

# COMFORT JAMES

*First Edition*

A photograph of a human hand reaching out from the left side of the frame towards the center. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The word 'EXPLOIT' is superimposed on the right side of the image, partially overlapping the hand and the sky.

# EXPLOIT

*A Personal development exercise*

## **EXPLOIT**

**(A personal development exercise)**

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**I could laugh at this statement: “Soberness comes after realization”, yet I cannot deny the truth it speaks to my very being. Having it in plain sentence, I’d say I’ve realized things and become sober in turn. Not sober like a tortoise having to hide in its shell but sober like becoming a better me. This is what “exploit” aims at achieving; making a better you. Knowing about the subject matter is good but it’s not enough to just have the knowledge, there is a place of application.**

**It is my desire that you make the very best of this book; do not lose sight of what’s really needed for your personal development.**

**I encourage you to also see other materials on the subject matter.**

**CJ.**

## *ONE*

### **WHAT IS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT?**

Imagine you were asked this question in a whole new environment and in order not to sound like an expert, maybe also because you're unsure of the other person's intelligence quotient, you simply say "Personal development means personal development." believe me, you cannot be criticized all because you gave such answer. You may then be required to expatiate and this is where you get to say all you know about it.

The word "personal" concerns a person. "Development" means advancement or improvement.

Putting the two words together, one can easily say: "Personal development deals with a person's advancement. Having an understanding of how personal development works as well as the key things that must be taken into consideration for personal development to take root is very important.

According to the Wikipedia encyclopedia, "Personal development includes activities that **improve awareness and identity, develop talents and potential, build human capital and facilitate employability, enhance quality of life and contribute to the realization of dreams and aspirations**".

The above definition shows the results of certain activities in personal development. In other words, there can't be personal advancement in **awareness and identity, development of talents and potential, building of human capital and facilitation of employability, enhancement of quality of life and contribution to the realization of dreams and aspirations** without these activities.

An individual can list quite a number of things as to achieving these results. To him or her, it could be what works well as envisioned (**perspective**). To simply put, the key elements of personal development known generally and also seen in the aforementioned definition are:

- Self-awareness – know "you"
- Self-knowledge – understand "you"
- Identity – who you are
- Talents – natural abilities
- Potential – abilities that can lead to success through development

- Human capital – your knowledge, skills and experience as contributory to the environment
- Quality of life – General well-being of individuals
- Dreams – a wish to have or be something
- Aspiration – a strong desire or hope to have something

These elements shall be further explained in the coming chapters of this book.

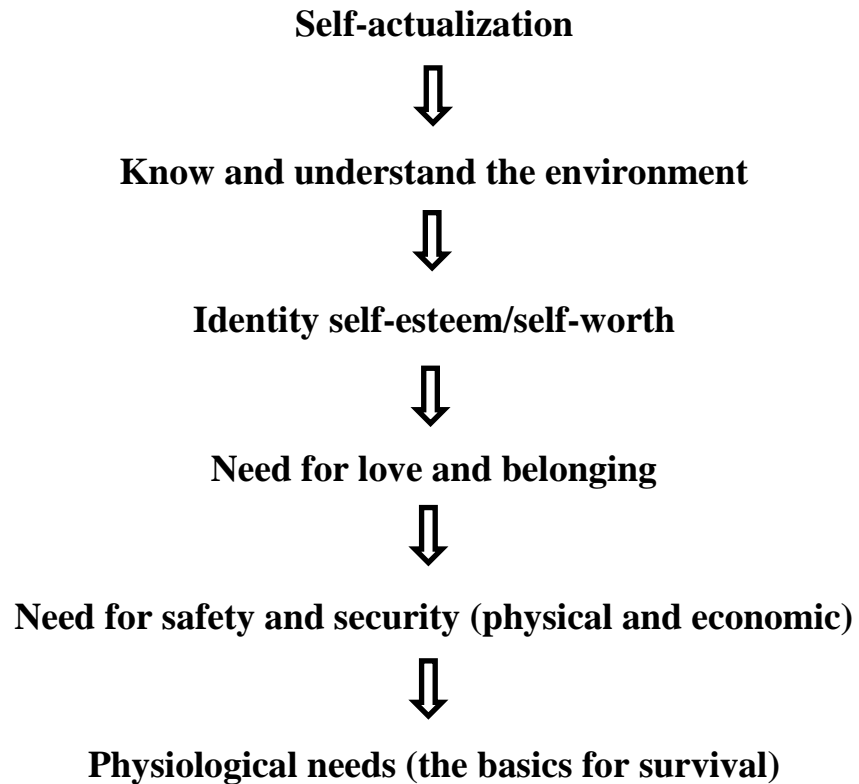
Personal development is simply a transition into a better you. There are things that must be put in place for the change to occur. As a person, there are things I could take up thereby causing my own personal change. It could be learning a new skill, developing my gifts, working towards becoming a good leader, developing myself spiritually, understanding my worth, improving my health or executing personal development plans basically.

