

...NOT IN THISDAY STYLE? THEN YOU'RE NOT IN STYLE

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2020

THIS DAY

Sty

20 QUESTIONS TONY RAPU

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COVER

Some people have argued whether it matters where or how you pray as long as God hears your prayers. This and many other issues were addressed in this interview conducted by **EXECUTIVE EDITOR, RUTH OSIME** in line with our Covid 19: 20 Questions series. She speaks with Dr. Tony Rapu, the Senior Pastor of the House of Freedom. He undertakes this work in his role as Chairman, Board of Trustees of Freedom Foundation. He is married to Nkoyo Rapu and they have three children.

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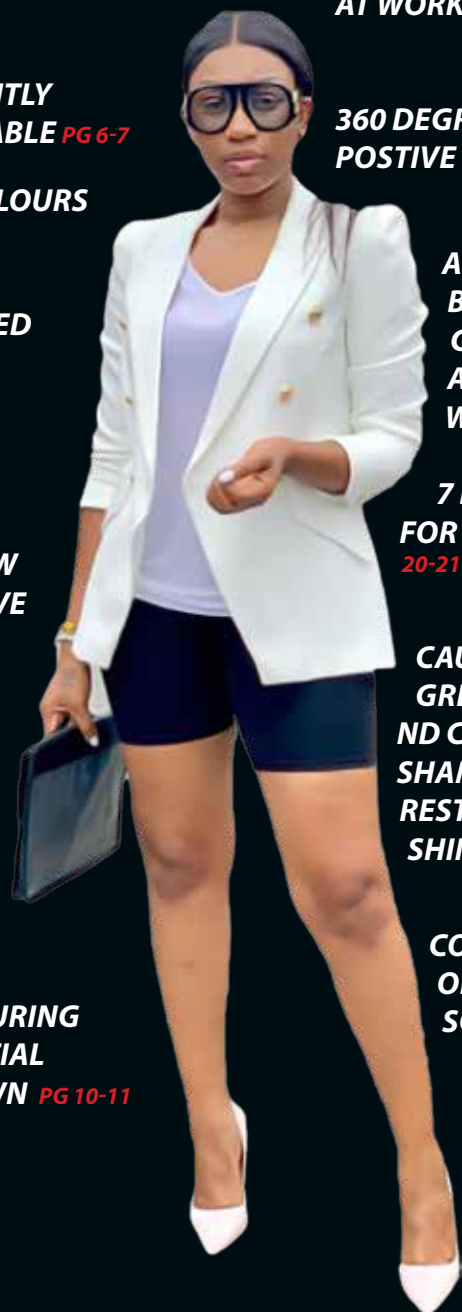
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THISDAY STYLE

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When you go through the trials of daily challenges, week in week out, you crave for something or somewhere to go at the weekend to de-stress and recharge which usually leaves you better prepared mentally to begin a new week with renewed vigor. For some, it might be attending an event that you enjoy or doing a hobby that relaxes you. For most, nothing beats going to Church on Sunday to sing your heart out in worship and praise and to also pray to God and thank Him for His blessings. Sometimes, it is also an opportunity to catch up with people you are normally too busy to see during the week. But like every other sector known to man, the Church/Mosque have also felt the hit of the Corona virus pandemic. They are unable to hold and can only reach out through virtual services online as is the new norm. Worse still, even after lifting of the lockdown, they have to adhere to social distancing in the building which can only accommodate 10% of their usual numbers to suit the law of today's times. With Churches, there is also the issue of whether or not tithes should be paid when there is so much anxiety about what the future holds. Many feel Churches should focus more on giving back rather than taking in. This is a very grey area and has to be handled with care so as not to leave a somewhat bitter taste in the mouth of those who stand by this belief. But Churches have done a lot in terms of providing for those in need but they do these acts silently because it is their duty to do so. Many might not know just how much they have done but many have felt the impact. Dr Tony Rapu of Freedom Foundation gives us a deep insight into the many unanswered questions people have on about what role Churches have played during this pandemic. And like with every other sector, he talks about the adjustments made and how they are adapting. He also dwells on the spiritual aspect of this plague because we cannot but wonder and ask ourselves if this is God's way of 'calling us to order' because the pandemic have given us cause to reflect. We have had to look within and thank Him for sparing our lives where some have been less fortunate. We are beginning to appreciate even more, the little things we took for granted. Each day we wake up, we thank Him for being alive because those who have lost their lives through this virus cannot do the same. Stay Safe.

Ruth

FASHION DIRECTOR/EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Africa Avant- Garde

ART | DESIGN | MUSIC | FILM | FASHION

Undiscovered stories

Tune in to the television series showcasing African innovators and creators working across art, design, music, film and fashion, this month on CNN.

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Celebrating NAOMI

@ 50

BY KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR

She's fiery, she's feisty, she's flawless and although she recently turned 50, she shows absolutely no signs of slowing down. She's supermodel Naomi Campbell, and she boasts one of the longest careers of anyone working in the fashion industry today.

The list of Campbell's career accomplishments goes on ad infinitum, and her career is so sprawling that it can be hard to know which thread to pull first. In honor of her birthday, we shine a spotlight on one of the most enduring legacies in the entire industry.



BORN A STAR

Born in Streatham, South London in 1970 to a Jamaican-born dancer, Campbell was raised around the creative arts. She accompanied her mother across Europe with her dance troupe Fantastica at an early age and entered the Barbara Speake Stage School when she was three.

At the age of only seven, Naomi Campbell was featured in Bob Marley's music video for "Is This Love", all but sealing her fate as someone destined for the spotlight. By 10, she had been accepted to the Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts, where she studied ballet.

MODEL IN THE MAKING

At 15, she was discovered by the head of London-based modeling agency Synchro and was quickly signed to Eileen Ford after that. At 16, she landed a coveted magazine cover and modeled for dozens of campaigns, but the catwalk was right around the corner.

THE BIG BREAK

Campbell's big break came in 1987 at the age of 17, when she walked for buzzy young designer Marc Jacobs at New York Fashion Week wearing little more than a bath towel. She then landed a spot on Yves Saint Laurent's Couture catwalk, quickly becoming a fixture at YSL shows.

CATWALK QUEEN

Campbell is considered to have one of the best walks in modeling history. Her leggy, confident stride – served with a side of attitude – makes her one of the most compelling figures on the runway. Her extraordinary physique and head-turning personality have had designers lining up to book her for their ad campaigns and runway shows. In the 90s, she was a fixture at Azzedine Alaïa, Anna Sui, Chanel, Fendi, and Versace.

But it wasn't all rosy for the fierce and fiery Campbell, who cited moments of bigotry and discrimination that made booking jobs difficult at times. In an essay penned for The Guardian, Campbell said, "When I started out, I wasn't being booked for certain shows because of the color of my skin. I

didn't let it rattle me. From attending auditions and performing at an early age, I understood what it meant to be black. You had to put in the extra effort. You had to be twice as good."

THE TRINITY

Fortunately, at the start of her career, Campbell became close friends with fellow supermodels Christy Turlington and Linda Evangelista – the three would soon be referred to in the industry as "The Trinity". Turlington and Evangelista were instrumental in Campbell's career, often insisting that Campbell be booked alongside them in certain shows – kind of like the present-day inclusion rider encouraged by the #TimesUp movement.

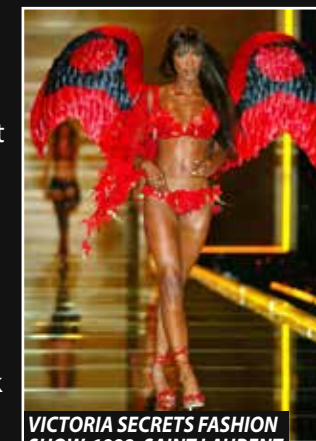
THE MODEL LIFE

In the 2000s, she enjoyed a thriving career as one of the world's biggest supermodels and a Victoria's Secret Angel. She was a regular at Julien Macdonald, Elie Saab, Dolce & Gabbana, Tommy Hilfiger, Dior, and Yves Saint Laurent.

FASHION FOR RELIEF

Campbell's modern career proves the evolution of the legendary supermodel – from catwalk queen and cover girl to activist and TV actress. Over the years, she has become outspoken about the lack of diversity in the fashion industry and, in 2013, joined Iman and Bethann Hardison in an advocacy group called Diversity Coalition that petitioned governing bodies at fashion weeks around the world to include more models of color in their shows.

