

THE DIARY OF A WASHED-OUT LAWYER

Somewhere in the world, there's a law student being hailed 'The Law' 'The Barr' and they are thinking – *"I'm the next Harvey Spectre"*.

I am failing at life. When I started University as a law student, I loved it. The fancy black and white outfits, the ever-demanding coursework, the thought of being better than the entire school, the hyper competitiveness of the students, solidified my interest in this prestigious Profession. I saw my bright future lined up and all I had to do was work hard, which I did. When I officially earned the title 'LAWYER', I was drawn into an unending delusional and cutthroat work culture. I wanted to stand out, make a difference. I threw myself into my work and building a career, it became my life. I was lucky to have gotten a good government job but the work place was structured in a way that you could not really make any real progress. You were given enough not to complain or rebel but not enough to think about taking over or building anything for yourself. They reinforced the illusion of *'don't worry, just work hard, we just might give you that promotion, you deserve'*. It was an unending, unachievable milestone.

What I didn't realize was although it felt like I was making progress, I was failing at life in a spectacular fashion. One morning, sometime in 2022, I was driving to work when an intense fear gripped me, I had closed my eyes for a few seconds while driving, it immediately dawned on me, that, I hate my life, I hate my job. I had a flash of troubling thoughts about my life and my job, I was scared. 'I AM LIVING A VERY LONELY SAD LIFE'. The more I tried to get myself out of these thoughts, the more these ridiculous thoughts crept in. I cried my heart out when I got to the parking lot. The aftermath of these thoughts made me a shadow of myself for the next few days.

Each time I entered the office, a familiar hate followed me. I started noticing everything wrong with my job. My input at work dwindled. I unfortunately found solace in my 3 - 4 glasses of wine at the end of the day. At this point, it would probably be easier for me to drink myself to sleep than have any real conversation with anyone.

P.S. being a Nigerian woman, I thought going back to church would make me feel better, but that didn't help. The thought of sitting through another night of revival just isn't what I need. I hate to think that I go to church with the thought of finding encouragement from my situation but the entire time I just want to scream. Then the horrid thoughts crept in again, I was dissatisfied with everything in my life, and I concluded that the problem was definitely ME. It had to be me. It's embarrassing but sometimes I feel like I just go to church to tick the "I went to Church" register.

Don't get me wrong, some days are good, in fact great. I'm Nigerian after all, we know how to have fun. There's always a party going on here and there. I love to do some shopping and not bother about the account balance for a few hours. There's nothing more comforting than scrolling through the pages of an online fashion store. The joy of unboxing new things is almost incomparable. Be it as it may a fleeting joy, but a joy nonetheless. Unfortunately, this joy is quickly followed by the stomach-turning agony of *'I just spent money I could have invested in something tangible* – Love/Hate relationship.

They say variety is the spice of life, so what does being stagnant mean, the death of it? This means that my life is slowly turning into a lesson before I die. Death by doing a job I hate, Death by living from paycheck to paycheck, Death by stagnation. Death by stabbing myself in the eye the next time I seat through a

3-hour boring meeting. Death by having to smile every day even when I don't feel like. Death by being exhausted from doing nothing. At this point, I am so sure I need therapy, or my daily dose of alcohol, or what the heck, BOTH.

I thought to myself, maybe you should find something to lift your spirit and I had noticed that I put on some weight and climbing the stairs just left me out of breath. So, I ended up having my first happy thought for the month, '*sign up to a gym*'. This is going to be exciting, I thought. Something to distract me from my thoughts and probably find myself some new friends. Minus the few times I was panting like I was going to die, this didn't seem like a bad idea. I had finally found a new tribe - The Gym. This might just make it better.

Sometimes I pick up a pen to write in my diary and I don't know where to start, I am tired of complaining. Complaining or venting, whatever you choose to call it, I'm tired of it and I'm sure my family members and friends won't understand. You have a good job, you are living well, so how can you be seen as being ungrateful. I'm also tired of pretending to be positive all the time, I'm such a people pleaser, always smiling but on the inside, there was a things fall apart marathon going on. Who exactly can you tell that your life is stagnant? I definitely don't want to tell anyone that I cry in the parking lot every day before I get into the office, because even when they ask, 'why are you crying? My response for sure would be 'I don't know'. I know I want to be, do and experience so much more than this, I don't feel like this is the life I signed up for. I have lost my inner positivity and there's nothing worse than feeling like you are not okay on the inside.

There's this thought of maybe if I had a man, I would feel better. Maybe if I had someone to talk about my day with, I would feel better. Maybe if I was having

sex regularly, I would feel better, but unfortunately, how would I meet the man when all I do is go to work and back, then on the weekends, I just want to sleep and have ME-TIME. I tried convincing myself that I really don't need a man, being an independent woman is the way to go.

- Knowing you need to do better + convincing yourself that you are better off the way you are = remaining STAGNANT.

I've never been good at math, so what the heck.

