mean you can’t play with colour, though. Muted pastels, jewel tones, and monochrome look in bold shades like emerald green or deep chocolate brown, which can still give that soft life energy. Just keep the styling sleek and intentional.

3. Effortless Silhouettes Over Tight-Fitting Pieces

The soft life aesthetic is all about comfort. That means flowy silhouettes, relaxed tailoring, and pieces that move with you. Wide-leg trousers, slouchy blazers, oversized button-downs, and maxi dresses are key players. Think of how a boss who owns multiple properties but never stresses herself would dress—exactly. That doesn’t mean you can’t wear fitted pieces, but when you do, balance is key. A form-fitting dress can be layered with an oversized blazer, or

slim jeans can be paired with a relaxed shirt. The goal is to look put-together but never like you tried too hard.

4. Statement Accessories, But Make It Subtle

Soft life accessories aren’t about piling on the trends; they’re about strategic elegance. Here’s what you need in your arsenal:

Minimalist Gold Jewelry: Think dainty rings, sleek gold hoops, and a subtle chain necklace. The goal is understated luxury.

Designer (or Designer-Looking) Handbag: If you can splurge, go for classics like a Bottega Veneta pouch or a Chanel flap bag. If not, look for structured, high-quality leather bags with minimal branding. No need for loud logos—let the craftsmanship speak for itself.

Chic Sunglasses: Oversized or retro-inspired frames instantly make any outfit look more

sophisticated. Bonus points for gradient lenses that give that air of mystery.

Silk Scarves: Tie them around your neck, drape them over your bag, or even wear them as a headscarf for that old-money aesthetic.

5. Elevated Loungewear for Everyday Elegance

Soft life fashion extends beyond the outside world—your loungewear game must also be on point. Those oversized T-shirts and faded leggings? Time to upgrade. Invest in matching ribbed sets, linen pyjama sets, and chic knitwear that make you feel luxurious even when you’re just binge-watching your favourite show at home.

6. Shoes That Mean Business (Without the Stress)

Soft-life shoes aren’t about suffering in sky-

high heels (unless that’s your thing). Instead, comfort meets luxury is the motto. Here’s your checklist: Chic Slides & Mules, Loafers & Ballet Flats and Minimalist Sneakers

7. The Power of a Good Blazer

If there’s one piece that instantly screams money, it’s a well-tailored blazer. Throwing on a structured blazer over literally anything (a slip dress, a tank and jeans, a matching set) makes you look like someone who owns property and has their life together—even if you don’t.

8. Perfume as the Final Touch

Soft life isn’t just about looking good—it’s about smelling expensive, too. Your signature scent should be warm, inviting, and a little mysterious. Think vanilla, musk, oud, sandalwood, or floral notes with a creamy base.

1. They Communicate with Clarity and Kindness

You never have to play detective with their words. They say what they mean, and they mean what they say. No mixed signals, no mind games—just open, honest communication. Even when they're upset, they express their feelings without resorting to insults or emotional manipulation. If something is bothering them, they bring it up in a way that invites discussion, not conflict.



ONYEKA AND MIKE UGWU

2. They Make You Feel Safe

Not just physically but emotionally. You don't feel like you have to tiptoe around them, second-guess your words, or brace for an emotional explosion. You can be vulnerable without fear of being judged or ridiculed. Real love is a soft place to land, not a battlefield.

3. They Respect Your Independence

A green flag relationship doesn't suffocate you; it lets you breathe. Your partner loves you, but they don't need to control you. They understand that you are a whole person outside of the relationship, with dreams, friendships, and interests that deserve space to grow. They don't get jealous when you spend time with friends or pursue personal goals—they cheer you on.

4. They Apologise and Mean It

No one is perfect, but not everyone is accountable. A great partner doesn't double down when they're wrong. They acknowl-

WHEN LOVE FEELS RIGHT: THE GREEN FLAGS YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR

We spend so much time talking about red flags—those glaring warning signs that make you want to sprint in the opposite direction. But what about the green flags? The quiet but powerful indicators that you're in a healthy, loving relationship?

