

MAY 16 - 17, 2026



Life

INSIDE:

CARGO PANTS to
recreate

Inside ALEX EKUBO's
life, career and final days



Women, are you
really okay?

Silent emotional battles many now hide





EDITOR'S NOTE

Ademola Olonilua

Finding Strength and Stillness

Welcome to this week's issues. This edition is a bit of a balancing act much like life itself. We are moving between moments of deep reflection and the simple joys that keep us going. The Nollywood industry is much quieter this week as we mourn the passing of Alex Ekubo. It is a heartbreaking loss for the entertainment world, and our thoughts are with his family and fans. We take a moment to honour his talent and the legacy he leaves behind. The void he leaves is a reminder of how much one person can impact the world. In light of such news, our focus on women's mental health feels more important than ever. With statistics showing the number of women dealing with mental health conditions, it becomes quite a necessity to be on our cover. We dive into the necessity of self-care, seeking help, and breaking the silence. It's okay not to be okay, and we hope these pages offer a sense of community and support. To help lift your spirit, we've curated the best of food, guides, travel and fashion as always bringing you the latest trends in these worlds. Whether it's a comforting recipe to share with loved ones or a look at the leads in fashion to boost your confidence, we hope these sections bring a smile to your face.

Take care of yourselves and each other.

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EDITORIAL TEAM Creators Toke Alex Ibru, Chief Executive Officer Anita Athena Ibru, Chief Strategy Officer (Global) Daniel Neilson, Managing Editor	Editor, Guardian Life Ademola Olonilua (08116759809) Contributors Musa Adekunle, Oluwagbemisola Sadare, Tobi Awodipe, Suliyat Tella, Eniola Daniel, Abigail Ikhaghu, Victoria Nwachukwu, Chinazam Ikechi-Uko, Oyindamola Adebisi, Chidinma Enweani, Fiyinfoluwa Odukoya	Design/Graphics Mayowa Iyiola Marketing/Adverts/Partnerships Cyril Anyika (08030567059) Blessing Oma (07088373524) Angela Ifediorah (08165066434) Olayinka Bolarinwa (08086951129)
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8 things to know about Nollywood Star Alex Ekubo

by Musa Adekunle



The Nigerian film industry continues to mourn the passing of Alex Ekubo, who died at the age of 40 following a private battle with cancer. Known for his charm and versatility, Ekubo was a popular face of modern African cinema. As the industry reflects on his life, here are seven essential things to know about the late actor.

Academic Foundation in Law

Before becoming a household name in entertainment, Ekubo prioritised his education. He was a graduate of Law from the University of Calabar. Additionally, he held a diploma in Mass Communication from the Polytechnic, Calabar, providing him with a strong academic background before his transition into the creative arts.

Rise Through Mr. Nigeria

Ekubo's journey to national fame began on the pageant stage. In 2010, he finished as the first runner-up in the Mr. Nigeria contest. This platform served as a significant springboard, allowing him to enter the Nigerian film industry with immediate visibility and public interest.

Award-Winning Artistry

His talent was officially recognised early in his career. In 2012, Ekubo won the award for "Best Actor in a Supporting Role" at the Best of Nollywood Awards for his performance in the film *In the Cupboard*.

Nigerian Teen Choice Award – Outstanding TV Personality (2015). Best of Nollywood Award – Best Actor of the Year (2016). Nigerian Model Achievers Award – Model Actor of the Year (2016). He got a Special Recognition Award from the First Lady of Nigeria for contributions to the Nigerian entertainment industry (2018). BEFFTA Award (London) – Nollywood Rising Star (2014). Screen Nation Film and TV Award (London) – Favourite Male African International Emerging Screen Talent (2014). Alex was praised by colleagues for his professionalism and his ability to portray

sophisticated characters.

Engagement to Fancy Acholonu

Ekubo's personal life was frequently a topic of media discussion, particularly his relationship with American-born model Fancy Acholonu. The couple were highly celebrated in the industry and were widely regarded as a "power couple" during their five-year relationship.

In May 2021, the pair announced their engagement and planned a grand wedding tagged #FalexxForever. However, in a move that shocked fans, the wedding was cancelled just three months before the ceremony in November 2021. The split remained a subject of public conversation for several years following various social media discussions.

Private Battle with Health

Despite his public persona, Ekubo managed his health crisis with a significant amount of privacy. His absence from major events

and social media since late 2024 led to widespread speculation among his millions of followers. It has now been confirmed that this period was spent managing the cancer that eventually claimed his life.

A Strong Family Orientation

Beyond the glitz of the red carpet, Ekubo was known for being deeply family-orientated. He maintained a very close bond with his siblings and was frequently seen carrying them along in his professional journey. It was not uncommon to see his siblings accompanying him on movie sets, as he prioritised their presence and support throughout his successful career.

A Lasting Cultural Legacy

Ekubo leaves behind a strong filmography that defined a decade of Nollywood. Beyond his acting, he was a fashion icon and a mentor to many younger actors. His passing at age 40 is viewed as a monumental loss to the African film landscape.



Women, are you really okay?

Silent emotional battles many now hide

by Musa Adekunle



Photos by Magnific

PRESSURE TO MARRY AT 30

For 30-year-old banker, Ifeoma Nwankwo, the emotional pressure came from home. Every family visit eventually became another conversation about marriage. Her mother constantly reminded her that she was “not getting younger,” while aunties and family friends repeatedly introduced her to men during weddings and social gatherings.

Turning 30 changed the way people around her treated her.

“My mother started sending pictures of men almost every week. At some point, it felt like my career achievements no longer mattered because I was not married,” she said.

Ifeoma admitted that the repeated pressure affected her emotionally and made her question herself constantly.

“When people normalise emotional exhaustion, they slowly damage their mental health without realising it.”



— Clinical psychologist, Miracle Ihuoma

CAUGHT BETWEEN WORK AND MOTHERHOOD

For 33-year-old marketing executive Chioma Eze, the struggle was balancing career growth with motherhood. After giving birth to her daughter in 2024, she returned to work six months later. Since then, she said life had become a cycle of office deadlines, sleepless nights and emotional exhaustion.

“At work, I feel guilty for not spending enough time with my child. At home, I feel guilty for thinking about work all the time,” she said.

Chioma added that raising a child in Nigeria’s difficult economy increased the emotional burden many women already carried privately.

“People keep saying women are strong, but honestly, many women are tired,” she said.

WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW

Beyond personal stories, available data have shown that emotional distress among young people, especially women, is becoming harder to ignore.

A 2024 Ipsos World Mental Health Day report found that Gen Z women were the most likely group globally to report repeated periods of sadness or hopelessness. According to the report, 40 per cent said they had experienced prolonged emotional distress multiple times.

UNICEF and Gallup survey found in Nigeria that one in six young Nigerians between 15 and 24 often felt depressed, anxious or emotionally distressed. The report also showed that many young Nigerians felt intense pressure to succeed socially and financially. Studies frequently show that depression and anxiety affect women at disproportionately higher rates than

NEED TO KNOW

40% of Gen Z women globally reported experiencing prolonged sadness or emotional distress multiple times
One in six young Nigerians aged 15 to 24 often feels depressed
Frequent studies show depression, anxiety affect women at disproportionately higher rates than men
Mental health experts warned that untreated emotional burnout in women can develop into depression, anxiety disorders and substance misuse.

A

t 1:12 am inside Yaba in Lagos, Tolu Adebisi stayed awake, emails waiting to be replied to in her inbox and half-edited video with her ring light beside her bed.