Additionally, she has worked with multiple charitable organizations through the course of her career, raising money for breast-cancer awareness, poverty in Brazil, the Haiti earthquake, terrorist attacks in Mumbai, and maternal health. Campbell's present-day career also involves the occasional television stint. In 2005, she established Fashion for Relief and hosted its first charity fashion show to raise funds for victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Since its conception in, Fashion for Relief has presented shows in New York, London, Cannes, Moscow, Mumbai and Dar



es Salaam, and has raised millions of dollars for various causes.

ARISE FASHION WEEK

Joining hands with one of Africa's most respected fashion showcases, ARISE FASHION WEEK, Naomi in 2018 and 2019 threw her weight behind the African fashion industry as it took its long-overdue place on the global stage. An effort which has ousted the likes of Kennet Ize on to the global fashion scene.

STILL ON TOP OF THE GAME

Also, in 2018, Campbell was tapped for the Versace supermodel comeback and Gianni Versace tribute collection. She has also walked for Louis Vuitton menswear and Dolce & Gabbana's special Alta Moda Spring/Summer 2018 show. In 2019, she returned to the Valentino Couture Catwalk after a 14-year absence, closing the show in a jaw-dropping look that reminded us why she has been able to stay on top of the modeling game all this time.



BE INSTANTLY FASHIONABLE

WEAR SOMETHING REALLY SMALL WITH SOMETHING REALLY BIG

A crop top with a ball skirt. An oversized top with cut-off shorts. Looking fashionable is all about playing with proportion and contrast. Not just big with small, but also hard with soft, tight with loose, and heavy with light.

WEAR THE WRONG SHOES

Whatever you would normally choose for footwear, choose the opposite. Trade your high heels for flat booties, your sneakers for high heels, and your sandals for sneakers. The more wrong it feels, the more right it is.

Looking more fashionable isn't always about wearing the trendiest, most expensive clothes, or mastering some complex styling trick. Sometimes it's as easy as just tucking in your shirt or throwing on a pair of sunglasses.

ADD SOMETHING CHANEL. ANYTHING

Anyone can be stylish, but if you want to be "fashionable" you gotta play the label game at least some of the time and those little interlocking Cs are a fashionable win every time. Sure, you could wear another prestigious brand, but it's not the same. Chanel is just hands down the most iconic fashion label there is. It can't be beat. One Chanel bangle or pair of sunglasses has more fashion cred than many high-end designer handbags and will probably stay stylish long after those bags become obsolete.

LAYERS, LAYERS, AND MORE LAYERS

The more layers you have, the less likely any one piece is to really make or break your outfit, so go crazy - a coat, over a jacket, over a mesh shirt, over a crop top. With a belt. And leather leggings. Under a skirt. You're an onion. A fashionable onion.

WEAR YOUR JACKET ON YOUR SHOULDERS

Don't think of your jacket as a jacket. Think of it as a cape with sleeves. Sleeves you are never EVER to put your arms into. You are the 'hanger' to the beautiful work of art you display with relish.

BY FUNKE BABS-KUFEJI

GOOD COLOURS

This lockdown might have made you feel sad and low. Pep yourself up by wearing clothes in colours that will make you feel good and happy. Who said you can't dress up when you're going to #StayAtHome?

GREEN

The colour green promotes balance and harmony, as also self-acceptance and compassion for self and others.

ORANGE

This colour stimulates the mind and body, promotes optimism, creativity, happiness, and opens the mind to new ideas and perspectives.

PINK

This colour gives clarity of thought, aids in a feeling of affection, compassion, nurturing and kindness.

RED

The colour red promotes strength, energy, motivation and confidence.

YELLOW

The colour yellow is uplifting and cleansing. It stimulates the mind, promotes contentment and self-confidence.

BLUE

Colour blue stands for peace, calm, relaxation, self-expression and intuition.



DERIN ODUGBESAN-THOMAS

FOLAKE HUNTOON WA

LISA FOLAWIYO

JENEE

POWEDE LAWRENCE

JULIE OLANIPEKUN

MIMI ONALAJA

CHRISTIANA KAYODE

BISOLA AIYEOLA

KIITANA

SHARON OOJA

MO AGUSTO

ALEXANDRIAH SHO-SILVA

Fashion has always had a way of taking our core wardrobe essentials outerwear, underwear, and everything in between and turning them into statement pieces. It's no surprise, then, that the protective face coverings we've been advised and, in some cases, ordered to wear outdoors to curb the spread of the coronavirus, have quickly been embraced and beautified by the fashion world. The fun part about having to wear the fabric masks lies in the fact that you can have tons of these in various fabrics, designs and after use each day, you can wash the mask, dry it and reuse it. STYLE believes every ensemble should be fashionable, so why wearing a fabric face mask be any different?

BY USIADE ISIONA



Fat SHAMING!



BY DONU KOGBARA

BATTLE OF THE BULGE - PART 10

Recap and vital statistics:

I am 5 feet and 10 inches tall and 60 years old.

I was super-slim till about 10 years ago, then gradually got fat, not because I started to eat more, but because my metabolism decided to slow down to a snail's pace when middle age caught up with me.

I started this weight loss programme on March 16th when I weighed a whopping 120kg and measured 49-47-51 (chest-waist-hips) inches.

By mid-May, I'd dropped to 111kg, but then allowed the devils called depression and gluttony to derail me. Which is why my weight had crept back up to 114kg when I wrote last week's column.

Fortunately, I've managed to reverse this negative upward trajectory and to jettison 1.5kg in the past 7 days; and trust me, it wasn't easy to get back on track because overeating is my favourite thing.

When I am happy, I celebrate by overeating. When I am unhappy, I overeat to cheer myself up. This unhealthy addictive behaviour is known as Emotional or Comfort Eating. And it's hard to break the habit of a lifetime, even if it is killing and crippling you.

Obesity can trigger off all sorts of fatal ailments and makes one more susceptible to the dreaded coronavirus. I also suffer from painful, creaky knees that cannot cheerfully cope with my excess weight.

OK, so I'm now 112.5kg, which is still elephantine, but 7.5kg less than where I was a few weeks ago. And, let's face it, most mere imperfect mortals don't achieve relentlessly steady progress when they decide to embark on long, tough, scary journeys. Stumbles are normal.

The trick is to make sure that stumbles don't happen too often and to always take a deep breath and dust yourself down and doggedly continue with the journey if you fall by the wayside from time to time. The trick is to never be so psychologically paralysed by failure that you totally abandon the struggle and rewind to point zero.

But it's also good to not always let yourself off the hook and to tell yourself off when you mess up and remember what failure costs you.

I stuck to my diet religiously in weeks one and two and lost 5kg in the second half of March. Nine weeks have elapsed since then and if I'd continued to be disciplined, I'd have shed at least 20kg by now.

Also please note that I've done almost no exercise since this weight loss programme was



launched because I am shockingly lazy, reluctant to exert myself physically and allergic to sweat.

Come to think of it, if I had gotten off my backside and added a consistently vigorous exercise routine to a consistently rigorous dieting regime from Day One, I'd have lost even more than 20kg... and would be a lot closer to my target weight of 85kg.

I can't quite forgive myself for crawling when I could have jogged, thereby making the journey towards my goal lengthier than it had to be. But never mind! There's no point crying over spilled milk.

OK so I've had weeks when I have stood still and weeks when I have gone backwards. And the 1.5kg I lost last week is OK but disappointing, given that I'd have lost more if I had exercised daily and eliminated rather than merely reduced

my sugar intake.

But let's be grateful for small mercies. At least I'm going in the right direction. And I must say that it's VERY useful to have supportive and determined fellow travellers during the weight loss journey.

I set up a WhatsApp group called WEIGHT WATCHERS UNITE! with 5 girlfriends. We post progress reports every Monday and lean on each other when we feel tempted to lapse or fall short of our goals.

However, other members of the group are more disciplined than I am; and I'm definitely benefitting from the peer group pressure...in the sense that I feel much more ashamed of standing still or going backwards than I would have if I'd been doing this project on my own or doing it with ladies who are as unserious as I can be!!!

When you judge your performance within a group context and see that others are forging ahead while you are dithering, you are more likely to stop messing around and join the success bandwagon.

