

Just Before You Quit Your Job, Read This!

By A Very Passionate Entrepreneur

Dear Reader,

What you're about to read is just the tip of the iceberg of my entrepreneurial journey. In this abridged e-version, I summarise the essence of my book, a labour of love, sweat and tears. Behind every glossy, filtered and pixel perfect image on Instagram is the not so glamorous hard work, sleepless nights and plenty of picking one's self up after many a fall. The media mentions, awards and fellowships did not come overnight. As we like to say in this part of the world, don't let anyone tension you! We're all trying to figure this thing out and while at it, let's tell ourselves some hard truths.

Yours in Management,
A Very Passionate Entrepreneur (A.V.P.E.)

Still trying to decide if this is your cup of tea? Don't take our word for it, our readers had this to say...

“Brutally honest. Entrepreneurship stripped down and shown as it really is. Highly recommended.”

- *The Enterprise Gazette*

“An easy read that will have you laughing but also reflecting about the journey of entrepreneurship.”

- Biz Woman Boss, author of '*Why We Must All Be Entrepreneurs*'

“Told in a down to earth manner while packed with nuggets of advice. A must-read for today's budding entrepreneur.”

- *The Courier on Sunday*

“Business school is great but what is even greater is real life experience. Just as we did not anticipate the pandemic, there will be things in business that will catch you by surprise. A Very Passionate Entrepreneur takes your hand and shows you the steps to take and the pitfalls to avoid in this book. This is a real gem.”

- Doctor Business, serial entrepreneur and Head of Department, School of Enterprise, Atlantic Pacific University

Dedication

I dedicate this book to every one who has ever attempted to turn their passion to profit. For going after your dream irrespective of the outcome, your courage is what adds colour to this journey called life. A Very Passionate Entrepreneur applauds and celebrates you.

Table of Contents

Foreword

Chapter 1 My Passion and The Voices in My Head

Chapter 2 Passion Upon Passion

Chapter 3 My Passion, My Life: Going for Broke

Chapter 4 Passion Turned Profit

Chapter 5 Passion on Lockdown

Chapter 6 Innovation: Going Beyond Passion

Chapter 7 Future Proofing My Passion

Foreword

“Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work,” says Peter F. Drucker. Simply put, you have to put in the work. Plans require time and effort to become a reality. While talent, money, connections and hard work are all very important, it is passion that drives you to go above and beyond. It is what fuels the determination to pick yourself up when the challenges knock you down. So, when A Very Passionate Entrepreneur asked me to write the foreword, it was an easy yes. If you’re looking for passion personified, you’re reading the right book. My advice, dear reader is to have an open mind and a willingness to learn from the successes and failures of the author. Enjoy!

Chapter 1 The Voices in My Head

“The person who walks out on his or her own volition acquires an inner independence that they will never quite lose.”

- Peter F. Drucker, *People and Performance*

As a nine to fiver working in a multinational in Nigeria, my career was on an upward trajectory. People prayed and fasted for the job I had. So, to wake up one morning and say I was throwing it all away to chase a dream, was unthinkable to many.

“You know you have your whole career ahead of you. Why will you want to throw it all away for a hobby?”

“You don’t have to quit your day job to follow your passion. You can always do it on the side.”

“Are you just going to leave? Leave and do what exactly?”

“Are you sure you are really making the right decision? I thought you enjoyed your job. Is it your boss?”

“All you young people, do you know how hard it was in our time? This is an opportunity of a lifetime.

These were the voices of colleagues, family and friends ringing in my head. It wasn’t just the questions they voiced but the ones implied in their pregnant silence.

What was my plan when my pay cheque didn’t come in?

How will I afford to take care of myself, my bills and responsibilities?

What if this my passion thing didn’t quite work out, what will be my Plan B?

Valid questions. I was young and I did have a bright future ahead of me. After joining the company at a grade above entry level, I earned a decent salary. In fact, I was head hunted while finishing my undergrad at Cambridge. In a country like Nigeria where a job and the security it brings is an answered prayer point, I was about to do the unthinkable till...

“Will you like me to speak to her about this?”

Her was my friend’s former boss. My dear friend, more like my sister friend was one of the very few people who got it. Maybe because she was young or maybe because she was a woman, I wasn’t sure but what I did know was that she was passionate. She had quit her juicy job with so many perks to work for a not-for-profit organisation that had neither launched nor raised any money.