If red flags scream, green flags whisper. They aren't always flashy or dramatic but are the foundation of a strong, lasting connection. So, instead of obsessing over what could go wrong, let's talk about the signs that show you're with the right person.

edge their mistakes, apologise sincerely, and make an effort to do better. And here's the kicker: they don't just say, "I'm sorry you feel that way." They actually take responsibility for their actions.

5. They Celebrate Your Successes

A green flag partner doesn't feel threatened by your achievements. They are genuinely happy when good things happen for you. Whether it's a job promotion, a personal milestone, or even just a small win, they're in your corner, clapping the loudest. There's no competition, no resentment—just mutual pride and joy.

6. They Handle Conflict with Maturity

Disagreements are inevitable, but how they're handled makes all the difference. A healthy partner doesn't scream, stonewall, or give the silent treatment for days. They don't try to "win" the argument at the cost of the relationship. Instead, they focus on finding solutions and making sure both of you feel heard and understood.

7. They're Consistent, Not Just in the Beginning

Anyone can be charming for the first few months, but real love is shown in consistency. A green flag partner doesn't just put in effort at the start and then let things fizzle out. They continue to show up, prioritise you, and nurture the relationship

long after the honeymoon phase is over.

8. They Make an Effort with the People You Love

They don't have to become best friends with your family and friends, but they respect how much these relationships matter to you. They make an effort to be kind, engage in conversations, and show genuine interest in the people who are important in your life. A good partner understands that loving you means respecting your connections.

9. They Match Your Energy

A green flag relationship has a beautiful rhythm—both of you give and take in equal measure. If you're always the one planning dates, initiating conversations, or making sacrifices, something is off. A healthy relationship feels balanced, where both people invest in making it work.

10. You Like Who You Are When You're with Them

This might be the most important green flag of all. You don't feel like you have to shrink yourself, put on a mask, or become someone else just to be loved. With them, you feel like the best, most authentic version of yourself. They encourage you to grow, but they never make you feel like you're not enough as you are.



JUMA JUX AND PRISCILLA OJO



MR EAZI AND TEMI OTEDEOLA

10 TINY THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MAKE YOUR HAIR GROW FASTER

For many Nigerian women, hair growth is the ultimate goal. Whether you're rocking your natural coils or keeping it sleek with a relaxer, there's always that desire for longer, healthier, and fuller hair. But while we all want inches overnight, hair growth is a process, and no magic potion will get you waist-length braids by next week. However, the good news is that a few small changes in your hair routine can make a huge difference over time. Here are ten tiny but powerful things you can do to boost your hair growth journey.



STRETCH RELAXER TIME

PROTEIN

WASH YOUR HAIR REGULARLY



PROTECTIVE STYLING

TRIM SLIT ENDS



RONKE RAJI



REDUCE HEAT STYLING

1. Stretch Your Relaxer Time

One of the biggest mistakes for ladies with relaxed hair is touching up too often. Relaxers permanently alter your hair structure, and over-processing weakens the strands, leading to breakage. Instead of relaxing every four to six weeks, try stretching it to ten to twelve weeks. This gives your hair time to grow without constantly overlapping chemicals on already-relaxed ends. In the meantime, protective styles and deep conditioning treatments will help keep new growth manageable.

2. Protein Treatments Are Your Best Friend

Hair is made of keratin, a protein, and when your hair is damaged from relaxers, heat, or excessive styling, it needs reinforcement. A monthly protein treatment will strengthen your strands, prevent breakage, and improve elasticity. Whether it's a store-bought protein mask or a DIY mix of egg and mayonnaise, this step is crucial for length retention. Just be sure to follow up with a deep conditioner to maintain moisture balance.