The most impressive performance to date has been turned in by one Ms Datta Amachree who hasn't once allowed herself to leave the straight and narrow. I will tell you about her methods next week.

DONU KOGBARA IS A VANGUARD NEWSPAPER COLUMNIST. Please feel free to share your thoughts about her weight loss journey on donzol2002@yahoo.co.uk



HOW EX-PRESSIVE IS YOUR LOVE?

I boarded the flight and sat quietly on my assigned aisle seat. Shortly afterwards, a middle aged man approached and requested, not overtly polite and almost commanding, I stand up so he can access his seat. His wife, a pretty light skinned lady fully covered in a beautiful traditional northern hijab, went first, sitting by the window while he took the center seat, adjusted his flowing gown and kaftan then settled in as we set off on our way to Lagos. It is all of a 50 minute flight from Abuja and hardly had we begun to taxi when it was made plainly obvious that I was in for a very interesting trip. I brought out my book and tried my hardest to assimilate the nuggets of wisdom within the pages but it was near impossible to ignore the drama unfolding right next to me.

I couldn't make out if they were a newly married couple or had been married for a while but whatever the case may have been, they had boundless amounts of affection for one another. They chatted throughout, comfortable in their company, giggling, laughing and oblivious to anyone around them. They would hold hands, she would caress his face and he would wipe her brow. She would lean towards him and lay her head on his shoulder for a bit while he tapped her gently, as one would a beloved child, rocked to sleep. They would watch some thing or the other off their phone, sharing earpieces so they can listen together and whatever joke it was, had them laughing together. It was all the more interesting because it was the least I expected.

The Almighty God in creating man, filled us all with an ability to surprise. This very Hausa, middle aged couple, from what is traditionally considered to be a very conservative Islamic culture where public display of affection is rare and tales of treatment of women can be heart wrenching, defied the norm. They shattered completely any illusion that their love must be hidden and reserved for the privacy of their quarters. As they stayed lost in each other's company, I was reminded of how deeply devoted God is to each of us, happy to show the world that He loves us completely and is not ashamed to showcase His adoration for all the world to witness. The question I was left with as we disembarked finally in Lagos was, "can the world see from my actions just how much I love God too?"

May you express His love by loving another today.

For your comments, contributions, connect with me here: @TonyeCole1 on Twitter.

10 FASHION MOVIES

YOU CAN WATCH DURING THIS PARTIAL LOCK DOWN

This one's for the fashion enthusiasts, self-isolating themselves and missing the glamour world a tad too much. With Fashion Weeks, Met Gala, and other significant events being cancelled, we all could use some good old shows and movies with the most stylish ensemble on-screen. From Breakfast at Tiffany's, Annie Hall to Sex and the City and Gossip Girl, these iconic shows and movies have immortalized their characters for more than just their acting skills. So here we give to you a list of our 10 fashionable movies/series to watch.

BY FUNKE BABS-KUFEJI



SEX AND THE CITY

SEX AND THE CITY

At the top of our list is the iconic Sex And The City series. Based on the life of Carrie Bradshaw, a columnist who speaks pure couture, and likes her savings hanging in her

black dress, created by master couturier Hubert de Givenchy. One of Audrey Hepburn's most iconic films, Breakfast at Tiffany's is remembered for many reasons, and fashion is a crucial factor. What happens

Metropolitan Museum, during the Met Gala. If this doesn't convince you to watch it, we don't know what will. The cast of this film is lead by Sandra Bullock and Charlize Theron; they lead a team of eight

women who pull off a world-class heist while dripping in jewels and couture. Also, it has Rihanna making her on-screen debut, what more could you possibly ask for.

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

A light-hearted take on real-life fashion mogul Anna Wintour, Devil Wears Prada is every fashion connoisseur's dream

most important issue of the year. What goes behind making that holy-grail of fashion is perfectly captured in this documentary. From the fashion editorials to all the copy-room drama, this documentary gives an inside peek into the fashion world.

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC

This is the story of Rebecca Bloomwood, who struggles with a shopping addiction, and in a hilarious turn of events, ends up working for a finance and savings magazine. The



THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

come true. With Meryl Streep playing the Editor-in-chief to perfection, the movie also gives you another chance to see Anne Hathaway get a stylish makeover after Princess Diaries.

THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE

This is the real-life version of The Devil Wears Prada, where Vogue's Editor-in-chief, Anna Wintour is caught in action while putting together the

movie left everyone drooling over high-end bags, dresses, shoes and that signature green scarf worn by actor Isla Fisher.

CRAZY RICH ASIANS

The romantic-comedy is about a young Asian-American couple, where the girlfriend



CRAZY RICH ASIAN

discovers that her boyfriend is the heir to a gigantic empire in Singapore. It's a roller coaster ride of hilarious events, in larger-than-life locations,



BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S

closet, the show has three other female leads, all with their unique style that also add to the glamour quotient of their show.

BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S

This movie is responsible for popularising the infamous

when Paul Varjak meets Manhattan's favourite party girl Emily Golightly, watch it to find out and if you have watched it before, we promise you it's still has thrilling as ever.

OCEAN'S 8

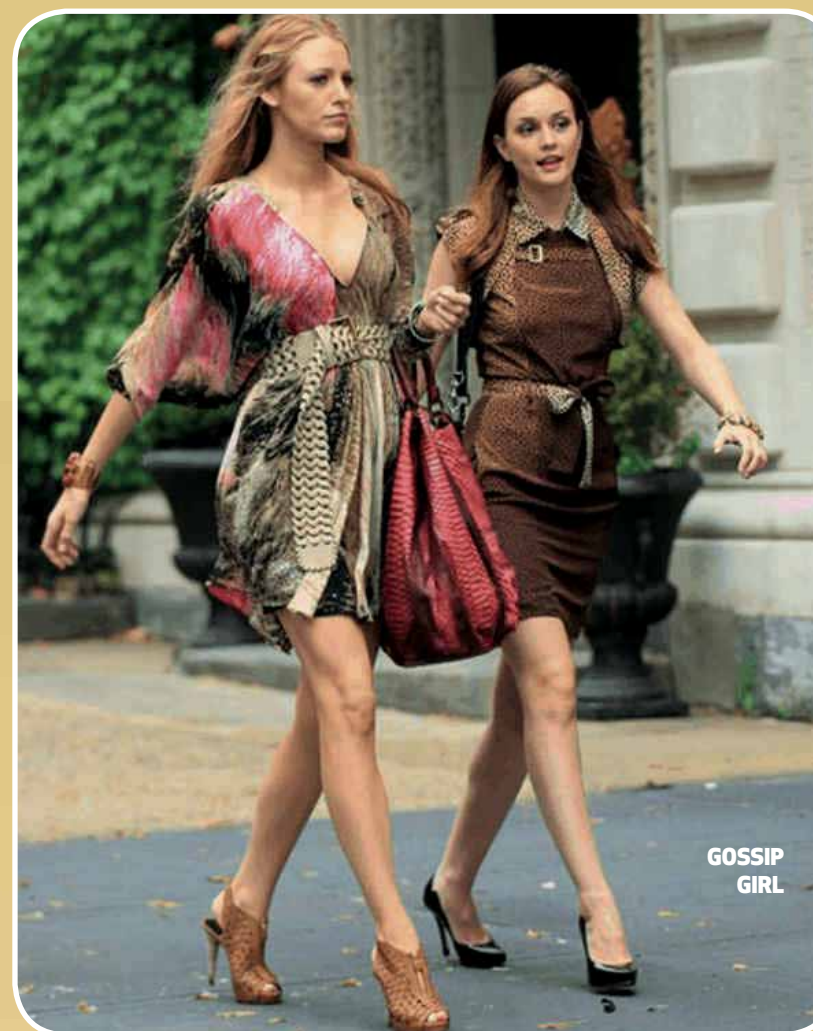
The movie's plot revolves around a jewelry heist in the



OCEAN 8



THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE



GOSSIP GIRL

shot in the most stunning ensembles. It accurately displays the crazy lives of the rich and how grandeur comes with no limits.

GOSSIP GIRL

"XOXO Gossip Girl", if this catchphrase doesn't ring a bell, get to your laptop and start watching Gossip Girl ASAP! It's a

love story. Fun fact: Diane Keaton as Annie Hall, picked her wardrobe for the film and for the first time, we saw a woman nailing androgynous style on screen. The classic high-waisted trousers buttoned-up shirts and vest with a tie became a timeless trend that can easily be worn even today.