Personal development also includes formal and informal activities which could be tailored towards developing others. Personalities such as teachers, counselors and mentors are propellers in developing others in this wise.

There are five dimensions of personal development - Spiritual, Emotional, Mental, Physical and Social. An acronym would be SEMPS. Below is a photo that captures the dimensions as well as a brief of what they entail:



Maslow (1970) gives the hierarchical theory of personal development thus;



**Exercise**

Get quiet and picture the transition you'd like to see in your quest for personal development.

## TWO

### SELF-AWARENESS, SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY

#### *Self-awareness*

Carefully read the Persian proverb below:

*“He who knows not and knows not that he knows not is a fool; ignore him*

*He who knows not and knows that he knows not is a child; teach him*

*He who knows and knows not that he knows is sleeping; wake him*

*He who knows and knows that he knows is wise; follow him”*

The need to know “you” cannot be overemphasized; awareness on its own means “knowing something”. Consider the following questions:

*Do you know you exist?*

*Do you think you are important?*

*Are you interested in knowing you?*

It’s almost very easy to give a quick “yes” to the first and second question. You may however have a reaction to the third question, such reaction can be: “Are you God?” This question is not aimed at telling you what you are as opposed to what you already know or think you know.

The foundation of personal development is: “know you” and this should not be misunderstood. As a matter of fact, this opens the floor for every other element of personal development.

You are an embodiment of “spirit”, “heart”, “mind” and “body”. A simple equation is: your spirit + your heart + your mind + your body = YOU.

- **Spirit:** your spirit is your inner witness. A single word for it – conscience. It is that ultimate personality that guides your morality. The place of conscience cannot be misplaced even in the midst of other compound attributes whether from the heart, mind or body. Knowing “you” begins from the inside out; the truth is always in your heart and you act for real by the conviction in your spirit inspired by God.

- **Heart:** the spirit and the heart share a relationship in genuine communication (spirit to heart - heart to spirit). An evident line of distinction is the physical nature of the heart as an organ of the human body; this is not so with the spirit. The heart is characterized by an entity, genuineness on its own which can only make its abode in the heart – “love”, hence, it is the seat of compassion. This is the whole essence of life. In knowing “you”, the heart is a good place to check (introspection) – seat of self-awareness. It is also the platform for immovable faith. Courage and confidence springs from the heart. And scripture says: “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life” (proverbs 4:23).
- **Mind:** your thoughts and imaginations operate here. This is also where the blueprint of an intension is registered – seat of creativity. The mind is an amazing entity; a measure of care is however to be taken when dealing with the mind as it is capable of housing the wrong thoughts that you allow into it. This can go as far as you allow it. A good usage of the mind is to deliberately think good thoughts.
- **Body:** this is your physical frame. It can also be called the flesh. The spirit, heart and mind function through this entity. The body needs to be in good shape in order for the spirit, heart and mind to function in harmony; Nutrition, exercise and rest are easy factors to consider in helping the body achieve its health goals.

### *Self-knowledge*

In the words of Lucille Ball – *“knowing what you cannot do is more important than knowing what you can do. In fact, that’s good taste”*.

Self-knowledge and self-awareness are quite related. With Knowledge, you become aware or familiar. There is always a “gathering of information” and in the context of understanding “self”, there is a process of self- awareness (refresh your memory on the three questions under self-awareness). Having been certain of what you’re made of, the answers you give to any question that might arise in that line

represents self-knowledge. In other words, you answer such questions with self-knowledge.

*“Understand you that you may be able to answer questions regarding you” -  
Comfort James*

According to psychology, self-knowledge tells us our mental state; it is a component of *self-concept*. There are three aspects of self-concept - the cognitive self, the affective self and the executive self.

*The cognitive self is made up of everything you know or think you know about yourself. It is a combination of physiological properties (race, height etc) and psychological properties (beliefs, values etc). Self-knowledge is actually linked to the cognitive self because the cognitive self is your known self.*

*The affective self is also known as the “felt self”. It is the emotional component of self-concept.*

*The executive self is the behavioural component of self-concept. It is also known as the active self.*

By self-knowledge, you aim at building your self-esteem or self-worth and ensuring that you encounter no pitfalls in life’s pursuit along the way. There must be a form of continual check on one’s self, this helps to ensure that you’re still on track.