3. Wash Your Hair Regularly (But Not Too Often)

Many Nigerian women, especially those with natural hair, are guilty of skipping wash days for weeks, thinking it helps with growth. While over-washing can strip natural oils, not washing enough leads to product buildup, clogged hair follicles, and an itchy scalp—none of which promote healthy hair growth. Aim to wash your hair every one to two weeks with a sulfate-free shampoo or co-wash, depending on your hair type and lifestyle.

4. Protective Styling—The Right Way

Braids, twists, and wigs can be lifesavers when growing out your hair, but only if done correctly. Too-tight styles, heavy extensions, and neglecting your hair underneath will do more harm than good. Opt for styles that don't stress your edges, and always moisturize your hair and scalp while in a protective style. Don't forget to give your hair a break in between installs to prevent traction alopecia.

5. Trim Those Split Ends

It may sound counterintuitive, but trimming your hair regularly actually helps it grow. Split ends travel up the hair shaft, causing breakage and making it seem like your hair isn't growing. A tiny trim every three to four months will keep your ends healthy and prevent unnecessary breakage.

6. Scalp Massages with Oils

Your scalp is the foundation of your hair, and good circulation is key to healthy growth. A simple 5-minute scalp massage with natural oils like castor oil, peppermint oil, or rosemary oil can do wonders. These oils not only nourish your scalp but also stimulate blood flow, encouraging faster hair growth. Bonus tip: Warm up the oil slightly before applying for better absorption.

7. Hydration is Key

Moisture is everything when it comes to hair growth. Dry, brittle hair snaps easily, making length retention impossible. Whether your hair is natural or relaxed, a good leave-in conditioner, water-based moisturizer, and sealing oil (like shea butter or coconut oil) should be part of your routine. Also, drink enough water! Hydration starts from within, and if your body is dehydrated, your hair will be too.

8. Ditch the Cotton Pillowcase

If you're still sleeping on a cotton pillowcase, your hair is suffering. Cotton absorbs moisture, leaving your hair dry and prone to breakage. Switch to a satin or silk pillowcase, or wear a satin bonnet at night to reduce friction and keep your strands hydrated.

9. Reduce Heat Styling

Yes, we all love that sleek silk press or bone-straight look, but excessive heat weakens your hair over time. If you must use heat, always apply a heat protectant and keep the temperature low. Better yet, embrace heat-free styles like bantu knots, twist-outs, or flexi rods for healthier, fuller hair.

