

Today I turn 25, and this should be one of the best days of my life. My parents called me first thing in the morning to wish me happy birthday, well they weren't the first to. My best friend and I do this thing where we stay up till 12 and be the first to call each other been doing it for the past 3 years, I did it with others some years ago but I rather just sleep if I have to, I can call you in the morning.

Birthday blues really got the best of me this year. I started having birthday blues when I turned 20; the awakening of not being a teenager anymore, shocking right? My 20<sup>th</sup> birthday was the most boring ever, I wasn't around my family or my friends and it felt like people forgot about me because my dad's call didn't come as early as it used to and that was a busy day for my mum so her call didn't even come in till, I eventually called her and I switched off my phone a night to my birthday because I was sad. I had been sad since the beginning of March, my childhood friend lost her mom on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March and the burial was 3 days after my birthday, she was like a mum to me I still remember her high pitched voice when she calls my name and her scent whenever I go visit and her food was the best ever (putting this down now I am crying) God bless her soul. I was also in an unstable relationship which messed me up the next year. I had so much love around me from my friends and family but that wasn't enough to fill up the emptiness, I got over it eventually but it took a while and that was my last relationship for a long time maybe because I wished he came back but at a point I didn't care about getting back with him because I just wanted an apology but then again something happened at my 21<sup>st</sup> and I became the villain in our relationship story. As the years went by, I just didn't care about relationships, whenever I met someone new, I always said to myself "when will they leave" and maybe I feel sad when they leave but it didn't matter to me, I always get over it.

Then came the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday I was in school with my friends enjoying our last days in university, October that year I will graduate. I loved my birthday this year but I didn't like the year, the feeling of graduating and not knowing what life has in store for me in the coming years. And then came graduation and everybody had to go their separate ways, still in contact with some people, some people I will never see again it has been 4 years, 1460 days (not precisely) but man that is a lot. I had mental breakdown right before my graduation I dealt with migraine, had breathing problem and sleep paralysis happened more often than usual, then I cut my hair very low it surprisingly grew super-fast before graduation. After graduation life just started happening, I went for service the next day after graduation and I wish I took a break after graduation maybe my life would have turned out any different but well it had to happen. I graduated as a civil engineer man I really should be proud of myself, I graduated with a second class lower and it haunted me forever especially when one of my family members asked me what I graduated with and I said 2:2 and she goes "how will you even graduate with that grade and you are in a private university, everything was easy for you so what was the problem?" I couldn't answer that question and graduation day came I didn't want to be there; I didn't want my parents to be there seeing other kids get award and I am just sited there but they were there and they were so proud and happy for me. I threw away my graduation book because in my class my name was the last on the list of those with second class lower. I graduated with a 3.02/5.0, 5 years of school, no carryovers, I didn't have to pay any lecturer to pass any course, I wrote all my exams by myself. I was just angry at my brain like why couldn't you do more, why couldn't you retain more, why didn't you get all the answers. Along the line I realized that it didn't matter as much as I thought it did, maybe it might be hard to get the scholarships that I want but I am going to live and build a good life for myself. I was to get my master's degree immediately after school, that was to be the plan but life happened.

Then my 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday came, I travelled to Uyo to be with my best friend a week to my birthday that was my first and last time of being in Uyo maybe I might go there some other time in life if the need occurs. She did my makeup and got a photographer so I had a mini photo-shoot afterwards we went clubbing at night, it was so lit, I enjoyed every part of my night I didn't drink a lot because I was travelling the next day back to base. I got myself a new phone and I also got a lot of love that day, my friend sent me a cake and she has done that repeatedly for the other years that followed. I was serving so the office I served at threw a party for me afterwards I went out with my friends, 5 of them everyone has left Port Harcourt now but 1. Service year was all about me, that was the most selfish year of my 20's. I took myself out a lot, I didn't plan hangouts with my friends, I could change my mind at any minute if things weren't okay by me or take decisions without involving anyone. My parents allowed me make decisions myself, so it was kinda scary but exciting at the same time so I was trying things out by myself. One thing was certain, I never wanted to hurt myself I loved myself that much, so whatever decision I made I knew had to face the consequences good/bad, they were mostly always good. I have always been a good child, I take pride in that maybe a little argument with my parents but that is that, I have never caused them pain. So last year was the argument of me not staying alone in the new town I was moving to because service but then we came to an agreement that after my service I am getting my apartment. My parents think I should have been a lawyer because to them I always argue but I just see at as me trying to give my opinion and if I don't agree with something nothing is changing my mind. A family friend of mine suggested marriage that year and it wasn't going to happen because I wasn't ready for one and my dad was trying to convince me and I wouldn't lie I actually gave it a thought but it was just too scary to process. I am still a child.