Earlier that evening, the 28-year-old content creator had posted smiling pictures from a restaurant in Lekki, where followers praised her beauty, consistency and “soft life.”

But behind the polished photos and cheerful captions,

Tolu was emotionally exhausted. “There are days I cry before posting content. But because my work depends on visibility, I still show up online even when I am mentally tired,” she told *Guardian Life*.

Tolu explained that social media worsened the pressure because everybody online appeared successful, happy and financially stable.

“You open Instagram, and everybody looks like they have figured life out. Meanwhile, you are struggling with bills, deadlines and emotional stress privately,” she said.

men.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also warned that emotional disorders, including anxiety and depression, continue to affect millions globally, especially among young adults and women.

WHY WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH BURDEN IS RISING

Mental health experts say the emotional burden many women carry today is becoming heavier because they are expected to succeed professionally, support families, manage homes, navigate relationships and still appear emotionally stable despite personal struggles.

Mental health nutritionist, Jane Ibude, said many women continue appearing successful publicly while privately battling emotional exhaustion, sadness and emptiness.

"From the outside, everything looks fine. They meet deadlines, show up for work, and even maintain social lives, but internally, they are dealing with overwhelming pressure, fatigue, sadness, and a sense of emptiness," she said.

Ibude added that the combination of financial pressure, social expectations and personal ambition had created emotional exhaustion for many women.

"When you combine financial stress with societal expectations and personal ambitions, it becomes overwhelming," she said.

Consultant psychiatrist, Prof Kingsley Okonoda, said the pressure on modern women had increased because many now carry multiple responsibilities.

"For many women today, burnout has become normalised. Common signs and symptoms include constant emotional exhaustion, loss of joy in previously meaningful activities, chronic fatigue, irritability and anger, emotional numbness, feeling unappreciated, difficulty concentrating, anxiety and overthinking, increased crying spells, withdrawal from relationships, social isolation, feeling disconnected from people, apathy, and lack of motivation," he said.

WHEN EXHAUSTION BECOMES DANGEROUS
Okonoda warned that prolonged emotional

exhaustion could gradually develop into more serious mental health conditions if left unchecked.

"If burnout is not checked on time, it can progress into mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, and substance misuse. Social consequences may include relationship conflict, poor job performance, compassion fatigue and physical health consequences," he said.

Clinical psychologist, Dr Miracle Ihuoma, said many women had normalised emotional suffering because society often praised them for enduring pressure quietly, although younger generations are becoming more open about mental health.

"There is a good level of awareness now. Gen Z and Generation Alpha are not as quiet as older generations used to be," he said.

According to him, emotional silence remained more common among older women who grew up in environments where expressing pain was discouraged.

"For people in my older generation, part of millennials as well, they have censored their voice just because of what people in society would tell them, and endured a lot of their sufferings, emotional and even physical," he said.

Ihuoma warned that treating emotional exhaustion as normal life could damage women's mental health over time.

"You can't see emotional exhaustion as normal life, because it is not normal. And when you see that as normal life, it is going to take its toll on you and on your mental health," he said.

A psychiatrist, Motunrayo Oyelohunnu, said hormonal changes linked to menstruation, pregnancy and menopause also contributed to the rise in emotional distress among women.

"Nature already puts women at a biological disadvantage when it comes to mental health. Their hormones, especially oestrogen and progesterone, directly affect mood regulation. During menstruation, pregnancy and menopause, these hormonal changes make women more vulnerable to emotional distress," she said.

For psychiatrist, Dr Gbonjubola Abiri, many women carry a "multi-layered pressure load" across work, family and society.

"Emotional burnout is more common in women as they carry multi-layered pressure load from the diverse roles they try to fill at home, at work and in society. There is a lot of pressure on women to succeed professionally, manage households, support family, both nuclear and extended and remain emotionally regulated," she said.

Abiri said women dealing with burnout often experience irritability, anxiety, sleep disturbance, emotional numbness, resentment and feelings of emptiness.

"To manage emotional burnout effectively, women must learn to rest without feeling guilty, put in place healthy boundaries, have supportive communities and ensure they make their mental and physical health a priority," she said.

"For many women today, burnout has become normalised."

— Consultant Psychiatrist, University of Jos/Jos University Teaching Hospital, Prof. Kingsley Okonoda



WHY WOMEN NEED STRONGER SUPPORT

Experts called for stronger emotional support systems, open conversations around women's mental health and better access to mental healthcare services.

They said families should stop reducing women's lives to marriage, childbirth or public appearance, while workplaces should create room for rest, flexibility and mental health support.

HOW TO MANAGE EMOTIONAL BURNOUT

Experts said recovery from emotional burnout requires more than temporary

rest. It involves a change in mindset and the creation of a lifestyle that supports women's emotional well-being.

Normalise rest

Rest should not be seen as laziness. It is an important part of psychological maintenance.

Encourage emotional expression

Women need psychologically safe spaces where they can express pain, anger, disappointment and exhaustion without fear of judgment.

Set healthy boundaries

Women should be able to say no to demands that drain their emotional and physical energy without feeling guilty. Not every demand deserves access to a woman's time, mind or emotions.

Share responsibilities

Emotional, domestic and family responsibilities should not fall on women alone. Shared responsibility helps reduce pressure and emotional overload.

Reconnect with self

Women should make time to reconnect with their identity, purpose, creativity, spirituality and personal interests.

Seek professional support

Therapy, counselling, coaching, mentorship and supportive communities can help women process emotional overload and rebuild psychological resilience. There is no shame in getting help.



"There is a lot of pressure on women to succeed professionally, manage households, support family and remain emotionally regulated."



— Consultant Psychiatrist and CEO of RediMed Consulting Services, Gbonjubola Abiri

A practical safety guide

for female solo travellers



Photos by Maggrific

Solo female travel will never be completely risk-free. It also isn't off-limits for any woman willing to prepare. Smart travel lives in that middle ground and millions of women navigate it every day. This guide isn't about fear. It's about the kind of confidence that only comes from knowing what to do when things go sideways. That confidence is something you can build. Here's how.

Before you travel,

Read about your destination. The government's foreign affairs or state department website publishes regularly updated travel advisories; it is not to deter you, but to inform you. These documents outline everything from petty crime patterns to health risks to

areas worth sidestepping entirely. Read them. Then read them again through the lens of someone who is actually going, not someone looking for reasons to cancel.

Then,

Cross-reference those advisories with

first-hand accounts from women who have recently been there. Facebook's Girls LOVE Travel community, the Wanderful network, and Reddit's r/solotravel are among the most useful resources available, not because they are more authoritative than official sources, but because they are more specific. A woman writing from Marrakech last month will tell you things no travel advisory will say: which neighbourhood to stay in, which areas feel uncomfortable after dark, and which local women she asked for help when she felt uncertain.

Ensure you

Research accommodation with the same rigour. Filter reviews specifically for solo female guests. Properties that feel perfectly comfortable for couples or families may carry real vulnerabilities for a woman alone. Look for a 24-hour staffed reception, well-lit entrances, rooms on upper floors, and an establishment culture that takes your safety seriously rather than treats it as a liability.

THE 9 NON-NEGOTIABLES

1. Trust Your Instincts

Your body processes threat signals faster than your conscious mind. When something feels wrong about a person, a route, or a situation, ensure to act on it. You owe no one an explanation for leaving.