I embarked on a quest to find out at what stage in my life I lost my inner positivity, that push spirit. Of course, in the true Gulder Ultimate Search fashion, this quest has led me to a series of yet unanswered questions. I could not figure out what I loved anymore. I had completely forgotten what it meant to be me. Did I like watching movies, did I like listening to music. So, I decided to try and find what I lost. I started listening to music everyday on my way to work but I found a way to play the same playlist every day until it started giving me headache. I had a friend who posted about a podcast on her story, so I thought, why not try that. I started listening to podcasts and it was not bad at all. I started with the 'I Said What I Said' those girls were so funny. Everyday I played the podcast on my way to and fro work and it just gave a lift to my day. Listening to them tackle life and how they dissected other people's problems and the knowledge that I was not the only one dealing with these issues and thoughts, I admired the audacity of these young women. I'm not sure what middle ground feels like, but this felt like it. Hopefully, I am on my way to the positive vibes.

I am convinced that life has a 'Chisom is doing well' radar that's jolts it into attempting something ridiculous. I don't think as adults there's ever a prolonged period of peace and joy. I had to do something to spice things up, I've

been trying to be more intentional about my life, my work and I had the bright idea to have a strategy section in the office within my department. For everyone to have a reflective time, tell people what they are doing wrong so they can try to fix it. I told myself, you need to start speaking up, unless you'll have a nervous breakdown. Bam! The day comes and we are sitting at a round table, and everybody is supposed to take turns to talk about what is wrong. I take this as an opportunity to tell my boss everything that I feel is wrong but because I had some built-up anger, I did not present it in the most diplomatic way. There I go again, ruining things. In my defense, I spoke up. Well, now I have to deal everyday with an angered boss.

Life is a daring adventure or nothing at all. Somehow I've found myself stuck in the 'nothing at all' part of it. No wait a minute, I am living a boring life, that can be said to be an adventure. Besides, my account balance called today and told me I cannot afford to be adventurous right now. You see why I need to enjoy my life. I keep seeing posts online about the critical conditions of Nigeria and that brings tears to my eyes – crybaby. The news and the videos of how crazy, things have become is very terrifying and the worst part is going to the comment sections and seeing how some individuals think. Any argument that leads to adults wishing each other death, is one that should not be had publicly. I've never felt bad about being Nigerian, damn! It is one of the most enjoyable places in the world, but we have to start admitting to some truths about the state of the Country. The Country takes some blame in my state of mind right now. Well, that's some rant but lack of adventure or not, Nigeria is an adventure on its own. I think it's time to start researching on how to move on from this adventure called Nigeria.

I hear everyone talking about Vision Board's, so, I'm hopping on that train to better my life. I pinned a bunch of stuff on my Vision board about my future goals, career growth, marital expectations in the spirit of not becoming a washed-out spinster. I decided to actively shake things up. I scheduled a date night each week. Don't worry about the man yet. Although I know the lazy bad bitch in me will not pull through, but it's the efforts that counts. Of course, I'm also thinking of the tiresome process of going on dates, am I ready for the plenty speaking English and the whole getting to know you process? I guess I might just settle for meeting my soulmate in an unexpected place like inside my house.

Let's call today's entry 'Confessions of a Bad Christian'. Sometimes when I read the Bible, I get a bit angry/jealous, depends on my mood. The Israelites were almost worse than me, it's not like I have ever worshipped a golden calf immediately after God saved me. But for some reason they had the promised land working for them. I know God's grace is amazing and I'm a living testimony of such grace, but I don't think the value of a direct solid instruction can be underestimated. Probably if I saw exactly what I was supposed to do with my life, that sounds nice. They knew exactly where their lives were headed – the Promised Land. I know God gives me directions and wisdom from his word, and through prayers and fasting, but an instructive fire or cloud here and there won't be a bad idea.

I slept with the worst feeling, my friend had told me that her father died unexpectedly, and I have no idea how to comfort her. She looked like she was in a lot of pain, and I couldn't help. I kept thinking of a practical way to help her other than saying sorry for your loss but I'm not sure the type of support she needs. If she wants to be left alone or wants to have people around. I think I would like to be left alone but that doesn't seem so normal. If I leave her alone,

I feel she'll feel alone and abandoned. I was reminded of the fragility of life. I haven't had enough experience with death, to know how to react. God, please give her peace through this and me the insight I need to adequately support her through this process.

There are a couple of people I owe an apology, secretly/not-so-secretly, I think I owe God an apology for being so horrible and prone to sin. I was just confused and angry. Luckily, I appreciate the knowledge that He loves me unconditionally and so we are good. I owe my family an apology for being so distant and unreliable lately. Hopefully I have not done or said something that will cause irreparable damage to my relationship with them. But your family is your family, so I'm sure everyone will be fine. I'll ask for forgiveness and I'm sure they'll forgive me. Finally, not to sound cliché, I owe myself an apology because I've spent the past couple of months making my life a living hell every chance I get, choosing not to be happy, not doing what I need to do to elevate myself. I felt justified in doing so because I was lazy about my situation. I was too lazy to quit a job I hate, I was too lazy to challenge myself to be better, I was too lazy to go out and meet new people, too lazy to have a conversation.

I thought to myself, being a Nigerian millennial, there was something that has become increasingly glaring, you can no longer use the 'there's no job out there if I decide to quit' excuse, because you are too scared/lazy to take a risk. Social media has shown us that you should dare to make the move, everything will start to align in due time. I decided that the first step to my recovery was to quit my JOB after I take my 2 – 3 glasses of wine.

To-Do List:

- Have a few glasses of wine

- Quit my job
- Double check my savings account
- Don't panic
- Take a deep breath
- Stop panicking
- Start journaling
- Stop panicking.