A day to my 23<sup>rd</sup> was when my office shut down, everyone had to work from home. I literally had no plans for my birthday because I already made up my mind I was just going to go to work and go back home, no outing because it was going to be a work day. Then COVID came, everyone had to start shutting down, I was home three of my friends came over (the ones I travelled with for my 25<sup>th</sup>) There was food and drinks that they brought over and music. Then everyone had to leave afterwards back to my quiet lonely self and in 3 days the birthday blues will be gone as usual. 23 was a blur, most of it was spent indoors; lockdown, covid, protest. My love life was nonexistent this year. Love to me is an addiction because the way you crave someone intensely even when the consequences are bad you withdraw then come right back into it screams addiction to me. I started working this year that was my first actual job, I moved into my apartment. The first year of moving in was terrifying though, I called my dad at any little inconvenience to cry and a year later I was doing this adult thing. I stayed over with my friend and her sister for most of the lockdown period before settling in my house by June. The year ended.

My sister came over on my 24<sup>th</sup> and my childhood friend was in town. I was to take my kids (younger family friends, lol I always call them my kids) to go see a movie, then go swimming and afterwards go for a concert at night. That day came and first thing first I had to go to work, though it was on a weekend but it was very urgent. Then the movies happened by the time I had dropped the kids off I was tired and time was far gone so I just had to rest and prepare for the show, as usual cake came in from our friend at our 22<sup>nd</sup>, and a dress came in from my sweet Val (lol we have been calling each other Val for the past 4 years; refer to my twitter for that). I had a swell time at the concert and a day after I went out with some friends and was extremely tired the next day which was Monday. 24 was a good year, I started a shoe business February and by the end of the year it didn't go as planned so I put it on hold but I was able to sell out almost all of it, some of it I never got from the shoe maker (scam). I had a friend tell me I wasn't taking my business serious that why don't I make contents or post as much or even post it on twitter where I will

get many interactions but I never told anyone I was dealing with imposter syndrome. I got a promotion at work and I also got into trouble at work, I wrote also and I started reading again, I spent time with my friends and family, my love life came back to life this year.

As I write this today, I can't explain how I feel, it is a mixture of emotions. I am closer to my family, more patient, I still get irritated really quick but it isn't something I can't handle.

I am always ready to learn new things, to start new things. I love reading about people, their beliefs, and their passions. I love singing and writing, I get Goosebumps when I hear someone sing without auto tunes just raw. I love cartoons a lot, I still read comics and learn new recipes on YouTube.

I love making people feel comfortable around me, not too comfortable to yield disrespect. I laugh a lot and hugs make me feel at peace especially hugs from my mother. I still speak to my dad every morning before I go to work, I appreciate every moment I get to spend with my parents, they are adorable. I still don't like being forced to do things. I have a partner I enjoy talking to and I care about so much and I have thought about our life together and it feels bliss, I love how calm he is and how patient he is and I love his views on life and how he shares whatever he learns with me. Is he someone I will want to get married to? Yes, but if it doesn't happen, I don't want us to ever hate each other.

I am still scared of getting married, the fact that someone can just stop loving you or vice versa then you two just keep on living like roommates. I pray for my future kids every now and then, I place my hands on my tummy and say a short prayer for them, I want to be as close as possible to my kids and I also want them to be able to confide in me and not be scared to bring their problems to me because of fear of being judged.

I still imagine myself getting up and moving to another city to start a new life. I still think a lot and it gets worse around my birthday because I feel that I am running out of time. I go to church and pray but there is this judgment from people when you don't go to church. I just want to live my life, I know there are certain principles to live by but I mustn't conform to all, not going to church doesn't make me less of a Christian. Just be a good person irrespective of your religion that is all that matters to me.

I have my daily reminders to tell myself of how much of a genius I am. I want to read these again sometime when I am 30 and I want to be happy about the process I went through in my twenties even though I didn't document all of it. I might update this in the later part of my 20's, I might not, but if you get to read this, I want you to know that there was a special person on this earth born on 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1997 and as much as she loved life she also hated it. They were happy moment, depressive moments but she lived through all of it. Her face always lit up when she sees the people she cares about and she was never afraid of anyone.

The birthday blues; is there a remedy for it?