2. Maintain a living itinerary.

Share a regularly updated itinerary with a trusted person at home. Include accommodation details, planned routes,

and a check-in schedule. If you go quiet, they know when to worry.

3. Verified transport only

Use Uber, Bolt, Grab, or official taxi ranks. Before entering any vehicle, confirm the driver's name, registration, and photo against the app. Screenshot the journey and share it.

4. Layer your money

Never carry your financial life in one place. A decoy wallet with small cash, a card kept separately, and emergency funds in a hidden travel wallet give you options in every scenario.

5. Secure your room

Deadbolt every night. A rubber door wedge, costing almost nothing, dramatically increases the security of any hotel or hostel room. A portable door alarm adds another layer of safety.

6. Navigate without broadcasting it.

Download offline maps before arriving. Walking with your head in your phone signals unfamiliarity. Know your route in advance; look up, walk with purpose, and appear entirely at home.

7. Know the local emergency number.

It is not always 999 or 911. Save the local police, ambulance, or the country's embassy contact in your phone before you land. Know them before you need them.

8. Carry a personal safety alarm.

A keychain alarm emitting 120+ decibels is legal almost everywhere, it costs very little, and is a highly effective deterrent. The noise it creates draws attention and disrupts intent.

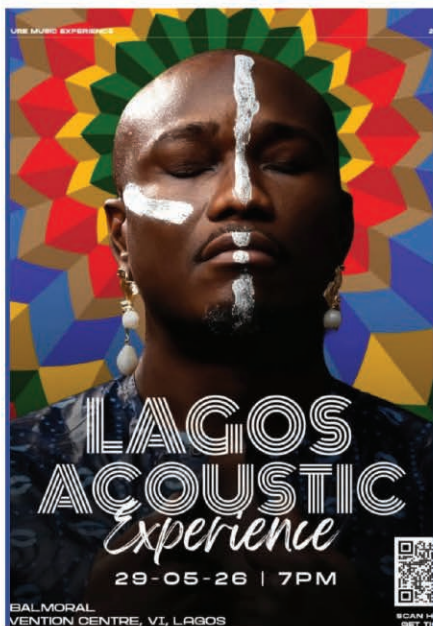
9. Insure everything

Travel insurance is the net under all of this. Read the policies on medical coverage, emergency evacuation, and trip disruption, and understand the exclusions. Travel with the card number accessible offline.



EVENTS TO ATTEND THIS MAY

From electrifying live concerts and comedy showcases to football fan festivals, fashion pop-ups, and food celebrations, this month delivers some of the most exciting experiences across Lagos and Abuja. Here's a curated guide to the standout events set to bring together music lovers, football fans, foodies, creatives, and comedy enthusiasts alike.



Lagos Acoustic Experience

Step into an unforgettable evening of soulful melodies, intimate performances, and premium live entertainment at the Lagos Acoustic Experience. This specially curated music showcase brings together some of Nigeria's finest Afrobeats and alternative music stars, including , , and . Guests can expect breathtaking acoustic renditions, vibrant stage energy, and an upscale atmosphere designed for music lovers seeking a unique live experience in the heart of Lagos.

May 29 | Lagos



GOALFEST 2026 & End of Season Watch Party

Football fans are set for an electrifying celebration as GOALFEST 2026 takes over Lagos with a massive end-of-season watch party and fan festival experience. Featuring giant public viewing screens, energetic fan parks, music performances, games, food vendors, and exciting football-themed activities, the event promises a thrilling atmosphere for supporters of clubs across Europe and beyond. Whether you're celebrating trophies, rivalries, or unforgettable moments from the football season.

May 30 | Lagos



Abarie Com Live - So Far So Good

Prepare for an explosive night of comedy, music, and premium entertainment at Abarie Com Live: So Far So Good. This large-scale entertainment production combines hilarious live comedy performances with high-energy musical guest appearances, creating an unforgettable experience for attendees. Featuring standout performances from celebrated comedian and other surprise acts, the show promises nonstop laughter, engaging crowd interaction, and a vibrant nightlife atmosphere perfect for Lagos entertainment lovers.

May 24 | Lagos



MC Monica Live in Lagos: "Can I Say Something?"

Get ready for a bold, hilarious, and unapologetically real comedy experience as MC Monica takes the stage in Lagos with her latest live show, Can I Say Something? The performance dives deep into the realities, pressures, and everyday hustle of life in Lagos through sharp humour, relatable storytelling, and fearless commentary. The event will also feature appearances from top comedians and music entertainers, delivering an exciting night packed with laughter, music, and unforgettable moments for fans of live comedy.

May 17 | Lagos



The Humour Awards (4th Edition)

The Humour Awards returns for its highly anticipated fourth edition, celebrating the creativity, impact, and achievements of Nigeria's leading comedians, skit makers, and digital humour creators. This prestigious entertainment and awards night blends glamorous recognition ceremonies with live stand-up comedy performances, comedy sketches, celebrity appearances, and musical entertainment. Bringing together industry stars, influencers, and comedy lovers, the event stands as one of the biggest annual celebrations of humour and entertainment culture in Nigeria.

May 31 | Lagos



POC Collective Popup Shop

Experience a vibrant fusion of fashion, creativity, and community at the POC Collective Popup Shop in Abuja. This lifestyle-focused market event showcases a carefully curated selection of premium local fashion brands, beauty products, accessories, art pieces, and creative entrepreneurs. Attendees can shop exclusive collections, network with emerging creatives, discover unique lifestyle products, and immerse themselves in a stylish social atmosphere designed to celebrate African creativity, entrepreneurship, and culture.

May 30 | Abuja

Cargo pants looks to recreate

by Chidinma Enweani

Cargo pants once had a very different purpose. Originally, they were rugged military wear designed for movement and endurance rather than style. Eventually, they became a street style favourite, embraced for their ease and everyday wearability. They found a permanent home with urban youth, skater culture, and the early 2000s fashion set.

Central to this movement is the innovative use of indigenous textiles. Designers are moving away from standard khakis and canvases, opting instead for the rich textures of Adire, Aso-Oke, and hand-woven fabrics. For instance, recent collections have showcased how the structured pockets and wide-leg cuts of the cargo pants can perfectly complement the intricate, strip-woven patterns of traditional cloth.

The result is a garment that feels both globally relevant and deeply rooted in heritage. There are stunning examples of this fusion, where high-waisted, wide-leg trousers utilise woven textile strips to create a sophisticated, architectural look.

Also, highlights the impact of bold, monochrome tribal prints that elevate the cargo from a casual item to a high-fashion statement

piece. Even more daring interpretations, such as those seen in these images below incorporated vibrant colours and fringing, proving that utility wear can be celebratory and expressive.

This shift represents more than just a trend; it is a sign of the continent's growing dominance in the global fashion conversation. By reimagining a Western staple through an African lens, local creatives are proving that functionality and heritage are not mutually exclusive. As these designs grace the Nigerian streets and runways abroad, the future of fashion is one where tradition and modern ease walk hand in hand.

If you are looking to update your wardrobe this season, here are three cargo pant looks you might want to try out:



How Nigeria's emerging artists are painting realities of modern life

by Musa Adekunle

Nigeria's art scene is witnessing a new generation of artists using creativity as more than decoration or self-expression.

Across studios, galleries and digital platforms, emerging Nigerian artists are turning paintings, photography, sculpture and mixed media into mirrors of society.

Their works speak to hardship, mental health, identity, womanhood, resilience and the struggles many people carry but rarely express.