I took her up on her offer and said yes. A few emails and a job interview later, I had an offer to resume as a part time teacher at a Sixth Form College, all achieved in a matter of days. I was finally going to put my Education with English and Drama degree to use while I figured out how to fully explore my passion for education and entertainment. The world was for the taking, and taking I would, in my time and on my terms.

Chapter 2: Passion upon Passion

“The decision between secure routine work and insecure work challenging the imagination and ingenuity is the one decision most people find easiest to make. You know very soon what kind of a person you are.”

- Peter F. Drucker, *People and Performance*

Growing up, I wanted to be everything, almost. From a young age, my inquisitive mind was fascinated by different careers. Some days, I wanted to be the classic doctor, one of the dream jobs the typical Nigerian parent had for their children. Other days, I was content to be a market woman selling chickens and eggs. I remember wanting to be a bookseller so I could read as many books as possible for free. Beauty pageant winner, lawyer, actress, teacher, dancer, entertainer, rapper, cheerleader, singer, pastor and the list went on. As I grew older, my love for exploring new things followed me all the way to university. In my head, studying Education with English and Drama meant opportunities in Nigeria’s budding film industry Nollywood, publishing, teaching, writing, journalism, communications, radio/TV presenting and public speaking to mention a few.

Even when I quit my job, it wasn’t just teaching on the agenda. I wanted to model, act, write, present, compere, edit, proofread and travel the world. I had my hopes set on being the next big thing on television, radio and in print, media queen cum high school/sixth form teacher. But with only 24 hours a day, I soon realised that something would have to give to live a comfortable life while pursuing my dreams.

I got a second part time teaching job at a high school to supplement my income. This left me with only one free weekday and the weekends to pursue my media passions. I registered my company while teaching and recorded the first season of my flagship production, *Africana Literati*, an Afro-centric magazine literacy and literary TV show. It was much harder and expensive than I thought. I scraped together my savings from my past job and did a lot of the work myself to save cost. I researched, wrote, presented, voiced, produced and marketed the show. We shot it in my house on a shoe string budget. Imagine, 13 episodes (minus the vox-pops), complete with costume and makeup changes in less than 24 hours. *Omo wa ise, o ri ise*. Like the Yorubas will say, the work you were looking for, now you have found it.

Chapter 3 My Passion, My Life: Going for Broke

“Entrepreneurship is 'risky' mainly because so few of the so-called entrepreneurs know what they are doing.”

- Peter F. Drucker, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*

As a creative, you want to do work that matters. Sometimes, if you are not careful, your passion can totally consume you. This means you end up putting in blood, sweat, tears and hard earned money into making the dream work at all costs. As a new entrepreneur, I was not really sure what I was doing. I took several risks like pouring my savings in a TV show hoping that it would be bought or licensed by a channel. I did not do any market research. I

just went with what I liked and thought would be a good fit after watching a particular channel I was targeting. With the tagline ‘Love Africa, Read Africa,’ my show was for the family. It was for people who liked reading. Unfortunately, as I got to find out, that is a much smaller segment compared to those who like to watch movies, series and reality TV shows. Selling the show became a challenge. When I got an offer to have the show licensed, I took it even though it now meant that I had to look for adverts – something I had never done. The few adverts I managed to get barely covered a fraction of my production costs but I was fulfilled. My passion was making a way for me even if it was not paying my bills. After several months of teaching part time and running my media and production company, I decided to face one passion, the media. I quit both teaching jobs and hoped for the best.

Chapter 4: Passion Turned Profit

“No apology is needed for profit.”

- *Peter F. Drucker, Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*

I had my hungry days a.k.a. humble beginnings. To the outside world and even some of my former colleagues who saw me on television or heard me on radio, I was making it. I was living the dream. My courage, tenacity and passion inspired many. But. A big but, I was running my business at a loss. And I wanted more. I wanted to go from red to blue. I wanted my dream to pay for itself.

My biggest break finally came from where I least expected it – communications. My past job working a 9 – 5 in corporate communications coupled with my established freelance writing/editing career positioned me for consultancy work on a government backed nationwide programme promoting financial inclusion. Two things worked for me.