You obtain self-knowledge from the visible information about yourself. Such information may include weight, strength and height. These constituents can be measured. There is however a limit to what can be measured. Such include honesty, love and so on.

Some people have a way of relying on the information obtained by comparing themselves with others. This has its negative effects and it is not always advisable to do that. You’d need enough buffers to be able to embrace the undesired behind it.

Charles H. Cooley’s processes of the responses we get from others were summarized thus:



- *We imagine how we appear in the eyes of another person*
- *We then imagine how that person is evaluating us*
- *The imagined evaluation leads us to feel good or bad in accordance with the judgment we have conjured*

As highlighted under self-awareness, the heart is the good place to check when it comes to knowing “you”. This process is called *Introspection*. It takes the form of looking inwards and directly consulting our thoughts, feelings and attitudes. The negative effect that this concept has on self-knowledge occurs when an individual thinks too much about a state of feeling – discouraging thoughts.

### ***Identity***

Your identity is who you are. It embraces your qualities and feelings. The enlightenment on what an individual is made of in terms of one’s embodiment (spirit, heart, mind and body) can be to some, a reminder and to some others a better explanation of what they already know.

Maslow (1970) in his clarification of self-actualization emphasizes the importance of being everything that you’re capable of becoming. This takes the form of being in touch with your feelings and experiences; it admonishes one to live fully with total concentration.

*“It’s amazing how many cares disappear when you decide not to be something but to be someone” – Coco Chanel*

You must become someone within the frame of “you”!

## Covey's exposition on the "voice"

Me	Needs	Four intelligences/capabilities	Attributes	VOICE
Body	Live	Physical (Physical quotient)	Discipline	Need
Mind	Learn	Mental (intelligence quotient)	Vision	Talent
Heart	Love	Emotional (emotional quotient)	Passion	Passion
Spirit	Leave a Legacy	Spiritual (spiritual quotient)	Conscience	Conscience

According to Stephen R. Covey in his book - the 8<sup>th</sup> habit, there are three birth gifts: Freedom to choose (Stimulus – Response), Principles and the four Intelligences/capabilities (as seen on the table above). He explained the concept of the voice thus:

“When you engage in work that taps your talent and fuels your passion that rises out of a great need in the world that you feel drawn by conscience to meet – therein lies your voice, your calling, your soul’s code”.

### ***Key things:***

Talent – your natural gifts and strengths.

Passion – those things that naturally energize, excite, motivate and inspire you.

Need - what the world needs enough to pay you for

Conscience – that still small voice within that assures you of what is right and that prompts you to actually do it.

My inclusion of Covey's exposition on the "Voice" serves as an aid to further enlighten you on "Identity". Do try and get a copy of the book. Yet another one

also by him is: the seven habits of highly effective people (my reason for inclusion being the relationship between the stimulus and response).

Please note that what you think of yourself affects your identity. You should think positively, take hold of your feelings and be aligned to your future.

### **Listening soulfully**

*You must give birth to your images.  
They are the future waiting to be born.  
Fear not the strangeness that you feel.  
The future must enter you  
Long before it happens.  
Just wait for the birth,  
For the hour of new clarity.*

***(Rainer Maria Rilke)***

### **Exercise**

- A. Take two sheets of paper, name them one and two. On sheet one, make a list of the things that's been contradicting your self-awareness, self- knowledge and identity. On sheet two, make a list of what you know should be in line with your self-awareness, self-knowledge and identity.
- B. Tear sheet one into pieces leaving sheet two.
- C. Make a decision to be principled from what you have on sheet two (what you know should be in line with your self-awareness, self- knowledge and identity).

## ***THREE***

### **TALENTS AND POTENTIAL**

#### ***Talents***

According to the Oxford dictionary, “Talent” is a natural ability to do something well. You may not have known some abilities you exhibited while growing up as talents. Maturity reveals enough to you as you are better enlightened on the reason behind the perfection in the tasks you handle effortlessly.

If you happen to be in a state where you’re not certain of your natural abilities, there are practical steps that you can take since you now know that your talent is your natural or innate ability. A simple question is to ask yourself is: “What exactly I’m I good at?”

Many tend to make a list here, which is not bad at all; as a matter of fact, I fully support this method especially if it’s done orderly - the strongest of all the things you’re good at should be first on your list. Your gifts were given to you based on your capability and you need to understand and use the right gift or talent for the right occasion and at the right time. You cannot be singing when you ought to be dancing. This is not an avenue for you to see yourself as a pack of talents. The more reason why you need to be sure whether the things you know you’re good at are as a result of skills learned or not.