For these artists, art is not only about colour, beauty or technique. It is also a way of telling human stories, questioning society and giving shape to emotions that words may not fully capture.

At *Guardian Life*, we spoke with some of these emerging artists who shared the stories behind their works and how they are using art to document life as they see it.

After Effects by John Alogi

John Alogi uses his painting *After Effects* to address the rising cost of education and its effect on children from low-income homes.

The artwork explores how expensive schooling can push vulnerable children away from the classroom and towards unsafe means of survival.

"This painting is inspired by how expensive education has become," Alogi told *Guardian Life*.

"It has a moral lesson. When education is not affordable, children may turn to the most available source of sustenance, including thuggery, theft and other social vices," he said.

State of Mind by John Akande

John Akande uses his artwork *State of Mind* to express emotional struggles, fears and uncertainties many young people face while trying to survive in an unpredictable society.

Through the image of a little Black girl, Akande explores anxiety, frustration, fear, hope and self-discovery. The work captures the complex emotions shaped by personal experience and the world around her.

"The little black girl lives in a city, whereby, there are a lot of pandemics here, and there. At the same time, she's experiencing a range of emotions in her local environment, such as anxiety, frustration, fear, and sometimes joy and excitement," he said.

"She's interested in discovering new things and experiencing the world around her, but she doesn't want to feel a sense of comfort and familiarity. By the way, trying to outsmart her mental states, she's so doubtful and biased," Akande added.

In the Space Between by Adams Abba

Adams Abba uses his mixed media artwork *In the Space Between* to reflect on the quiet moments that shape personal growth and self-discovery.

Created with charcoal, coffee and gouache on canvas, the 2025 piece explores the emotional space between action and pause. It also speaks to the fragile journey between who a person is and who they

are becoming.

"This piece explores the quiet moments that exist between action and pause, between who we are and who we are becoming," Abba stated.

Fragments of Perfection by Abdulwaduud Afolabi

Abdulwaduud Afolabi, also known as MrWaduud, uses his artwork *Fragments of Perfection* to paint a picture of hidden struggles women face behind the facade of flawlessness.

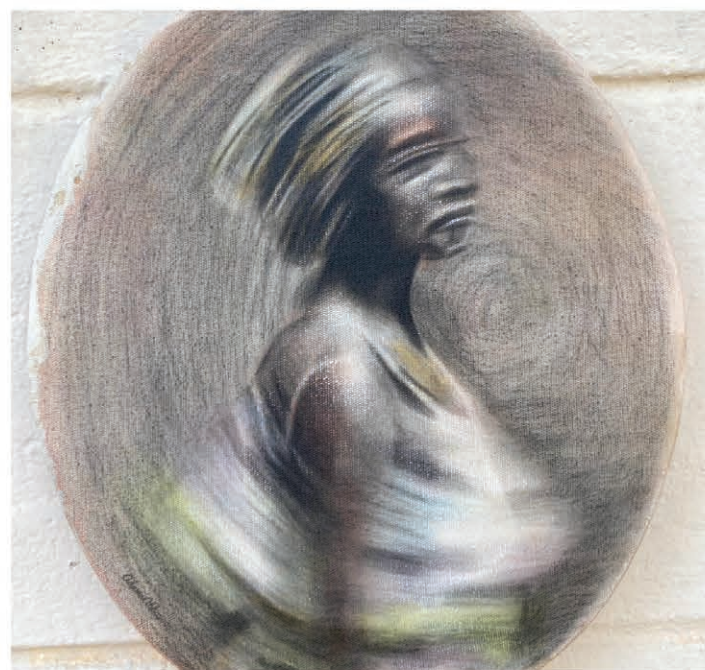
"This is one of my ongoing series of works that touch on the joyful influence of art on mental health.

"In this piece, which is perceived as perfect at first sight, selected features have been intentionally not included, yet. Like many women who are perceived as flawless, they are the ones who know their flaws, insecurities, and inadequacies."

Giving up is not an option II by John Alogi

For John Alogi, an artist from Abeokuta, Ogun State, resilience and determination sit at the heart of his work *Giving up is not an option II*.

"This artwork reflects the strength required to keep going despite life's pressure and uncertainty," he simply said.



Photos provided by the artists

Dr. Tewa Onasanya: High-performing women are intentional about their thoughts, energy, and actions

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

Dr. Tewa Onasanya is a multifaceted entrepreneur, a Mindset Stylist and Philanthropist with over 23 years' experience.

A Publisher, Women Empowerment Advocate, Cervical Cancer Prevention Advocate, Author and Mindset Stylist, she holds a BSc in Pharmacology from the University of Portsmouth, UK and a Diploma in Fashion Journalism from the College of Media and Publishing, UK, a certificate in Mindfulness from Udemy and a Certified Law of Attraction practitioner. She is the Founder of Exquisite Magazine and convener of Exquisite Lady of the Year (ELOY) Awards and Conference. In this interview, she speaks on her passion for empowerment and driving mindset shift for women.

You've built a multi-dimensional career across media, wellness, and advocacy. What were the defining inflection points that shaped your trajectory into the woman you are today?

There have been a few defining moments. The first was recognising that I have the power to become whomever I wanted to be, I knew I didn't want to live a life that was dictated by limitations, whether societal, financial, or internal. That awareness led me to entrepreneurship very early unintentionally.

Another key inflection point was launching Exquisite Magazine at a time when many women, especially African women, were doing incredible work but were largely unseen. I realised visibility was power and that changed everything for me.

More recently, stepping fully into my role as a mindset stylist has been transformational. It required me to confront my own fears around visibility and fully own my voice. That shift from doing the work to embodying the message has shaped the woman I am today.

How did your academic background in pharmacology evolve into publishing, mindset styling, and entrepreneurship? Was that transition strategic or organic?

It was both organic and intuitive. Pharmacology trained me to understand systems, structure, and the science of how things work. My degree taught me transferable skills that cuts across every sector. Also, very early on, I realised that my desire to be able to support people to heal (I initially wanted to become a medical doctor), inspire people, making an impact, extended beyond working in the pharmaceutical industry, it's still extending as we speak and I am discovering more every time.

I was always drawn to people, their stories, their potential, their transformation. Publishing became a natural extension of that curiosity, showing that you could study one thing at University but evolve as you grow older. Over time, I began to see a deeper pattern: the real limitation for many people wasn't opportunity, it was mindset. So, what may look like a pivot was actually an evolution for me.

All I do is beautifully woven into one another. Every step has built on the other, leading me to where I am now, helping people rewire how they think, so they can expand how they live and this is done through everyone of my platform, Exquisite Magazine, ELOY Awards Foundation, EMAC Foundation for Cervical Cancer Prevention and being a Mindset Stylist.

Exquisite Magazine is positioned as a "visibility platform for the unlimited



woman." What gap did you identify in the media ecosystem when you launched it?

Over the past 23 years, as Exquisite Magazine grew, we saw that there was a clear gap. Many platforms were either inaccessible, expensive, or narrowly defined in how women were portrayed. I wanted to create a space where women could be seen in their fullness, not just for aesthetics, but for their impact, their intellect, their journeys. A platform that said: you don't have to shrink to be featured. Exquisite became that bridge between visibility and credibility, where women are not just showcased, but positioned.

In today's saturated media landscape, how do you sustain relevance and authority, particularly for women-focused narratives? Relevance today is not about noise, it's about clarity and consistency. We stay grounded in our core mission: visibility with value. We don't chase trends; we amplify stories that matter. Authority comes from being intentional about the narratives we put out and ensuring they are both aspirational and authentic. Also, we evolve. Media is dynamic, and we've embraced digital transformation to remain accessible and impactful while staying true to our essence. I always say one

innovates or stay stagnant and stagnation leads to a natural death.