NOCTURNAL ANIMALS

Turns out, Tom Ford is just as good at making movies as he



NOCTURNAL ANIMALS

show based on New York's rich kids and their lavish lives. Other than the gripping plot twists and grand parties in every episode, the styles of it's two protagonists will keep you hooked. Both Blair

is at designing clothes, and Nocturnal Animals is a fashion masterpiece. In it, Amy Adams plays a tormented art dealer to the super-elites of L.A., and has a myriad of chic on-screen outfits (none of which are courtesy of Ford, however - the designer banned his own label's clothes from appearing in the film).

Waldorf and Sareena Wanderwoodsen have earned cult fashion status for their excellent looks on the show.

ANNIE HALL

Annie Hall poetically delivers a complicated



ANNIE HALL

HOW TO BE PRODUCTIVE AT HOME 4 TIPS TO WORK SMARTER

BY KONYE NWABOGOR

Wondering how to be productive at home? Here are a few tips & tricks to get you in the frame of mind to work hard. If you struggle to stay focused, whether you're working on your own goals or sitting in zoom meetings, all you need to do is change your mindset to be productive at home and smash every goal you set yourself.

1 What you know vs who you know

The first principle of working smarter not harder is not doing it alone. When you're working from home, you want to be held accountable for what you're doing. If you're trying to be productive, you should find someone else who can help you out. Whether it's a friend who can check in with you to see your progress, a colleague, or a manager. Set yourself a task of sending an end-of-day report or doing a check-in call. This alone will motivate you to get your tasks done.



2 Always eat the elephant first

You've heard this one before, eating the elephant literally means doing the hardest tasks. When you start with the hardest thing on your to-do list and tick that off, you'll be left with momentum to keep the productivity going. Doing the hardest task first every day will train your brain to stay on full-work mode, instead of looking for ways to procrastinate and avoid the harder tasks. You have more time in one day than you realize if you use them wisely and set yourself small, achievable goals to get stuff done.



3 Use the Eisenhower box method

If you're struggling to figure out what you want to do, need to do, and where to put your hours during staying at home, the Eisenhower box method is for you. Essentially you set your to-dos into four categories, do, decide, delegate, and delete. Things you have to do, things you decide to do, and things you delegate to others (or another time if you're unable to delegate to someone else) and delete from your life.

This super-simple method of setting up your daily tasks can be used in a planner, which allows you to have space on the left-hand side for planning your day (with the Eisenhower method) and also self-care checklists on the right page so that you can track all the things you decide to do. Try this if you're still struggling to divide your time and be productive and see how it massively improves your life.



ALEXA WILLIAMS

4 Schedule deep work

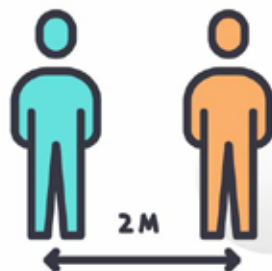
Yes, multi-tasking can be a great thing but really it should be a habit of the past. Your attention needs to be focused on one thing and one thing at a time if you want to get it done. You can focus your attention by setting yourself a timer. Thirty minutes of deep work focus, and three-four minutes of a break in between. This is the best way to schedule your work time for maximum focus and minimal distraction.

SOCIAL DISTANCING VS PHYSICAL DISTANCING



As you cope with the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic, knowing the difference between social and physical distancing can help improve your mental health.

'Social Distancing' is a measure of distance across social boundaries, it refers to staying at least 6 feet (2m) away from people to avoid getting infected and 'flatten the curve' in the spread of COVID-19.



'Physical Distancing' is the geographical distance from person A to person B. Physical distancing isn't socially disconnecting from our friends and family, as mental well-being is also important.

Although "social distancing" is still widely used, it may be sending the wrong message and contributing to social isolation. During these current times of quarantine and isolation, it's important we stay connected virtually with the people in our lives and our communities.

Keep your distance and remain connected through:



Video chats and phone calls with friends and family or visit online communities that discuss and share information on numerous topics of interest



Game nights with everyone you live with (if they aren't sick) or video games that allow you to connect with people around the world



Virtual movie nights with your family and friends (video chat or text while watching the same movie in your own homes or rooms)



Exercise/yoga/mindfulness videos online to be physically active in the comfort of your own home.

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Practise physical distancing the right way



Limit your time in public. If you need essential items, like groceries or medication, it's fine to go out but it's important to limit your trips. Instead of going to the store every few days, try to go once a week or, if it's available in your area, use grocery delivery or pick up services.



Keep your distance, some stores have used tape to mark off distances of 6 feet at checkout lines. Be mindful of keeping your distance from people around you but feel free to still engage.



Wash your hands. While hand sanitizer is a great option when you can't get to a sink, thorough hand washing with soap and water is the best way to prevent the spread of viruses.



Use a face mask. Whenever you're outdoors, endeavour to wear a face mask. These can be store bought disposable ones or homemade. Whatever the case, make sure you wash or change your face masks daily.



Use hand sanitizer before and after you enter a store. Use a hand sanitizer that's made with at least 60% alcohol.

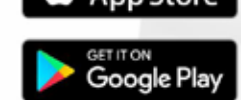


Cover your mouth. Even if you think you're not sick, when you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth with a tissue or the inside of your elbow. If you use a tissue, throw it away immediately and wash or sanitize your hands.



The World Health Organization (WHO) have started using the phrase "physical distancing" in place of "social distancing", maybe it's time you did too. #AccessCares

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Some people have argued whether it matters where or how you pray as long as God hears your prayers. For most people though, they love the physical connection a church/mosque provides. Yes, another sector affected by the pandemic is the house of Prayers. Virtual services are not quite the same. This and many other issues were addressed in this interview conducted by EXECUTIVE EDITOR, RUTH OSIME in line with our Covid 19: 20 Questions series. She speaks with Dr. Tony Rapu, a medical doctor, filmmaker, life coach and the Senior Pastor of the House of Freedom which embodies various expressions including This Present House, The Water Brook Church, The Potters House of Lagos, Holy Trinity Lagos, The God Bless Nigeria Church and Holy Hill Lagos. He undertakes this work in his role as Chairman, Board of Trustees of Freedom Foundation with programs such as the Genesis House (a residential rehabilitation program for young women who have been victims of sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking), House of Refuge (a drug rehabilitation and resource center which caters specifically for the rehabilitation needs of drug and alcohol dependent persons), and Kings Ventures (which provides empowerment programs to young men and women via career skills training, business and entrepreneurial development training, vocational skills training, counselling and mentoring). He has also produced and edited short films documenting his work 'on the field', including the critically acclaimed "My Lagos Diaries" documentary series.

He is married to Mrs Nkoyo Rapu, who chairs the Bethesda Child Support Agency, a program under the Freedom Foundation (which mobilizes community resources with the assistance of partners to help children from impoverished backgrounds secure a better future through education). They have three children.

COVID-19 SERIES 20 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH TONY RAPU

1 **There is a clamor for churches to reopen. As long as the heart is sincere, what does it matter how and where you pray?**

Yes, I am aware a debate on whether churches provide essential services or not is currently raging. I'm not even sure that question is the pertinent one we should be asking. We can in no way compare churches to businesses or salons or even markets, except of course that people also gather at those locations. The Church is a spiritual entity. It meets the social, spiritual, and emotional needs of people. The Church is also very concerned about the plight of the poor, feeding the hungry, and sheltering the homeless. It provides assistance to the emotionally abused, counsels people traumatized by domestic violence, and daily provides food relief programs other unquantifiable activities. So the question is not whether we should gather because we an essential service or not. The question should be whether we should gather in the light of a life-threatening pandemic and what our moral and spiritual obligation is to protect those who gather and our community.

Coronavirus has exacted a toll on us all but we have been rather fortunate in Nigeria not to have experienced the magnitude of casualties reported in America or Europe. However, sadly some of us here in Nigeria have still experienced the loss of friends and family and this drives home the reality of the danger inherent in the spread of this pandemic and the need to still be cautious and watchful.