The first talent on your list should be your strongest gift. When you have a flair for something, you bring out the very best because you’re operating in your element. You find fulfillment by operating in your element because of the presence of passion. So if you’re still about wondering what you’re good at or maybe you’re trying to find a distinct one, begin with what you’re passionate about. And if you’re presently doing something you’re not passionate about, please realign yourself.

## How to realign yourself

Your spirit is the ultimate qualifier of your natural ability. When you're in your element, there should be no form of compromise on your part in terms of ethics. Your inner witness requires a communion with God and this happens in the place of meditation. Meditation is the practice of thinking. It is not so much of a huge task; the reason why some people don't get the most out of it is because they bring the market to the place of meditation. The market represents the fears, doubts, confusions, alternatives, you name them – those things that tend to compress the truth. And when it's not working, they run off, not allowing the truth to take root. Do not purchase a thing from the market in the place of meditation; the market will eventually run out of stock by your perseverance. So stay for as long as it takes. Don't leave the realm of meditation unsatisfied.

Your heart and your spirit come to terms in the place of meditation. Your heart obtains a maximum level of certainty from your spirit having been enlightened on what the situation really is with what you love doing or how passionate you are about that particular thing. And if you happen to be struggling with certain things that you're not passionate about, whether you are productive at it or not, your spirit simply tells your heart what you have to do. Your heart receives courage and confidence from your spirit.

If you have to give up something in order to go for what you derive joy from doing, your mind can tend to think "regret". Your spirit however doesn't buy into this and your heart is so much into your pathway to happiness hence, the "what if" thought in your mind is silenced. Creative ideas on how to enhance your talent are birthed.

Your physical frame displays your natural ability...

You may choose to take the realignment process in "ascending" or "descending" order. Ascending by acknowledging thus: "I can do this (what you are good at) with the whole of my body, mind, heart and spirit." And descending - "my spirit confirms what's in my heart, my mind succumbs and my body performs."

Everyone in planet earth is gifted; the challenge most times is identifying the gift(s). I've discovered that people that feel that they have no talents operate in their

area of gifting unawares. I also found that the reason they don't know is because they haven't seen the importance of their gift in that area of effectiveness. Some have gone as far as saying "it won't amount to anything because it's a normal thing people do in the world." An example of such normal thing can be "solving a problem with your hands". You have a grace which graces the work of your hands. Some people who are into one handiwork or the other may not see their ability to do something well as a gift. I'd elaborate on this under "potential" which is the fifth element of personal development. This also concerns those that are sure of their natural abilities.

### *Potential*

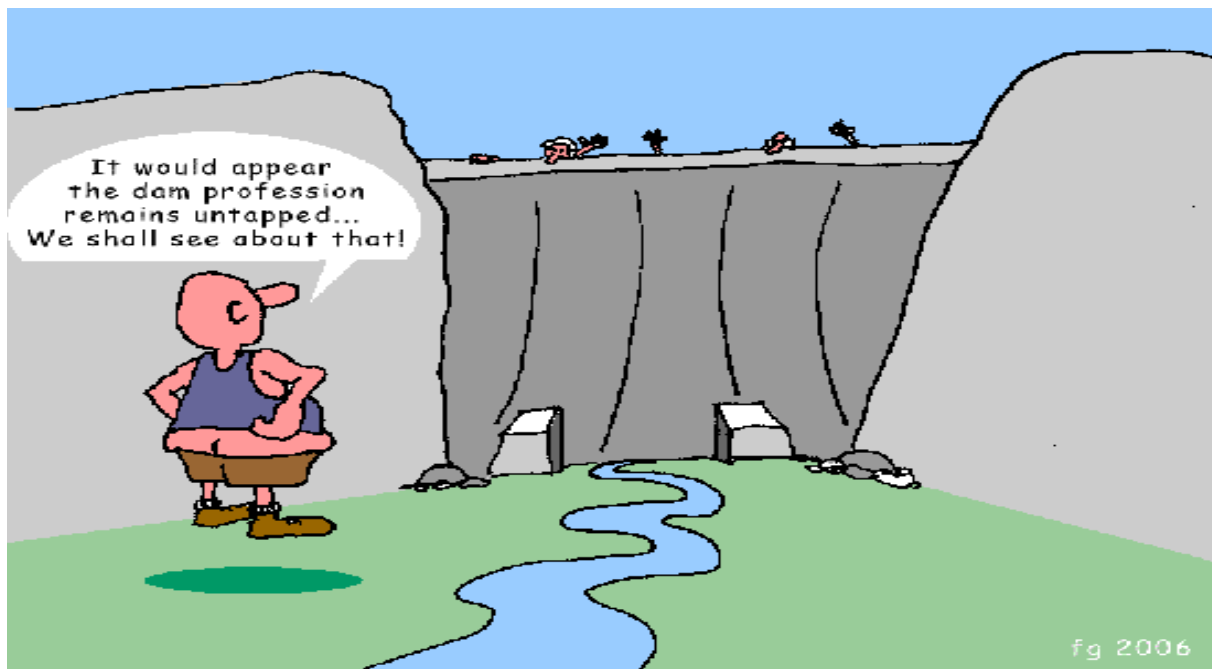
Your abilities can develop so much as bringing about a heroic deed. Exploit generally revolves round possibilities. It's wonderful to identify your talent(s) and it's more wonderful to develop the talents. For example, if you have a natural ability to sing but refuse to develop that ability, mediocrity is as good as the situation. The parable of the talents in the bible required the talents to be put to use but someone did otherwise.