What does "visibility" truly mean for African women in 2026, beyond aesthetics and social media presence?

Visibility in 2026 is about positioning, power, and ownership. It's not just being seen, it's being recognised, respected, and rewarded. It's about having a voice in rooms where decisions are made. It's about monetising your expertise and owning your narrative. For African women, true visibility means shifting from being overlooked to being undeniable and doing it without burnout.

Through the ELOY Foundation, you've created access to funding, mentorship, and training. What systemic barriers are Nigerian women still facing in scaling their businesses?

Access remains a major challenge, access to funding, networks, and the right information. There's also a confidence gap that is often overlooked. Many women are doing the work but are hesitant to position themselves boldly for larger opportunities.

Structurally, there are still limitations within financial systems and policy frameworks that make scaling more difficult for women-led

businesses. That's why our work goes beyond access to funding, we focus on equipping women with the mindset, structure, and visibility required to scale sustainably.

As a Mindset Stylist, you work with high achievers, navigating success and wellbeing. What are the most common internal barriers women face at the top?

At the top, the barriers become more internal than external. The most common ones are self-doubt, the fear of being fully seen, and the pressure to maintain a certain image. Many high-achieving women are successful but not fully expressed. There's also the challenge of alignment; you know building success that looks good on the outside but doesn't always feel fulfilling internally. My work as a Mindset Stylist is about helping them align success with peace, clarity, and authenticity.

Your book Rule Your Mind emphasises intentional living. In practical terms, what daily disciplines separate high-performing women from the rest?

High-performing women are intentional about three key things: their thoughts, their energy, and their actions. We don't leave our mindset to chance. We are deliberate about what we consume, this includes what we read, eat, listen to even smell, yes. We are intentional about what we say and affirm, because our words have power, and also intentional about what we focus on daily.

We also prioritise self-audit and self-regulation, understanding oneself and creating space for clarity, not just constant activity. And importantly, we act. Consistency in aligned action is what separates intention from results.

If you had to give one non-negotiable principle to the next generation of women leaders, what would it be?

Convince yourself first. Before the world validates you, you must validate yourself. Your belief in your vision, your worth, and your capacity is the foundation of everything you will build. Once that is solid, everything else aligns. I say if you don't believe in yourself, no one will.

Beyond the accolades and platforms, who is Tewa Onasanya when the work stops? When work stops, I am a woman who values peace, presence, and connection. I love love. I love to eat, I enjoy the quiet moments, being present in the moment, the simplicity of being myself. I am deeply committed to growth, not just in what I do, but in who I am evolving into. Beyond work, I am someone who is constantly choosing to live intentionally, love deeply, and expand fully.



Taiwo Fashipe: My aim is creating memories, giving people sense of belonging

by Eniola Daniel

we're excited to be moving into an even bigger space.

How has your brand evolved over time? Alexandrite became about creating experiences, not just selling products. Then I started Isibhahome, which is even more personal to me. It's about telling stories through scents, creating emotions and memories, and giving people a sense of belonging. So, really, my journey has been about moving from just selling things to creating meaningful experiences. It has evolved from being about transactions to being about connections and feelings.

What would you identify as the most significant factor behind your success? Consistency, not perfection, has been everything for me. Just showing up, even when things weren't perfect, and being willing to start before I felt completely ready. I have failed many times, and there were moments I invested everything I had and got stuck. But I didn't quit. I kept refining, evolving, and pushing forward. I'm glad I did, because that consistency is what built the brand into what it is today.

In your experience, who tends to give gifts more frequently between Nigerian men and women?

Without a doubt, women are naturally more intentional when it comes to emotional expression, so gifting feels more personal and thoughtful to them. Men do gifts too, usually for important occasions or with a little prompting, but women tend to do it more often and

with much greater attention to detail.

As a female leader, what has been the most significant barrier you have faced? One of the biggest challenges has been having to constantly prove that I deserve to be in the rooms I operate in. Sometimes, people don't immediately take you seriously, so you learn to let consistency and results speak for you.

How does your company actively support and empower other women?

A lot of what we do is built around collaboration and opportunity. Many of the artisans, creatives, and vendors we work with are women, and we're intentional about creating spaces where women can contribute, grow, and be seen.

What inspired your decision to venture into this space?

It came from noticing a gap. I had worked with High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs) for a long time, and one thing I always wanted was to be able to come back and say thank you in a way that felt truly memorable. Every time I outsourced gifts, they never quite captured the thought, detail, or feeling I had in mind. That was when I realised this was something I wanted to do myself.

One phrase I usually repeat is, "Your gift will make room for you." I saw that people wanted premium, meaningful gifts, but there weren't many options that delivered this in a thoughtful, modern way. This gave me the opportunity to bring together my love for detail, storytelling, and creating experiences that make people feel valued.

How do you balance professional pursuits with family responsibilities?

I've learned that balance is not always perfect. Some seasons demand more from work, and others from family. What matters most is being present where you are and creating support systems that help you manage both.

Do you have female mentors or women who have inspired you?

Yes, definitely, both personally and from a distance. I've always been inspired by women who grow with intention, stay grounded, and continue building without losing themselves. Those journeys remind me of what's possible.

What guidance would you give to women who have ambitions but don't know how to begin?

Just begin with what you have. You don't need everything figured out from day one. Start small, stay committed, and allow yourself to grow as you go.

What's the secret of your success?

Honestly, there's no secret. It's discipline, intentionality, and the willingness to keep showing up, even when things are uncertain.

Are Nigerian women collaborating enough, or is there room for more growth?

There's definitely room for more growth. Although we are seeing more collaboration now, there is still so much power in women choosing partnership over comparison, because that's where real impact happens.

Adaeze Oreh becomes Professor, pledges better healthcare

by Ngozi Egenuka

In recognition of her contributions to healthcare delivery, medical education, and policy leadership, Dr Adaeze Oreh has been elevated to the rank of Professor of Medicine.

The appointment, by the Governing Council of Pamo University of Medical Sciences, confirmed in April 2026, followed a rigorous academic evaluation process and marks a defining milestone in a career spanning over two decades across clinical medicine, public health policy, research, and health systems strengthening.

A Consultant Family Physician and immediate past Honourable Commissioner for Health in Rivers State, Professor Adaeze Oreh is widely recognised for her role in driving reforms that significantly improved healthcare delivery and access.

During her tenure, she led the rollout of a contributory health insurance scheme, revitalised 24-hour emergency medical and ambulance services, expanded medical

training and accreditation across key specialties, and oversaw critical infrastructure investments, including the establishment of a high-capacity medical oxygen plant. These interventions positioned Rivers State as a leading performer in primary healthcare delivery nationally.

She previously served as Country Director of Planning, Research and Statistics at Nigeria's National Blood Service Commission and as a Senior Health Policy Advisor at the Federal Ministry of Health, where she contributed to policy development, including efforts leading to the enactment of the National Blood Service Commission Act 2021, as well as innovations aimed at addressing blood supply challenges in Nigeria.

An accomplished academic, Professor Oreh has authored over 125 publications across peer-reviewed journals and mainstream media, with research spanning primary healthcare, infectious diseases, and health systems reform.