The question I, as both a medical doctor and pastor would ask is, 'When would be a safe time to gather again in light of the hovering possibility of a wider spread?'. The answer lies in a delicate balance that considers different probabilities that should lead us to a safe and coordinated approaching gathering. Regarding praying online, we know digital meetings have currently replaced church services. Yet these efforts, necessary as they are, cannot remove the human need for physical interaction and community. So the conversation is 'If the Coronavirus is with us for a while and we have to gather because Church requires physical interaction, how can we gather in a way that protects the health of the people and minimizes transmission?'

2 **How well are conventional churches embracing technology and what are the benefits of a digital church in terms of outreach?**

Before COVID there had already been a global trend towards increased use of technology. Churches were already streaming services online. Zoom and other conferencing platforms were already in use. The pandemic was really only a trigger to push us into the new possibilities that technology offers. I have engaged social media in the past few years and seen great benefits from the awareness we can create on those platforms and have been able to interact with people in ways we never imagined possible. COVID-19 and the lockdown only just pushed us the more to grapple with already existing technology. We must always remember that our mission of preaching the message of the kingdom is unchanging. But in different seasons, our methods must be flexible and in the absence of church building, we must look for creative ways to keep our focus on our unchanging mission.

3 **What key things do people miss most about conventional services that the virtual service cannot provide?**

Many who are embracing new ways of doing church are quick to tell us that the church is not the building and neither is it an event. But when you do speak to other people they will confess they miss the physical

gathering. Some say they miss the simple things like running into people as they drive into the church, chatting before or after the service. Many miss being in the same auditorium worshipping and serving together in a corporate expression of worship. Others miss the corporate Holy Communion. Some miss the choir and their singing. We have provided some creative ways of worship during our online services but for many people, nothing beats the gathered congregation's energy of our collective worship. When we speak to pastors, some find speaking to a camera awkward and miss the ability to weave the sermon to meet the specific need at the time of the message.

4 **Aside from church services, what other things can you do online?**

Worship on Sunday is the outstanding activity of a church's communal life. With the lockdown, we were forced to stream our services online. We would pre-record the services and then premiere on Sunday on various online platforms. Our musicians and those involved in the service record their portions from their homes or studios. I would record a sermon at home as well and then our technical team edited it all together for a Sunday service experience. But the church is not just about a good digital experience or

But for us, hope is not a feeling. Hope is not a mood. It is a choice, it is a decision based on what we believe. If God could raise Jesus from the dead, then we too have reason to hope that God will give us His best, despite our circumstances. With this hope, we can plan and create new visions and dreams for a world beyond COVID.

even a good message. The essence of the church is about community and relationships. And that is why I believe as we journey towards a digital transformation, when it is time to return to the gathering, people will still embrace the building. Perhaps a younger audience may still prefer the online options. Eventually, many churches would probably create a sort of hybrid church, keeping the online experience but complementing it with the physical gatherings. But while we are away from the building, we have to find ways of maintaining a strong community. We have had a phone call initiative, where we did our best to reach out to every church member via telephone. We have used these calls to meet prayer request needs and refer people who need counseling and relief items to the appropriate departments. We've had creative programs online including exercise classes, counselling sessions, DJ events, Zoom parties, Holy Communion services, leadership trainings and many other kinds of meetings just to enhance social connections.

5 **There seems to be a void when it comes to online services for children. How are you addressing this?**

I remember growing up in Lagos during the civil war. I recall the moments of anxiety especially when negative news came about the happenings in war-torn areas. It is not hard to recall some images from when we were very young and that's why it is important to

think about our children during times of upheaval like those we are experiencing now. As we know, children are very perceptive and though they might seem okay, they know that something is not quite right. We are all living through a crisis of significant proportions. Kids know when something is not quite right; so from the financial struggle as some parents lost their jobs, to the psychological effect of social distancing, children have been absorbing a lot. Our lives have been impacted by the pandemic and the same is true for children.

We have been encouraging parents to listen and talk with children, letting them know we might not have all the answers but we are all in it together. Children's ministry in church has been a creative challenge as with many other churches. With the onset of homeschooling, kids have been occupied during the week and we were careful not to overload already stretched parents. Now we have multiple services streamed for the kids on Sunday. But what has been most important is asking parents to use this time spent together with their children to create memories.

6 **What initiatives from your church have been affected due to the lockdown?**

We have had a challenge with our God Bless Nigeria (GBN) initiative. As you know, the God Bless Nigeria centers are located in poor neighborhoods all over Lagos. We've had them in existence since 2006. Our work in those neighborhoods is about helping and empowering the individuals and working with them in those indigent communities. With the lockdown, we have had to suspend our GBN physical services and unfortunately majority of our members do not have smartphones nor can those who do afford the data to keep them on online services for any significant length of time. So we have been looking for creative ways to keep the GBN communities together. For the community pastors, we were able to purchase smart mobile phones and have arranged quick courses on the basic use of technology, especially how to use Zoom effectively. We have been able to provide free data in addition to other relief materials. We are currently contemplating having our GBN services on radio as more of our members have more access to radio than they do the internet.

7 **For people who do not know what their tomorrow holds, how can they keep hope alive?**

The message of the gospel is essentially one of hope. The Coronavirus has elicited fear, hopelessness, and for many, feelings of anxiety. But that's where our message comes in. That in Christ Jesus we can confront whatever our fears may be and lay hold of the promises of God. We have a hope in Christ. The Bible calls it a living hope. Our message has been one of the inheritance we have in Christ. A message of keeping hope alive despite the challenges we face. Sometimes we use the word 'hope' in a way that loses its spiritual significance. People often define hope ordinarily as a feeling or a mood where things don't feel or appear so bad any longer. So you say to someone going through a major challenge "You just have to have hope" and they think they are supposed to feel something positive because they're now hopeful. They feel they are supposed to get into a positive mood which they are not quite feeling at the time.

But for us, hope is not a feeling. Hope is not a mood. It is a choice, it is a decision based on what we believe. If God could raise Jesus from the dead, then we too have reason to hope that God will give us His best, despite our circumstances. With this hope, we can plan and create new visions and dreams for a world beyond COVID.

8 **In terms of outreach, what places have you visited in the lower socio-economic demography and how impactful has this been in spreading the word?**

Our 'God Bless Nigeria' Centers began originally by reaching out to area boys and commercial sex workers and bringing rehabilitation to them. But we have gone beyond these specific groups, to reaching out also to the poorer members of those communities as well. GBN operates in an area called Ijegan in the Egbeda area. We have centers as well in Shomolu, Ijora, Ajegunle, Oshodi, and others across Lagos. People ask what the difference is between Freedom Foundation and GBN and it's simply that Freedom Foundation is our platform that provides structured and sustainable programs and works closely with our field workers from GBN to deliver the programs to the poor. The Foundation works with a team of social workers, nurses, psychologists, and doctors who run our various programs while GBN works with pastors and field workers in the communities. Freedom Foundation runs Genesis House our centre for rehabilitating trafficked women and House of Refuge for rehabilitating drug dependent persons.

9 **What have you done to support COVID 19 and how have you worked with the government in executing these projects?**

Regular feeding and community outreach programs have been ongoing in these poorer areas before Covid-19, but during the lockdown, we went beyond our usual communities to extend our relief program to other areas in Lagos. We solicited support from well-meaning individuals and some corporate organizations to provide packed uncooked food for families. Our objective was to strengthen our impact by feeding a larger number of people in need. This we were able to achieve particularly since the governor His Excellency, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu graciously supported our 'God Bless Nigeria' initiatives and the government provided the assistance we needed to gain access to these communities during the lockdown. However, more needs to be done to create healthy partnerships between civil society and government. The government has a responsibility to provide for the common good of its citizens. The government needs to work more closely with and through credible organizations already feeding the hungry and organizing programs to alleviate poverty. This could further strengthen and deepen the impact of government outreaches to poor communities. Private organizations like churches are close to the needs of the poor at the grassroots and devoted to alleviating them. When the government attempts to directly resolve issues at this level, those initiatives quickly become politicized and those who should benefit are often neglected.