From the photo above, you'd see that "potential" became "performance". Your known gift remains a potential until developed. There is what you should do with your talent(s); there is an area of effective operation basically.

## Plumbing Scenario

On that faithful day, the tap broke and water flowed uncontrollably. You thought within yourself, “A new tap needed to be installed.” You somehow found a way to stop the flow of water. You’ve handled similar situations in the past. One thing however is that you’ve always proposed the same solution in similar situations – “A new tap needed to be installed”. The reason why you’ve taken no action all this while is because this situation required more effort compared to the quick fixes you’ve done so far. The reality is: “The strength behind your gift yearns to do more, to be better.” So you are to perform the real task and let there be no losing side, as a plumber, prevent water erosion and make the channel for getting water advanced, having worked on developing your passion for plumbing. Take a good look at the photo below:



The potential plumber looks to install a tap

## The concept of replenishment

Your development in your area of gifting will require sacrifice. This is where some people may not be willing to submit easily. A simple way to put it is: you have to give something in order to get the best result. Let's say you just discovered something you didn't know was in you, you may then ask "so what am I going to do about this?" The fact that you identified or saw a part of it doesn't mean you know the entirety of it. Go out of your way, get to work and enjoy the benefits later on.

If you tried getting confirmation from your embodiments as per your talent(s), you may have concluded afterward that there could be no further truth. The people that have come to be fond of you may give comments similar to your earlier conclusions but you are the one that makes the final decision. People express their opinions on various grounds; what they say with the best of intentions is worth listening to sometimes. Some opinions are even meant to propel you; it is however not very wise to operate in the capacity people want to see you in, ignoring the truth you have come to know.

In the concept of replenishment, you don't just take counts of your different potentials neither do you make boastful acknowledgments. As stated earlier, there is a place of effective operation. Don't be in a haste to make heroic shows without taking an examination by and for the person you see when you look in the mirror. Money is not and never the topmost prerequisite when it comes to advancing your potential. In the place of sacrifice, you give your time; you encounter times of possible discouragement. Sometimes you get to ask yourself why you got into what you got into in the first place – second thoughts almost overwhelms you. In times like this, you should always ask: what happens when you hang in there? What happens when you tell yourself that you're going to give it your very best one more time?

When I was learning to play the piano, I encountered times of discouragement; this was because I wasn't delivering what I thought I could deliver in that line. It went as far as my teacher saying to me one day: "Comfort you're not encouraging me." That statement stayed with me through out that day and I wondered if learning to play the instrument was worth it. It eventually dawned on me that I needed to give more. I submitted to the instruction coupled with my undying desire



to play the piano. It wasn't long before I got the news that my teacher was leaving for school and this was in another state. You may try to imagine what my reaction must have been like then. But I didn't let that stop me, I continued learning still. I've seen the result of my hard work and earned my teacher's respect and I look forward to becoming better than I am now.

Nobody said it would be easy when you work towards making your potential speak for you. It takes perseverance in the process. Getting a clear picture of the prize as confirmed by your embodiments will keep you in check. Your potential cannot be wasted when used for the right course.

### **Exercise**

- A. Get into meditation mode, take the simple steps in uncovering what you're good at – realigning yourself (you might have to consider reading “talents” again).
- B. Having been certain about (A), ask yourself how you can be better. Please pay close attention to your conscience.
- C. Like the plumber scenario (photo), what transformation can you cause in your immediate environment?

## ***FOUR***

### **HUMAN CAPITAL AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

#### ***Human capital***

Human capital is a pool of your Knowledge, Skills and Experience (KSE) as contributory to the environment. Basic human needs can be met by the combination of these (KSE).

In the labour market, most employers put forth their expectations before engaging a fresh labour. Such qualities that may be required as proof of what your resume says can be: Good and effective communication, ability to work with a team, ability to learn and so on. These may not actually be the main requirements of the job. Still, it is expected that they be intact as their usefulness would play a huge role on the job. After engagement, the qualities can then be improved upon through investment. This can be through further education, training, benefits and so on.