Her work has been cited internationally, reinforcing her position as a leading voice in advancing equitable healthcare systems in low- and middle-income countries. She has also contributed to global health discourse through engagements with leading institutions, including the Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and The Aspen Institute, where she serves as a Senior Fellow in Global Health.

Speaking on the elevation, Professor Oreh described the recognition as both an honour and a call to greater responsibility: "This moment is not simply a personal milestone it is a renewed commitment to advancing medical education, strengthening health systems, and ensuring that healthcare delivery is equitable, efficient, and accessible to all."

A representative of the Governing Council noted that the appointment reflects her outstanding academic and professional



contributions:

"Professor Oreh's elevation is a recognition of her exceptional scholarship, leadership, and service. Her work exemplifies the integration of academic excellence with real-world policy impact, which is essential for addressing contemporary healthcare challenges."

ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment in Africa is more ambitious and global than ever, and it's because these women

by Oyindamola Adebisi

Entertainment in Africa has always shaped everyday life, from the films and music we grew up with, creators whose work reflected our realities. For many of us, women were central to those memories, as actresses, singers, storytellers and creators who influenced how we experienced entertainment.

These are the women whose influence is felt across every corner of the entertainment industry today.

Mo Abudu: the woman who built the blueprint

Mo Abudu has played a defining role in transforming African entertainment into a global business and storytelling force. From launching Moments with Mo, one of Africa's first syndicated daily talk shows, to building EbonyLife Media into a major media ecosystem, she expanded the scale and reach of African storytelling. Her international partnerships, including a landmark Netflix deal in 2018, helped open global doors for premium African content.

Genevieve Nnaji: the bridge between Nollywood and the world

Genevieve Nnaji helped reshape global perceptions of Nollywood with *Lionheart*, the first Nigerian Netflix original film and Nigeria's first Academy Awards submission. Beyond its milestones, the film proved that Nigerian cinema could achieve global

recognition while remaining deeply rooted in local storytelling.

Kemi Adetiba: the blockbuster disruptor

Kemi Adetiba changed expectations for commercial Nigerian filmmaking with "The Wedding Party," one of Nollywood's highest-grossing films at the time, and later with "King of Boys," which proved political thrillers could dominate mainstream audiences. Her polished visual language and large-scale storytelling shifted expectations for commercial filmmaking and helped redefine what blockbuster entertainment in Africa could look like.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: the storyteller who shifted narrative

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has significantly influenced African entertainment through her storytelling and cultural commentary. From *We Should All Be Feminists* to *Half of a Yellow Sun*, her work has shaped global conversations around African identity, womanhood and Nigerian storytelling, while influencing screen adaptations and wider cultural discourse.

Angelique Kidjo: Africa's global sonic ambassador

For decades, Angelique Kidjo has carried African music to international audiences while staying deeply rooted in African sound. With five Grammy wins and decades of



boundary-crossing collaborations, Angelique Kidjo has helped position African artistry as globally influential.

Tems: the architect of a new sound

Tems redefined contemporary African music with an introspective sound that achieved global success without compromising its identity. As the first Nigerian female artist to win a GRAMMY and the first African artist to debut at number one on the Billboard Hot 100, she expanded the definition of global success for women in African entertainment.

Funke Akindele: the master of commercial storytelling

Funke Akindele has mastered the balance between cultural specificity and mass appeal.

Through *Jenifa's Diary*, Funke Akindele built one of Africa's most successful television franchises. She later became the first Nigerian filmmaker to gross over 1 billion at the local box office with "Omo Ghetto: The Saga." To date, she continues to push the limit and break her own record for highest-grossing films with every movie release.

Tiwa Savage: the visibility pioneer

Before Afrobeats became a global movement, Tiwa Savage was already redefining what female stardom in African music could look like. She became one of the first women to dominate Afrobeats at a commercial level, a genre typically reserved for male artists. Her signing to Universal Music Group marked another major milestone for African female artists.

LIFESTYLE

Soft life, hard economy is the reality — but I refuse to give up my guilty pleasures

by Oyindamola Adebisi



A monthly self-check-in revealed how much my guilty pleasures have changed over the past six months, with fewer "living in the moment" expenses than before. This shift reflects Nigeria's high inflation in early 2026, with rising costs affecting not just essentials like groceries and transport, but also everyday joys. Rather than cutting out indulgences entirely, I've learned to adjust and keep them more intentionally.

Buying clothes for plans that may not exist yet

Before inflation, I used to buy clothes instinctively, building imagined plans around them without needing real occasions. Now, I pause and ask more practical questions before purchasing, sometimes stepping away before deciding. Still, I continue to indulge, because I've realised the habit isn't really about clothes — it's about preserving

space for possibility and refusing to let life be reduced to just responsibilities.

Massages have moved from monthly rituals to occasional resets

Full-body massages used to be a monthly, non-negotiable part of my routine, but now I space them out to about every two months, depending on the month. In between, I try to recreate the feeling with smaller self-care rituals, though they only go so far. The shift has made me realise how much I relied on that pause, and now the experience feels less like a luxury and more like something I genuinely need.

Multiple hangouts have turned into one good plan, and more time alone

I've always been the planner in my friend group, coordinating schedules and keeping things moving. But recently, I've had to slow down. Where I once easily stacked multiple hangouts, I'm now more intentional about what I agree to and how much I can handle. I still plan, but less frequently, balancing social time with quieter solo moments.

What's changed isn't my social life, but its pacing—and learning that even planners need breaks.

My gym shoes are coming together — at my pace

I'm still committed to building a coordinated gym look, especially matching shoes for my outfits. While I used to buy things impulsively and complete collections quickly, I now space purchases out and move more intentionally. It takes longer, but it keeps me financially mindful while still making the gym experience more enjoyable.

Hair is the one thing I refuse to compromise on

Despite cutting back in other areas, my hair remains non-negotiable. While I adjust spending on things like massages and outings, I refuse to compromise because of how much they affect my mood, confidence, and overall presence. Even if it's costly, I see it as an essential emotional investment rather than something to question or cut down.

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more

COLUMN



Fiyinfoluwa Odukoya is a clinical and public health nutritionist, author, and founder of YourDietBoy. He writes *The Nutrition Gap*, a weekly column on practical nutrition for Nigerian life. He is also the author of *How To Think Like A Nutrition Consultant*.



What your office canteen is doing to your afternoon productivity

by Fiyinfoluwa Odukoya

The afternoon energy dip in many workplaces has more to do with lunch than laziness. In this column, Fiyinfoluwa Odukoya explains how heavy office meals, sugary drinks, and poor canteen choices affect productivity after lunch.

The 2 pm crash is not laziness. It is lunch. I once asked a room full of corporate professionals in Lagos to raise their hands if they usually felt a serious energy dip between 2 pm and 4 pm.

Every hand went up. Then I asked how many of them had eaten a heavy lunch within two hours before that crash. The same hands stayed up. The room laughed, but the problem is not funny.

Nigerian workplaces are losing productive hours every day, and one of the most ignored reasons is the food eaten in office canteens.

What happens after heavy lunch

When you eat a large meal, especially one high in refined carbohydrates and low in protein and fibre, your body goes to work. Blood flow shifts towards digestion, insulin rises to process the sudden increase in glucose, and your brain begins to slow down.

That is when the familiar “after-lunch feeling” begins. Heavy eyelids, poor concentration, slow thinking and a sudden craving for coffee, soft drinks or something sweet just to survive the next few hours.

This is not laziness. It is biology. And for many workers, it is triggered daily

by what they eat at lunch.