10 **But will working with the government not involve your meddling in politics?**

Did Jesus meddle in politics? The answer depends on how you define being political. You could say to someone 'Don't play politics with me'. In that case, you have defined politics negatively. You are saying 'Do not resort to deception or manipulate something for your own personal advantage'. But the way I presume you're asking about politics is in the way it relates to government. In that regard, first of all Jesus did not need political office. He was King already. He didn't need any other title. He didn't in any way try to get into the Jewish power structure. But Jesus' ministry had the most powerful impact on the State to the extent that the natural reason for His execution was very political. He was political in the sense that He influenced society and government. In that regard, Jesus was not just



When we study the New Testament, we find that our giving should actually be a response to the lavish grace that God has extended to us through salvation in Christ rather than a meticulous calculation of 10% of our income.

political, He was a revolutionary and even controversial. We in the Church are called to be political in the sense that Jesus was and in our effort and endeavor to influence society positively as well, we should seek political office. No institution has access to as many resources and funds like the government does. The government formulates policy. What this means is that if the Church really wants to influence society in more significant ways beyond providing social services, then we should be involved in influencing policies as well. It will be far easier to resolve the issues of poverty from a policy level than just the providing soup kitchens for the poor.

At this policy level, it is not the church as a congregation that should pursue a political agenda but individuals from the churches who should endeavor to occupy offices from where they can influence greater change. We should never stop providing social services and feeding the poor but as Christians we must now engage in the process of electing officials into public office and we ourselves should vie for elective office. This may necessitate our joining political parties which is the normal pathway to accessing political office.

11 **What kind of church branches do you have, what are they called and how do you define the needs of each branch?**

We have a group of churches we call 'expressions' with an umbrella structure we refer to as the House of Freedom. I coined the term 'expressions' years ago to describe the unique style of ministry God has given us in the House of Freedom. Each expression is different and none is a replication of the other like the branch or parish model. Each attempts to reach out creatively to a different demography of people in the Lagos area. Each one has a team of pastors and leaders and they more or less run that expression with strategic

direction from the centre.

12 **There have reportedly been more cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and marriages under pressure during this lockdown? What have you put in place to address such situations?**

I believe that fear, panic, and anxiety related to the lockdown have been responsible. With churches shut down, children restricted to homes and schools shut down, confinement has certainly triggered stress among people with the resultant effect of increased tension in homes. At the same time, fears about loss of jobs and financial stress may also have increased the likelihood of violent conflicts at home. Clearly, many men are not used to staying at home with their wives. Increased encounters in confined spaces have obviously triggered the likelihood of anger and its consequences. Our message has been to encourage the survivors to call for help and assistance, especially where physical harm is imminent. We've been running a series of online programs to deal with the issue of domestic violence, anxiety, and other mental health issues. However, survivors need to reach out for help when they are in these difficult situations.

13 **There is a video going around showing where you prophesied a tough year for 2020 concerning a plague and you actually advised people to stay home until the crisis passed. So is it safe to say your prophecy came true and you were not surprised when the COVID 19 did come?**

My sermon for the 31st-night Crossover last year was a message on the Plagues of Egypt. It didn't sound like a popular message one should preach on a night where people wanted something to inspire them into a new year but I went ahead with it. At the time I preached it, I did not know the interpretation. I just spoke what God laid on my heart. It was only with hindsight we saw it applied to Coronavirus. God was using it to speak about what was to come. Prophets often spoke in parables as they brought God's word to His people and many times they themselves did not even know the meaning of their prophecies until it was fulfilled.

The challenge we have seen though is that people often want a personal prophet to predict their future and give them direction for their personal lives. It is risky to constantly make life-changing decisions based on a prophecy by a person. Prophecy is generally to encourage and not give them daily direction for every decision they make. Prophets will sometimes bring specific direction, but generally, this should come as a confirmation of something that God has already spoken to the person concerned. Personal prophecies can often be misleading. Making important decisions only based on a word from another person can be misleading. Many people have been led astray because they failed to hear God for themselves and only followed a personal prophet's direction. The ideal thing is for you to hear God for yourself and get confirmation from the prophet.

14 **They say there are different callings of a prophet. Can you please elaborate?**

Prophets express their gifts differently and in accordance with the grace God has placed in them. Some speak to individuals, bringing them guidance, encouragement, and correction. Other prophets speak primarily to their church family. As they grow, they may begin to speak beyond their local church and become recognized prophets to the national or global church. Some prophets are called to be prophets to the nations. They carry a passion to see the nation fulfill the

plans of God. Some prophets bring advice to rulers of nations. They usually would bring words of judgment and direction concerning the nation and that's why in the Bible you find prophets often appearing in the presence of kings and rulers. They are to serve as counselors and their involvement in guiding political rulers will be to serve the purposes of God. Daniel is an example of a prophet in government. When God wants to guide a ruler, he sends prophets. However modern-day prophets should be careful about supporting kings and rulers as this could easily compromise their ministry. There are other prophets who operate in the market place and like Joseph of old, combine bringing guidance and direction with entrepreneurship.

15 **During this pandemic, there has been some public outcry on churches advertising online ways for their members to pay their tithes. What are your views on tithing?**

I know that the debate concerning tithes has been raging for a while and arguments are fierce on both sides. Some for and some against. I personally do not think it is a debate we need to turn into a battle. The Bible tells us to be careful about those arguments that degenerate into strife. The love of God urges us to be civil in our communication no matter the sentiments we may have for or against an issue. Christians are to be known as patient people and I believe that love is far more important than our views on tithing. In any case, the tithe in the Old Testament was like a tax that individuals were supposed to pay. It was usually an offering of crops and livestock from the people's farms. It was an expression of gratitude and dedication and the gifts went in support of the poor, in support of the temple, and in the support of the priests. When we come to the New Testament, we see that Jesus addresses the principle of tithing in a rather interesting way. Observing the Pharisees as they paid their tithes, He was angry with their attitude. They were very fastidious in meeting their tiniest tithing obligations. But what Jesus pointed out to them was that their foundational issues were faulty, much like today, as the debate over tithing continues.

The issue as far as Jesus was concerned was not tithing. Greed and materialism had taken over their religious structures. Justice, mercy, and integrity were lacking in their conduct. The fundamental issues from Jesus' perspective was social justice, generosity, and helping the poor.

When we study the New Testament, we find that our giving should actually be a response to the lavish grace that God has extended to us through salvation in Christ rather than a meticulous calculation of 10% of our income.

From this perspective, our giving should be an expression of gratitude and an act of worship.

In the New Testament, our giving ought not to be from a legalistic compulsion but out of loving devotion. Our giving should reflect our love for God

which takes us beyond the place of mathematical calculations. For those who say that we're not required to tithe, they present an argument to convince us we are no longer required to give. This in itself is an error.

As Christians, we are only stewards of all that we own. The steward manages the resources of the Owner and uses it for His work. God's demand from us is not just a 10% payment but really 100%. Our relationship with God must not be whether we give Him 10% or not but whether our lives are completely submitted to Him. So if I say 10% is God's money and 90% is my money, I err. Because in reality the 90% is God's money as well and He may require me to channel it into His work and live with only 10%. So in the final analysis, God's requirement is not 10% but 100%. All that I am and all that I own belong to Him. Whichever way we finally resolve the question of tithing, we all agree that Christians should be generous givers. We should not

wait for someone to pressure us with a need. We are to look for needs that we can meet.

16 **Some feel that churches, rather than collecting monies from their brethren at these trying times, should focus instead on giving back. How has this lockdown affected churches's finances?**

I cannot say that I have tracked the financial impact of the lockdown on the Church but I can hazard a guess that some denominations with strong financial reserves will have the ability to survive and even thrive in this COVID-19 season. Other churches may struggle for reasons such as a decline in online attendance or reduced income of their members. Some churches may not have had the technology for online streaming much less online giving. If there's no way to engage giving and encourage online methods, then that church will struggle. Those who embraced online meetings and online giving before COVID-19 will be better placed to face the financial challenges necessitated by the lockdown. In any case, it is a time for the churches that can, to use their influence and savings to support their members who are in economic distress. We have had regular meetings for our business community and engaged professionals within our congregation to teach people how to position themselves for the emerging job market and how to make the necessary changes in finance and business.

“So in a manner of speaking, God has used the Corona virus to press a reset button. It has been like a call to rest for many and for others to re-evaluate their lives and their relationship with God.”

Our call as church is always to show empathy and support the weak in our communities. We must find the balance between encouraging people to stay generous and at the same time avoid putting pressure on members already in a precarious financial situation.

I am aware that many churches have privately arranged financial assistance for members in dire need.

That some other churches won't make it through the crisis is a possibility as well, but there will always be new opportunities for ministry. Our gifts and callings are never revoked by God.