*Adam Smith (economist) puts thus:*

“Fourthly, of the acquired and useful abilities of all the inhabitants or members of the society, the acquisition of such talents by the maintenance of the acquirer during his education, study, or apprenticeship, always costs a real expense, which is a capital fixed and realized, as it were, in his person. Those talents, as they make a part of his fortune, so do they likewise that of the society to which he belongs. The improved dexterity of a workman may be considered in the same light as a machine or instrument of trade which facilitates and abridges labor, and which, though it costs a certain expense, repays that expense with a profit.”

According to Smith, division of labor determines the productive power of labour. Enhancements and possible improvements always turn out to be the result of division of labour. Hence, a relationship exists between division of labor and human capital.

Every element of personal development is intertwined. Just as you have been exposed to the concept of self-awareness, self-knowledge and other elements before human capital, your known self has a stand in the professional field if necessary

approaches are taken.

Mandell (2007) compiles common assumptions of how the self could be used in professional practice as follows:

- The self is of importance because it is a dimension of the person through which theoretical and technical knowledge is mediated in a professional context. Who we are as humans become a part of the frame where the work is done.
- In order to create a working alliance, it is important to have the Communication skills and abilities to take in both verbal and nonverbal expressions, such as tonality, body language and dress.
- You need self-awareness of your values and beliefs, attitudes, openness, genuineness and warmth and a non-judgmental stance. These are used in the service of setting and maintaining boundaries, confidentiality and in modeling behaviour.
- Feelings towards the other, within a relationship, are expressed through the transference counter-transference system. It is your earlier personal experiences that come into the encounter and affect the real meeting.
- As a socially constituted product, subjectivity operates within discursive positions. The historical inheritance in different institutional and cultural identities embodies different power and one needs to be observant of domination. In this perspective, there is a need to be concerned with ethics.
- In therapeutic work, there are discussions of how much the therapist should include clients in the process. There are many theories that are used by different therapeutic traditions. One is the theory of the wounded healer, assuming that the foundation of being able to help others builds on your own experiences and awareness of your own wounds and how that affects us. Self-awareness and a well reflected personal process is important from this perspective, preventing the practitioner from imposing or projecting their own material onto the client.

## Getting it right

An employee gets it all wrong if he/she applies KSE in any engagement and ignores the need for continued improvement. This is like cramming the contents of a book just to pass an examination and not being able to remember any part of the book afterward. You need to invest in yourself first and by so doing, you place good worth on yourself. When you have a picture of that sector you hope to function in effectively, your desire to call the shots when you eventually get there would drive the need for hard work. Analyze the brief conversation below:

***Employer:*** *we need you ASAP; how much would you like this organization to pay you? There are other benefits as well...*

***Employee:*** .....

Fill in the gap above based on your “worth”. Please note that your KSEs are intangible.

## Competence

This is the ability to do something well. It is another interesting aspect of human capital. The Wikipedia encyclopedia puts its features thus:

- *Expandable and self-generating with use:* as doctors get more experience; their competence base will increase, as will their endowment of human capital. The economics of scarcity is replaced by the economics of self-generation.
  
- *Transportable and shareable:* competence, especially knowledge, can be moved and shared. This transfer does not prevent its use by the original holder. However, the transfer of knowledge may reduce scarcity of it and adds value to its original possessor.

Example: An athlete can build human capital through education and training. An athlete who has been playing for a long time will have gained so much experience (much like the doctor in the example above) that his human capital will have increased a great deal.

A point guard gains human capital through training and learning the fundamentals of the game at an early age. He continues to train on the collegiate level until he is drafted. At that point, his human capital is accessed and if he has enough he will be able to play right away. Through playing, he gains experience in the field and thus increases his human capital. A veteran point guard may have less training than a young point guard but may have more human capital overall due to experience and shared knowledge with other players.

### *Competence, Ability, Skill or Knowledge*

"Knowledge" is often used. "Competence" is broader and includes cognitive abilities (intelligences) and further abilities like motoric and artistic abilities. "Skill" includes narrow, domain-specific abilities.

Knowledge equity (knowledge capital minus knowledge liability) plus emotional equity (emotional capital minus emotional liability) equals **goodwill or immaterial/intangible value of the company.**

Intangible value of the company (goodwill) plus tangible (material) equity equals the **total value of the company.**

### *Quality of life (QOL)*

This is the general well-being of people. If some people are asked how they appreciate everything around them, there'll be a mix of positive and negative responses. Positive, if they're getting optimum satisfaction from life and negative if otherwise.