The canteen problem

Walk into the average Nigerian office canteen at 1 pm, and the options are almost predictable. Jollof rice, fried plantain, white rice and stew, a small piece of meat or fish, meat pie, soft drinks and packaged juice that often contains more sugar than fruit.

These foods are not evil. But when they become the main meal of the workday, eaten quickly and in large portions, they can set workers up for an afternoon crash.

In many Nigerian cities, several professionals skip breakfast because of early commutes, traffic and rushed mornings. By lunchtime, the body is already tired and hungry. Then, instead of receiving a balanced meal, it gets a heavy flood of calories at once. The crash that follows is not surprising. It is almost expected.

What can help

The solution is not complicated. But it requires intention from both workers and employers.

For workers, protein at lunch can change the afternoon. Eggs, beans, fish, chicken or moi moi can help slow digestion and keep energy more stable. The point is not to eat a mountain of protein. The point is

to make sure it is present.

Water also matters. Choosing water instead of soft drinks can reduce the sugar crash that makes post-lunch fatigue worse. A short walk after lunch can help too. Even 10 minutes of movement can support digestion and help the body manage blood sugar better than sitting immediately at a desk.

Why employers should care

For organisations, the canteen menu is not just a welfare issue. It is a productivity decision. What workers eat at 1 pm can affect what they deliver at 3 pm.

“Nigerian workplaces are losing productive hours every day, and one of the most ignored reasons is the food eaten in office canteens.”

A team that eats better is more likely to stay alert, focused and present during the most important hours of the workday.

The 2 pm crash is not an unavoidable part of office life. It is often a food problem. And the solution may begin with what is served for lunch.

TIPS

Five lunch ideas to help workers stay active, focused

by Musa Adekunle



Rice and Beans with Stew

This meal gives a good balance of carbohydrates, protein, and fibre. Beans help improve fullness, digestion, and blood sugar control, while the rice provides steady energy for long work hours.



Pasta with Chicken and Vegetables

Pasta can provide sustained energy when paired with lean protein and vegetables. Adding vegetables increases fibre intake, supports digestion, and helps prevent the sluggish feeling that often comes from eating overly oily pasta meals.



Moin moin with Pap and Fruit

Moi moi is rich in protein and fibre from beans, helping you stay full for longer. Adding fruit improves fibre intake and provides vitamins that support concentration and energy levels during the day.



Boiled Yam with Egg and Vegetable Sauce

Yam provides steady energy, while eggs add quality protein for satiety and muscle support. The vegetables in the sauce improve fibre intake and make the meal more balanced.



Jollof Rice with Grilled Chicken and Salad

Jollof rice can still fit into a healthy office meal when portions are moderate and paired with protein and vegetables. Adding salad improves fibre intake, supports digestion, and helps balance the meal.

Photos by Magnific



Photos by Magnific

Sexual punishment: Is your partner withholding affection to control you?

by Chidinma Enweani

In the careful building of a romantic relationship, affection is the glue that keeps everything together. It shows that there is safety, trust, and care between two people. However, when someone purposefully stops showing warmth or intimacy to get what they want, the relationship changes. It stops being a team effort and becomes a difficult power struggle. This habit, often seen as gatekeeping or withholding affection.

What this means

At its heart, withholding affection happens when one person treats affection like a transaction instead of a way to connect. In this situation, closeness is not something shared. Instead, it is a prize for "good" behaviour or a punishment for "bad" behaviour. While it might seem like a simple way to react to a fight, using affection to control someone can deeply hurt a partner's feelings.

It is very important to tell the difference

between this and simply not wanting to be intimate. There is a big difference between a partner who is not in the mood because they are stressed, tired, or overwhelmed, and a partner who uses sex to get their way. The first is a normal part of being human that needs kindness and patience. The second is a planned choice made to gain power during a disagreement.

The Shift from Partnership to Power Struggle

When someone holds back affection to control their partner, the idea of being a team is replaced by a me against you attitude. The partner who is being ignored often feels a deep sense of being unwanted. Over time, this creates a bad environment where one person feels they must do certain chores or act differently just to receive basic kindness.

Experts say this behaviour often happens because people do not know how to talk about what they need. Instead of saying, "I am upset that you stayed out late," a partner might act cold for many days. This silence sends a strong message. It tells the other person that they will only be loved if they follow certain rules. When intimacy becomes a bargaining chip, the foundation of the relationship starts to break.

The Psychological Toll of Withholding
For the person who is being ignored, always worrying about their partner acting cold can cause a lot of anxiety. In a healthy relationship, a partner should make you feel safe. When that safety is taken away as a punishment, it can make a person feel very bad about themselves. They might start "walking on eggshells," always watching how they act to make sure their partner doesn't stop being affectionate.

Also, this can create a cycle where one person pulls away and the other person tries too hard to get close. This makes the person being ignored feel desperate. This lack of balance is the opposite of the equal partnership that most couples want today.

Navigating the Path to Resolution

Can a relationship get past this stage? The answer depends on being open and willing to fix the power balance.

Identifying the Intent

Couples must be honest about why the affection has stopped. Is it a physical problem, or is it being used to win a fight?

Developing New Scripts

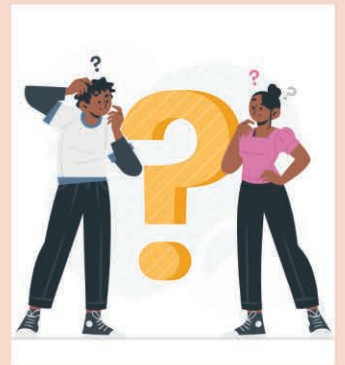
Instead of using silence as a weapon, partners should be taught to explain how they feel. For example, saying "I feel lonely when we don't spend time together" works much better than being cold for a week.

Re-establish Safety

Closeness cannot grow where there is fear. Both partners must agree that affection is never used to negotiate or fight. Couples should move away from the old idea of "winning" a fight and toward being more emotionally intelligent. Realising that withholding affection is a way to control someone is the first step to stopping the cycle.

True closeness needs a "safe space" where both people feel free to talk about what they want without being punished.

By protecting this space, couples ensure that their bond remains a source of strength rather than a tool for manipulation. This commitment to mutual respect is what allows a partnership to thrive even during the most difficult seasons.



Ask Life's Big Sister

Have a relationship dilemma or burning question? Ask Life's Big Sister by sending your questions to life@guardian.ng. Selected answers will be published in the magazine each weekend. Follow us on social media to join the conversation.



My ex called to say he was disappointed I went no contact after he broke up with me. What do I do?

He broke the connection when he broke up with you. He does not get to dictate the terms of your handling of the aftermath. His disappointment is his responsibility to manage, not yours.



I believe in outsourcing, but my man has a different opinion, although he is not troubling me, but I want to make him happy. How do I balance this?

The best way to balance this is to outsource the big tasks but keep in touch. Use services like logistics or dry cleaning to save energy, but choose one or two personal activities to do together by hand, like cooking a weekend meal or choosing décor.



As a son, I hated my father because of how he used to hit my mom back then. Now I am, but I don't have a relationship with him.

I understand, and it's valid to feel this way. Watching him mistreat your mum created these wounds and the loss of respect that is hard to repair. If having no relationship provides you with the safe space and peace you need to heal, that is a healthy boundary to maintain.

RECIPE



Photos by Magnific

Salmon Poke Bowl Recipe

by Chidinma Enwean

The Salmon Poke Bowl is now a major hit in the food world. Originally from Hawaii, this dish is like a disassembled sushi roll in a bowl. It has become popular because it is healthy, filled with protein, and very easy to prepare for someone with a busy schedule.