17 **What key lessons have churches learned from the coronavirus pandemic?**

I have done more technology in the past two months than I have done in the past two years. The pandemic has caused us to wrestle with many issues we would not have imagined before. How do we run a digital church? How do we preach in front of a phone camera? How do we activate our small groups online? What do we do about our children? How do we build and sustain a community, conduct weddings, baby dedications, and funerals without physical meetings? We've had to stop and consider what is essential and what is not. So in the past two months, we've been forced to adapt. I'm sure many churches were able to find many solutions to the issues encountered. We are constantly asking ourselves questions like – are some of these solutions just for the crisis or do they actually make church better? We're grappling with what to do when we finally return to the buildings. So maybe there are some conversations we all need to have, as we

come out of the crisis. Coronavirus has brought major changes, but it has been a great time of learning how to run a church in difficult times.

18 **A lot of donations have been made in the last few months, now, more than ever before. Do you think this trend will continue?**

The church's social mission actually becomes more evident during times of crisis, so that when asked what COVID-19 means for the social mission of the church, we respond that, in these times we have become vibrant, more generous, and most true to the message of the Kingdom. What this lockdown period has done is to awaken the consciences of people to help those worse off than them.

18 **Has there been any positive side to how Churches operated in terms of their social mission?**

One of the blessings of COVID-19 is that it has allowed us to see beyond our own needs, to the needs of those less fortunate.

We have been amazed by the creativity, action, and cooperation that has emerged from the actions of many churches. We have seen churches rise up to help with leaders such as Rev. Sam Adeyemi, Pastor Wale Adefarasin, Pastor Godman Akinlabi, Pastor Poju Oyemade, Pastor Bolaji Idowu, and many others too numerous to list here. Many of these noble initiatives have happened away from the cameras, social media, and the public eye. Many ministries reached out quietly without making any noise. My friend, Pastor Tunde Bakare recently offered their church premises to the government for use as an isolation center. I have had conversations with the Lagos State Honorable Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi on ways churches could collaborate with the government on the medical front. Many people are offering a helping hand to the less privileged and building programs that I believe are here to stay.

20 **Most people also see this pandemic as God's way of 'shutting down the earth' to make us value and better appreciate the things we took for granted.**

When you look in the Bible, you find that God would use crises to further His purposes and reveal His agenda. So that behind the crises in Egypt in the days of Moses, we see the unfolding purposes of God. In the days of Joseph, even though the crisis involved problems in the economy and a 7-year biting recession, Joseph told a troubled Pharaoh that God was in it. Same way today, it is not as though God creates evil but he deploys it for His own purposes. He used Judas to achieve His purposes. He permitted the religious elite to kill Jesus and yet through it all, He was working out a master plan.

So in a manner of speaking, God has used the Coronavirus to press a reset button. It has been like a call to rest for many and for others to re-evaluate their lives and their relationship with God.

You look at family, despite the challenges occasioned by the lockdown, we can see that the pandemic has created time for family. Parents are having to give more attention to their children, husbands and wives are having to find ways to resolve issues. We are having to see that the church is not about the building but the people. When we look at the government, we see the pressure on our political elite to respond with responsibility towards the people. The pandemic has shown that government should be less about politicking and more about the good of the people.

The pandemic is God giving us all the opportunity to re-engineer a whole new world.



LIVING A PHENOMENAL, HEALTHY, HAPPY AND FULFILLED LIFE.

YOUR BODY IS NOT DRUG OR NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENT DEFICIENT - MAKE YOUR HEALTH A PRIORITY

Corona pandemic has brought to the fore the importance of making our health a priority. I am amazed at the number of people who are building their businesses and careers and fail to create a time to pro-actively manage their health.

Success that is achieved while compromising the health, relationship or marriage of the individual is not true success. People work hard, make money to live a good life and may not live long enough to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Many people are suffering from needless preventable diseases.

Thomas Edison said "The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease".

People rely mostly on what their conventional medical doctors tell them in their yearly medical examination or the doctors visit. Consulting your conventional medical doctor is important but depending solely on your doctor is not a wise decision. The reason is that conventional medical doctors are trained to focus on identifying disease states in the body which are often categorized into body parts. For instance inflammation in the joints is known as Arthritis. Conventional medical doctors also focus on alleviating the signs and symptoms of illness but hardly deal with the root causes of disease. Dealing with diseases by focusing mostly on prescriptive drugs or nutritional supplements is not a wise decision as the body is not suffering from drug deficiency nutritional deficiency or Nutritional supplement deficiency. The reliance on popping that drug or that nutritional supplement that does not focus in helping the body rebalance itself is not wise. Underlying many diseases are multiple body dysfunctions and nutritional deficiency which must be corrected for effective healing to take place. If we are to achieve vibrant health we need to deal with ill-health in the content of the individual's total social existence and also focus on the root causes of ill-health and try to remove the root causes so our bodies can return to a state of balance.

We wait for diseases to develop then we spend a huge sums on heroic measures, even then ignoring the underlying lifestyle-related-causes. This is the equivalent of waiting for a leaky roof to destroy the infrastructure of a house and then repairing the damage without fixing the leak. Growing number of people lack vitality and suffer from a host of complaints difficult to define, many adults and many children today suffer from complaints including Allergies, headaches, lack of energy, excessive fatigue, and various digestive and respiratory disorders, along with a variety of emotional State ranging from mild depression to mood swings and anxiety. They are manifesting what Jeffrey Bland, Ph.D., calls a state of vertical ill-health.

They are not sick enough to lie down in which case they would be horizontally ill and yet consider themselves normal because most of the people they know are equally unhealthy. Forward looking physicians are becoming increasingly aware that something is wrong with the patients immune systems, since they continue to suffer from illnesses which normal immune function should be able to deal with. Yet this decline in immune efficiency is something contemporary medical treatments seen unable to do anything about.

Many people are dying untimely, many others are

suffering from needless preventable non-communicable diseases. There are so many troubled relationships and marriages. Many lack financial Stability. The challenge is that for you to achieve vibrant health, it requires a determined, consistent daily habit of healthy life choices. The first thing to do is to reprogramme your mindset to make your first things First in your life. You are not just a physical being, you are also a spiritual being, mental and emotional being. Looking at ill-health from the perspective of only the physical is not wise because the body is an integrated whole. When you have spiritual, mental or emotional imbalance it will affect the physical and when you have physical imbalance it will lead to an imbalance in your spiritual, mental and emotional life.

More and more people will achieve vibrant health if they will take charge of their beliefs, thoughts, feelings, decisions and actions in order to modify the process of their lives. Most of the time they do not, they go to doctors, pastors, imams, or a shrink hoping to be fixed by someone else. Getting people to realize that the decisions they take every day determine the outcome of their lives and it is better they look inwards identify their weakness and commit to working on them so they can turn their weakness into strengths. I have had my share of challenges and weakness and up till now I am still working on myself practicing the principles of CANI - constant and never ending improvement in all areas of my life, my spiritual, mental, emotional and physical life. I suffered from depression for several years. I had no energy, no enthusiasm. I would lie in bed from morning till night and just about when my husband would come home from work I will struggle out of bed to take a bath. Taking a bath was such a huge task for me. It was very bad. I could not even say my prayers. I now know that that illness was preparing me for the job I have at hand. My weakness has been turned to strength and I am now 360 on the positive - living a phenomenal, healthy happy and fulfilled life.

I set up My company Healthy Living services in 1991 to provide for Nigerians the modalities that I used by God's grace to turn my life into the phenomenal woman I am today, looking and feeling great at 66 years. The truth is that our conventional medical doctors are trying their best and I congratulate them for their dedication to saving lives but we need to shift from our drug and nutritional supplement dependency to effective healthy life choices that will deal with the root causes of disease so that the body that has an innate healing ability given by God as a gift to man-kind can rebalance itself for healing. We should not focus on masking our symptoms and signs with prescriptive drugs and nutritional supplements that do not deal with the underlying root causes of our diseases.

It is my immense pleasure to inform Nigerians about the 17 secrets of optimum health. When I talk about health I am not referring to ill health alone. I am referring to spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health. World Health Organisation describes Health as a state of spiritual, mental, emotional and physical well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. As an integrative health care Practitioner we deal with wellness from the root causes and not just on the signs and symptoms. We look at health in relationship to the individual total social existence. Having said all these you will understand when I reveal the 17 secrets of optimum

Health that diseases must be looked at in terms of the total social existence of the individual.