“Quality” refers to the standard of something; whether it's good or bad. Some people find it easy to do the math of unpleasant circumstances when it comes to

talking about life in general. Attaching their predicaments to their environment have become a norm for them.

If you're familiar with the popular "MR. NIGER D" ("M" stands for *movement*, "R" – *respiration*, "N" – *nutrition*, "I" – *irritability*, "G" – *growth*, "E" – *excretion*, "R" – *reproduction* and "D" – *death*) in biology, you'd see that these characteristics of living things as pertaining to life has to do with your ability to do what characterizes you as a living thing.

The enhancement of the quality of life is part of the goals of personal development. In essence, you have an idea of what life entails and you're living it. Improving the status quo is however a necessary obligation as you rise.

### Dimensions of quality of life

1. Education: this is one factor of quality of life that's highly placed over other factors. You wouldn't know most of the things you know today if you hadn't been educated. This is also a concern for many parents; they desire that their children reach their highest potentials and a good start is through education. There are parents that look forward to their children accomplishing more than they did so they invest in them. Business organizations also prefer engaging educated personnel who can deliver thereby improving the state of affairs of the company. Even a little education can go a long way because it is better than no education at all.
2. Health: this relates to the physical, mental, emotional and social aspect of a person's life. A person's health is bound to decline if necessary precautions are not taken. Refresh your memory on the dimensions of personal development in chapter one. This is for the benefit of having an idea of what the physical, mental, emotional and social aspect of a person's life entails.
3. Work: skills differ and there are different environments where they can be applied. In enhancing QOL as relating to the work factor. It is highly beneficial for an individual to have a broadened scope in terms of skills on a job. Acquiring different skills is not bad, still, there is the place of

knowing the right skill that is required in addressing certain issues. Have an understanding of the situation at hand and see its importance; you'd be able to take the right course of action and the result will be as expected – good standard of work. There is no guarantee that the ride would be pleasant always; one may get to grumble over some things in the work factor. Such things as insufficient pay, workload and deprivation from learning new skills in the work environment are reasons why one may grumble. This is most times the case with some employees. Even as humans, there's always the desire to want more. It's like saying there's no end to our desire for optimum satisfaction. The truth behind all of these is: **perception** is the reason for the feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction as it pertains to the work factor. The feeling of disparity which could lead to inferiority complex is also born out of perception.

4. Psychology: this factor relates to the mind. The feeling of the highs and lows of the quality of life comes in here. The mind is one of your embodiments and it is expedient you take control of it. The mind responds to virtually every dimension of quality of life. Don't linger on the wrong thoughts.
5. Stress: this doesn't have to be an everyday encounter; it's almost as if stress on its own is one inanimate that's been attached to every activity in the human world. In managing stress, one has to be careful so that further pressures are not inflicted. When the need for rest arises, seize it! Also, understanding that stress shares a relationship with worries and anxieties will help to change your orientation of it hence, causing you to make adjustments where necessary. You may not completely eradicate the presence of stress but by enhancing or improving your quality of life, you can ensure proper and effective management. Don't lose it all because you're stressed!
6. Family: this factor of the quality of life is very important. There is a general understanding that the family comes before any other thing. It is an embodiment of the people you have come to be well acquainted with. You cannot be more focused on the work life for example and leave the family

wandering. It'd be like raining coals of fire on your head when the negativities which were not addressed earlier come right back at you. The family is one group that appreciates the little that's done out of one's capability. Family is a lifetime gift!

7. Spiritual: Spirituality can be defined as involving a relationship with the sacred. Even with all your achievements, there's One to whom you owe allegiance – God. In the place of flourishing, you know deep within by an unhindered knowledge of the presence of a Living Force, that it hasn't been by your might so far (Spirit conscious). The spirit is one of your embodiments and there is a greater Spirit from Whom your spirit (you) gets direction. This happens when you engage in activities that fuels your spirit man. Such activities could be worshiping with other believers in a religious gathering, communing with God privately, reading the holy book and so on.

### **Exercise**

In line with human capital and quality of life, examine yourself critically and make a list of areas you know you need to work on.



## *FIVE*

### **DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS**

“Dreams are aspirations of what we see ourselves actively participating in, in order to improve ourselves while becoming a part of something big” (Laura D. Field).

Your dreams depict your wish to have something; it is guided by hope. Aspiration is a strong desire to have something. These concepts (dreams and aspirations) are intertwined. Dreams are treasured and a strong love for them sometimes puts one in an imaginative mode. Quite a number of adults had dreams as kids, some are living it today and some have embraced something else. While dreams remain a wish, aspiration pushes you to work.