Here is the simple guide to making a Salmon Poke Bowl in your own kitchen.

Ingredient

To get the best taste, you need fresh ingredients that balance salty, sweet, and sour flavors.

250g Fresh Salmon must be sushi-grade, cut into small cubes.

Use 1 cube of sushi rice seasoned with a little vinegar, sugar, and salt.

You can use salad greens or quinoa instead of rice.

2 tbsp Soy Sauce for a savory, salty base.

1 tsp Sesame Oil adds a nice toasted smell and taste.

1 tsp Rice Vinegar for a bit of tanginess.

1/2 tsp Sriracha add this if you want a little bit of spice.

1 tsp fresh ginger grate very small.

The Toppings:

Use edamame beans, sliced cucumber, and thin radish slices.

Half an avocado, sliced into pieces.

Dried seaweed (nori) and pickled ginger. sesame seeds and chopped green onions.

Instruction

In a bowl, mix the soy sauce, sesame oil, vinegar, ginger, and Sriracha. Add the salmon cubes and stir gently so every piece is covered. Put it in the fridge for 15 to 30 minutes. Do not leave it too long, or the fish texture will change.

Cook your rice and let it cool down to room temperature. It is important that the rice is not hot when you serve it, or it will warm up the raw fish and make the vegetables soft.

Put the rice into deep bowls. Place the marinated salmon in the middle. Arrange the edamame, cucumber, radish, and avocado in neat piles around the fish to make the bowl look beautiful.

Sprinkle sesame seeds and green onions over the top. If you like, you can add a small drizzle of creamy spicy mayo for extra flavor.

Extra Tip: Always tell your fish seller that you plan to eat the salmon raw. They will help you pick the safest, freshest piece available for your meal.

TIPS

Red Ice Cocktail

by Chidinma Enweani

The Red Ice Cocktail is more than just a regular drink; it uses frozen fruit juice instead of plain water ice. This means it gets more flavorful as it sits, rather than getting watery and tasteless like traditional cocktails. To get that deep red color and a perfect taste, you need the right ingredients.



Here is your simple guide to making this stylish, colorful drink at home or at your next event.

Ingredient

1 Cup Hibiscus Tea (Zobo). Brew it strong and let it cool down completely.

1/2 Cup Pomegranate or Cranberry Juice. This adds a sharp taste and a rich red color.

Fresh Raspberries or Pomegranate Seeds. These will be frozen inside your ice cubes.

60ml Vodka or Silver Tequila. If you want a non-alcoholic mocktail, use sparkling water instead.

30ml Fresh Lime Juice. This adds the necessary sour kick.

15 ml Sugar Syrup: To balance the sour fruit flavors.

A Splash of Club Soda: For a crisp, bubbly finish.

Fresh Mint for a nice smell and a pop of green.

Lime Slice to make the drink look professional.

Instructions

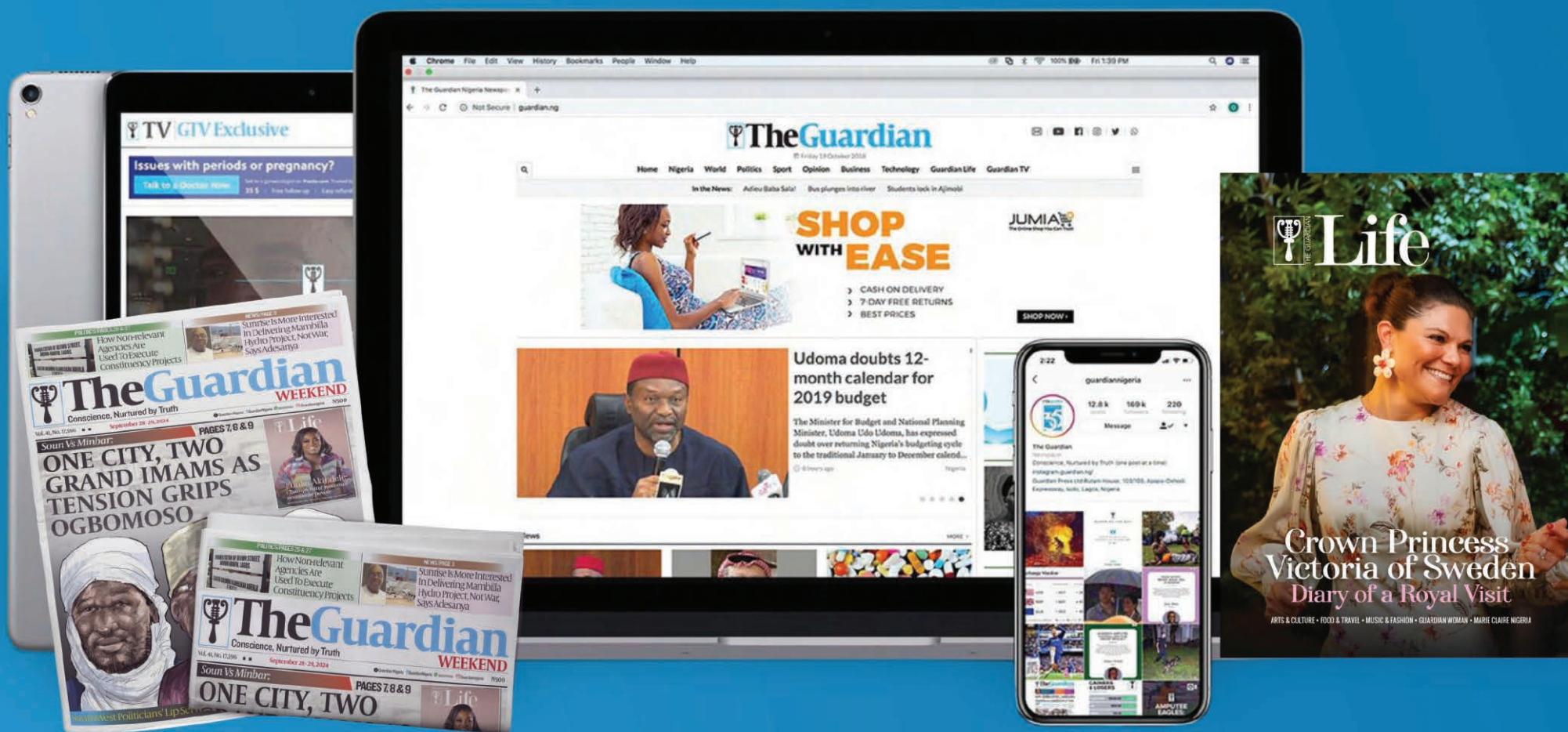
Mix the cool hibiscus tea with the pomegranate juice. Place one or two raspberries into a large ice cube tray. Pour the juice mixture over the fruit and freeze for at least six hours. Using big ice cubes is better because they melt slowly and release flavor gradually.

In a cocktail shaker, mix your alcohol (or water), lime juice, and sugar syrup. Fill the shaker with regular ice and shake hard for 15 seconds. This makes the drink very cold and adds tiny air bubbles for a better texture.

Place one large "Red Ice" cube into a clean glass. Pour the mixture from your shaker over the red ice using a strainer.

Add a splash of club soda to the top. Garnish with your fresh mint and a lime slice. As the red ice starts to melt, the drink will change from clear to a deep, beautiful red, and the fruit taste will get stronger with every sip.

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