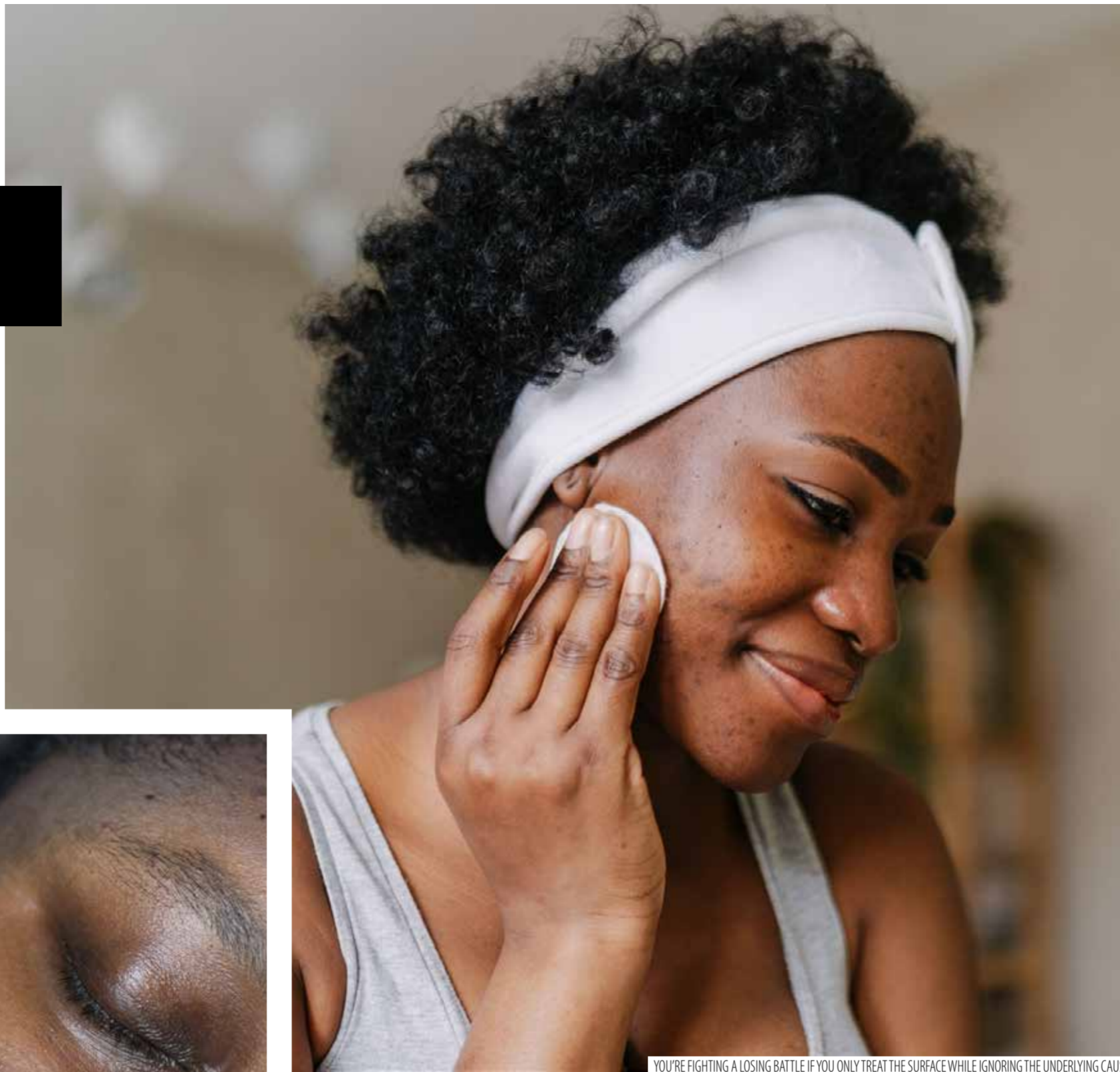
10. Patience and Consistency

Lastly, hair growth requires patience and consistency. There's no shortcut—your hair will grow about half an inch per month if you take good care of it. Stick to a routine, listen to your hair's needs, and give it time. Before you know it, you'll be measuring your progress in inches!

HYPERPIGMENTATION 101

WHAT YOU'RE DOING WRONG (AND HOW TO FIX IT)

Hyperpigmentation—those stubborn dark spots that refuse to leave your face no matter how many brightening creams you slather on—can be one of the most frustrating skincare concerns. It sneaks up after a breakout, lingers after a bad sunburn, and sometimes appears out of nowhere, making your complexion look uneven. If you've been battling these unwelcome guests for months (or even years), chances are you're making a few common mistakes without realizing it. Let's break down what you might be doing wrong and how to finally get hyperpigmentation under control.



HYPERPIGMENTATION



MOST TREATMENTS TAKE WEEKS, SOMETIMES MONTHS, TO SHOW VISIBLE IMPROVEMENT



HYPERPIGMENTATION

You're Not Using Sunscreen Religiously

If you only apply sunscreen when you're headed to the beach, we have a problem. Hyperpigmentation thrives under UV exposure, meaning every time you step outside without SPF, you're deepening those dark spots. Even if you're indoors all day, blue light from your phone and laptop can worsen pigmentation.

The Fix: Use a broad-spectrum SPF 30 (or higher) daily, rain or shine. If you're serious about fading dark spots, sunscreen isn't optional—it's mandatory. Bonus tip: Look for sunscreens with ingredients like niacinamide or zinc oxide, which can help soothe the skin while protecting it.