#### Circumstantial Modification

The dreams some people had during childhood don't always turn out to remain when they grow up. For example, the rejection a person got after series of attempts in getting into college to study medicine may warrant reconsideration. This person actually had the dream of becoming a medical doctor and due to the treatments gotten so far, the person embraces a new dream. In some cases, the college can propose options in the same field which eventually leads the person in question to a whole new path. On the person's part, “age is telling on me; I've tried and tried but it isn't working with medicine...”

It's very easy to think thus: “this dude shouldn't have given up, if only he tried one more time, just maybe he would be pursuing his dream by now” and things like that. The desire to achieve a dream is one good adrenaline and series of attempts might have been made by the person in question. There are however other factors that can cause one's ambition to be altered in a way, some of them are: ill health, money. Lack of focus and so on.

## Derived passion

Let's call our earlier mentioned dude Jack. The college offers him options in Pharmacy and he accepts or he applies at another time and chooses to study pharmacy. If along the line Jack comes to like the course even though he had not the faintest idea about what it entails initially, that can be called derived passion. Jack might eventually end up becoming a successful pharmacist. In reacting to the thought as to why he gave up on his childhood dream or ambition, it is important to understand why he desired to become a medical doctor in the first place. Kids have a way of attaching themselves to situations that appeal to them. Let's take for example a little girl that admires her parent's disposition and approach to work. She then asks her mum one day, "Where do you and dad work mum?" Her mum replies, "We work in a bank darling." She gets to school and somehow became exposed to the nature of the banking profession being a well-paid one. She comes back home and asks her mum, "mum I heard bankers earn big; does it mean that you and dad acquired all these properties with the same money?" Her mother laughs and replies, "Well most of it my dear."

"I wanna be a banker," she screams. "I'm gonna buy furniture like these, cars, I'm gonna..." Her mum cuts her, "You can be anything you want to be my dear; you gotta study and love banking of course before you can make the best out of it as a profession. It's never about the money or how serious bankers look or dress." Not wanting to have second thoughts, she says, "If you love it, I'll love it too."

Whether Jack's reason for wanting to be a medical doctor was worth the sweat or not, there comes a time of proper analysis and re-evaluation because it is believed that he knows better as an adult. If he was inspired by someone or something he saw, the place of personal development in developing others would serve a good cause. Personalities as teachers, guides, mentors, life coaches and so on would help Jack stay focused. It is better if the person went through the process of becoming a medical doctor and can easily share his experiences with Jack. These scenarios are by the way; there are other scenarios that relate as well.

You dreams come to fulfillment when your aspirations come to fulfillment.

## Chasing the wrong dream, the place of not giving up and the need to dream again

There is no fulfillment in pursuing the wrong dream. It's amazing how some people would chase a dream all because they know someone who's fulfilled in it. This case is clearly one attributable to a long forgotten or lost identity. Frustration can also cause this. And in the place of not giving up, keeping one's head in the game takes understanding.

As quoted in the second chapter of this book, "Knowing what you cannot do is more important than knowing what you can do. In fact, that's good taste" (Lucille Ball). Telling yourself that you got no time to dream again is only a flimsy excuse. Things may have happened that led you to thinking that way but you are not a victim of your past. Every brand new day is an opportunity to maximize the gift of life. Why don't you take a moment and ask yourself what your sole goal is. The climax of whatever you'll be putting together mustn't be self-centered; it's never enough to be overly ambitious. Having realized your dreams and aspirations, help others to rise as much as you can.

*"The good you do today may someday be forgotten, do good anyways" –  
Anonymous*

### Goals

Your goal is your desired result; what you hope to achieve. In the transition into a better you, your goal(s) should reflect key things as "**Attitude**" (your thinking and feeling manner about yourself or someone or something which propels behaviour), "**Career**" (your work and life roles), "**Education**" (your learning process), "**Family**" (the people you have come to be well acquainted with), "**Financial**" (having money), "**Physical**" (your body and its care), "**Pleasure**" (satisfaction), "**Public service**" (community service) and "**Artistic**" (creativity). Balance is very important!

### Exercise

In line with what you read in this chapter, write down areas you feel you require balance. How can you commit to working on them? Please understand that development is a process so, don't push yourself too hard.

## CLOSING

As stated in the introduction of this book, it's not enough to just have the knowledge; there is a place of application. You have just concluded a simplified personal development exercise resource. You may have had questions, comments or opinions while reading so feel free to send them to [iamcomfortjames@gmail.com](mailto:iamcomfortjames@gmail.com) 'cause I'd love to hear from you. Also, we implore you to like our Facebook page if you haven't – [www.facebook.com/camilities](http://www.facebook.com/camilities) and follow [@camilities](https://www.instagram.com/camilities) on instagram and twitter.