1. I had the skills and experience to back it up. For the four years I worked in the corporate world, I had developed my relationship with the media. I had perfected the art of writing press releases, newspaper articles and content for the newsletter.
2. I was hungry for business. Not just any business, I was in it for the profit. I had plans for more shows but plans with no money were just ideas stuck in my very active imagination. So, whenever, I saw opportunities, I grabbed them whether it was work, schooling or competition. I was in it to win it!

As soon as I got the text message from a past client to come for a meeting to discuss the brief, I jumped on it. I showed up and got the job. I wasn’t the most qualified. I didn’t have a big team working for me. In fact, it was just my laptop and me in the early days. When I delivered on the PR brief, I was mandated to come up with more ideas to support the PR. What did I do? I went back to my love for the media and this time, I used my money to produce a demo of a radio show I conceptualised. The client loved it and gave the go-ahead. The show was translated into several languages and broadcasted all over Nigeria. For the first time, my passion turned a profit.

Chapter 5: Passion on Lockdown

‘A time of turbulence is also one of great opportunity for those who can understand, accept and exploit the new realities.’

- *Peter F. Drucker, Managing in Turbulent Times*

As a media entrepreneur and educationist, I had very high hopes for 2020 until the pandemic struck and put things on a lockdown. All of a sudden, getting to the studio to pre-record my weekly educational radio show became a challenge. Even more worrisome was that brands were cutting down on their marketing spend. The events I would normally comperere were no longer happening. The pivot to explore and exploit digital platforms was swift. Like we say here, no time to waste time.

No radio show did not mean the conversations needed to end. I just needed to be creative. Instagram Live and YouTube became my go-to platforms for engaging our community. But it did more than that, it helped to position me better. A YouTube video I had done on homeschooling for parents and in another, sharing tips for schools going digital was randomly seen by a Dubai based web designer working on a website for a state backed reading initiative. I didn't know all of this till I got a DM on Instagram from the Director General who excitedly told me about my videos. We get chatting and in no time, I was booked to hosting their virtual event and special TV show for Children's Day.

Chapter 6: Innovation: Going Beyond Passion

“Not to innovate is the single largest reason for the decline of existing organizations. Not to know how to manage is the single largest reason for the failure of new ventures.”

— *Peter F. Drucker, The Essential Drucker*

One of my biggest passions remains creating Africa focussed edu-taining content for television, radio and digital platforms. The end goal used to be owning a TV channel and a radio station. With the high capital outlay and no guarantees of adverts should the stations be set up, I have had to go back to the drawing board. After four seasons of producing and airing Africana Literati, the light bulb finally went off when I was approached by an edTech platform to become a full time presenter. People might not pay to watch our show which has a literacy segment but people will pay for educational lessons online. This idea was later refined after working as a consultant on an educational radio show for a not-for-profit. How about an edTech solution focussed on literacy? A website or app that students can learn how to read. Then, offer the other edu-taining content as a value add. Even though we are still at ideation stage, we have been accepted into a tech program. Our decision to innovate is opening us up to new audiences and new sources of funding – angel investment, venture capitalists and grants. Before this, we were at the mercy of advertising agencies, clients and platform owners.

Chapter 7: Future Proofing My Passion

“One cannot manage change. One can only be ahead of it.”

— *Peter F. Drucker, Management Challenges in the 21st Century*

They say the only constant thing in life is change. And after living through a pandemic that changed how we worked, schooled, socialised and essentially, lived our lives, it is safe to say that the human species will continue to adapt to change. We might not fully be able to manage it as Drucker says but there are many lessons we can take to be ahead of it.

Here are my top three.

1. Technology is here to stay. So, any passion or business that will not just survive but grow and thrive in a post-pandemic world needs to embrace technology fully. We have to see tech for what it is – a tool to solve problems and make our lives easier.
2. People will always be our greatest resource. Whether we are working remotely or in close proximity in the office, we should invest in them. This goes beyond trainings and fancy certificates but is a deep concern and holistic commitment to the worker's welfare. A big yes to more support for mental health and working mothers.
3. Passion will continue to drive innovation. As careers in tech, entertainment, sports, marketing begin to gain as much popularity and acceptance as their traditional counterparts, medicine, law and engineering, we will see more people follow new passions with greater commitment and support. The result will be new job titles, companies and industries.

Finally, dear reader, don't lose your magic, the world needs it.

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