You're Over-Exfoliating

Exfoliation is key to shedding dead skin cells and revealing fresh, radiant skin. But too much of a good thing can backfire. Over-exfoliating (with harsh scrubs, chemical peels, or too many acids) can lead to irritation, triggering more melanin production—and even darker spots.

The Fix: Stick to exfoliating 2-3 times a week with a gentle chemical exfoliant like lactic acid

or mandelic acid. If your skin is sensitive, opt for enzyme exfoliants instead, which work without causing irritation.

You're Popping Pimples Like It's a Hobby

We get it—the urge to pop that juicy whitehead is almost irresistible. But every time you pick, squeeze, or scratch a pimple, you're setting the stage for post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH). The trauma causes your skin to produce excess melanin, leading to those dreaded dark marks.

The Fix: Hands off! If a pimple is bugging you, use spot treatments with salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide, or hydrocolloid patches instead. And if you absolutely must extract, see a professional.

You're Not Treating the Root Cause

Hyperpigmentation isn't just about the dark spots you see—it's about what's causing them. Acne, eczema, hormonal imbalances, and even certain medications can contribute to persistent pigmentation issues. You're fighting a losing battle if you only treat the surface while ignoring



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STICK TO EXFOLIATING 2-3 TIMES A WEEK WITH A GENTLE CHEMICAL EXFOLIANT



HYDRATION BEFORE MOISTURISERS

the underlying cause.

The Fix: Identify and address the root cause. If it's acne-related, focus on acne treatments. If it's hormonal, speak to a dermatologist about options like birth control or hormone-balancing treatments. Sometimes, treating the trigger is the fastest way to clearer skin.



CONSIDER IN-OFFICE TREATMENTS LIKE CHEMICAL PEELS, MICRONEEDLING, LASER THERAPY, OR PRESCRIPTION-STRENGTH LIGHTENING AGENTS

You're Relying on DIY Remedies That Don't Work

Lemon juice, toothpaste, turmeric masks—there's no shortage of DIY "miracle" treatments floating around the internet. While some natural ingredients can be beneficial, many home remedies can actually make hyperpigmentation worse by irritating the skin or making it more sensitive to the sun.

The Fix: Stick to dermatologist-approved ingredients like vitamin C, licorice extract, alpha arbutin, and tranexamic acid. If you're unsure about a home remedy, patch-test first or consult a professional before putting it all over your face.

You Expect Results Overnight

Let's be real—hyperpigmentation takes time to fade. You might be doing everything right, but you'll only end up frustrated if you expect an overnight transformation. Most treatments take weeks, sometimes months, to show visible improvement.

The Fix: Be patient and consistent. Track your progress with photos every few weeks to stay motivated. If you're using products like retinol, vitamin C, or professional treatments like chemical peels, give them at least 8-12 weeks before assessing results.

You Haven't Considered Professional Treatments

If your hyperpigmentation isn't budging despite your best efforts, it might be time to call in the professionals. Sometimes, at-home treatments can only do so much, especially for deep or stubborn pigmentation.

The Fix: Consider in-office treatments like chemical peels, microneedling, laser therapy, or prescription-strength lightening agents. A dermatologist can customize a treatment plan based on your skin type and specific pigmentation concerns.

You're Ignoring Your Body

Hyperpigmentation isn't just a face problem—it can show up on your chest, back, arms, or anywhere else your skin experiences inflammation or trauma. If you're neglecting your body, those dark spots may stick around longer than necessary.

The Fix: Treat body hyperpigmentation just like your face. Use gentle exfoliants, targeted treatments, and sunscreen on areas prone to dark spots (especially if you experience body acne or ingrown hairs).



BE PATIENT AND CONSISTENT. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS WITH PHOTOS EVERY FEW WEEKS TO STAY MOTIVATED.

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