17 SECRETS OF OPTIMUM HEALTH

- 1 spiritual well - being
- 2 mental and emotional well - being
- 3 consult a doctor/ Health assessment
- 4 Adequate Hydration
- 5 complete internal body detoxification
- 6 Body alkalization
- 7 Healthy Diet & nutritional supplementation
- 8 Healthy fitness programme
- 9 stress awareness & coping skills
- 10 improve blood circulation
- 11 Remove free Radicals
- 12 strengthen the immune system
- 13 Rebalance the micro-biome
- 14 control bacteria , virus, fungi, moulds and parasites
- 15 Be positive happy and prayerful
- 16 structural adjustments
- 17 Reduce electro - magnetic waves.

FIRST SECRET OF OPTIMUM HEALTH : SPIRITUAL

WELL-BEING : The first secret of Optimum Health is Spiritual Well-being and the power of Faith. Faith is the spiritual power through which the impossible becomes possible. Faith connects the human spirit to God. To attain optimum health we need more than physical nourishment and things money can buy. We all need spiritual nourishment as well. Faith releases a force which can perform miracles. The opposite of faith is worry, doubt, fear and anxiety. It is also important to state that faith without works is dead and worthless. If there are any challenges in your life, you need to pray and have faith that the challenge will be solved but there are also actions that you may have to take as directed by the Holy Spirit to achieve a resolution of the challenges. God has made available to us all kinds of opportunities, information and strategies that can help us turn our lives into positive successful lives and we have to be committed to take actions that will lead us to our God-ordained destinies. It is unfortunate that some churches preach instant healings, wealth, blissful marriages as soon as they pray for you. In some cases God may intervene with miracles but most often you may need to do your part to turn around any challenges, seeking God's guidance as you go along, believing that when you ask, you shall receive, when you seek you shall find and when you knock, the door will be opened. This truth is clearly a demonstration that everyone has some degree of responsibility in life. You have to ask, seek and knock. It is unintelligent to depend wholly on your pastor or imam to solve your problems. You must look inward and identify what you need to do to help your life become better. Waking up every morning and deciding to read your bible or Koran and pray helps you cope better with the challenges of the day.

If you want more information on Ganotherapy you can send a Whats up message to this number:- 08027589310, 08033688808.

Until next two weeks stay safe, positive, healthy and prayerful

Dr. Ifeyinwa Nwakwesi, Stress, Nutrition, Cell-Revitalization, Personal Development, Genotherapy, And Integrative Medicine Specialist, The Phenomenal Woman By God's Grace

AT-HOME BEAUTY GADGETS

That Are Totally Worth It



JADE ROLLER

There are a lot of ways to use a jade roller to massage your face before bed to wake you up in the AM. (Put in the fridge for a cooling, de-puffing massage!) Use it over your sheet mask to help it stick to your face better, or my personal favorite, massage serum or cream into your skin during your skincare routine. You can also use it with your gua sha stone for an uber-relaxing, spa-like facial massage.



GUA SHA STONE

Just because it doesn't vibrate or send electrical shocks through your face doesn't deem this beauty tool ineffective. Gua sharefers is the act of scraping the skin with a tool to promote circulation. It's also super relaxing and contouring. Use it nightly or a few times a week to help massage and de-puff the skin.



ZENPY NANO IONIC FACIAL STEAMER
The OG beauty device is making a major comeback

There are at-home beauty treatments we all know about: masks, facial massage, exfoliators, peels - to name a few. But what about the tools that truly mimic the in-spa experience? Those are often overlooked. Maybe it's the high price tag, maybe it's that they aren't talked about enough, or perhaps they're just a mythical beast to us commoners - whatever the reason, beauty gadgets and devices that can be done at home are popping up now more than ever. While we can't make it to any aesthetics appointments, why not invest in our skin while we're at home?! Here are a few of our favourites.

BY KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR

in social isolation. Estheticians, dermatologists, facialists, and more swear by the use of a facial steamer to open up the pores and strengthen the power of the products applied on top of the skin. Rarely will a facial go by during which the esthetician doesn't use a facial steaming device - especially if extractions are involved. While you can put your head above a pot of boiling water, investing in a facial steamer is definitely a good idea if you're planning spa nights out in the next few months.



MICRO ROLLER .2mm

Microneedling, dermarolling - whatever you call it, we love it. Microneedling creates punctures in the skin, rejuvenate and make new marks, uneven skin tone, and texture. Just because this is the least expensive product on the list doesn't mean it's ineffective. It's a .2mm roller, meaning it is good for beginners to use on the face without excess irritation.



ICE GLOBES

These little ice balls are no joke. Pop these in the freezer,

and they'll turn into little ice balls you can use to massage your face. These are also great for relieving headaches, massaging tension and knots out of your back and temples, or sinus relief when massaged around your nose.



LUNA PLAY PLUS CLEANSING DEVICE

This cleansing device has some of the makings of the Clarisonic, but it's a little different. Instead of a natural brush-head, the Foreo Luna devices are made of silicone, which is much easier to clean and keep sanitized after every use. Instead of moving around in circles like the Clarisonic, the Foreo Luna vibrates to massage the face while it's cleansing all that dirt, oil, and makeup away. It's automated to tell you when to stop scrubbing a different part of your face and is just overall a relaxing addition to your skincare routine.



MIA PRIMA FACIAL CLEANSING & PORE MINIMISING SKINCARE DEVICE.

There's a reason this product has lasted in people's routines for decades: it works. Hard-to-remove products like heavy foundations, sunscreen, and oils need a little extra help to totally come off your face at the end of the night, and that's where the OG spin-brush comes in handy. Whether you use it to deep-clean during a second-cleanse or as an exfoliator a few times a week, this product is absolutely worth the hype. Make sure your brush-head is sanitized often, as the brush head can harbor bacteria and overall-gross-stuff pretty easily.



Causes For GREASY HAIR AND CLARIFYING SHAMPOO TO HELP RESTORE HAIR SHINE

BY USIADE ISIOMA

Washing your hair every day because the excess oil is unbearable and getting the root of the problem makes more sense. Here are eight things to stop doing to prevent your hair from getting greasy and six best clarifying shampoo to give your hair its shine back.

• TOUCHING YOUR HAIR TOO OFTEN

Constantly touching or fiddling with your hair flirtatiously or out of boredom, transfers oils from fingertips to your strands. Also try and nicely discourage anyone from touching your hair too much in bed. It feels nice but doesn't look as nice in the morning.

• OVER WASHING

Yes, you wash your hair to cleanse the grease but no, it doesn't help. Unfortunately, daily shampooing can strip your scalp of its natural oils needed for its growth to replace them. Try cutting back on washing your hair daily to 2/3 times a week. Your hair will thank you in the long run.

• OVER CONDITIONING

Be cautious with conditioner. You may be applying a conditioner that's too heavy for your hair type, which can weigh it down. Or you may not be washing it out properly which is another grease giving culprit. And finally, avoid placing your conditioner all over your hair, focus on the ends to avoid causing oily roots and lank lengths.

• OVER BRUSHING

Brushing your hair too much can stimulate oil production, which at first looks glossy, but soon looks greasy. Stick to detangling the lengths and ends if you have got an obsessive hair brushing habit.

• YOUR HAIR BRUSH IS DIRTY

Your hairbrush can harbour all sorts of nasties. Build-up of stale styling products and dust are only the obvious ones. A clogged brush will transfer these on to the hair making it feel dirty, so make sure yours is cleaned properly on a regular basis.

• YOUR HAIRBRUSH IS FULL OF HAIR

A hairy brush might not seem like an offender, but if your hair is greasy, using a brush clogged with hairs will only be transfer grease from old strands back on your clean hair.

• APPLYING THE WRONG PRODUCTS

You may be choosing styling products that aren't compatible with your hair. Look for lightweight formulas and avoid ones that promise shine and moisture which would be better suited to dry or dull hair types.

• PRODUCTS BUILD-UP THAT NEEDS DETOXING

Styling products can cause the scalp and strands to become clogged up. If you are a dry shampoo type, you might want to give your locks a detox by using a clarifying shampoo 2-4 times a month, or product designed to exfoliate the scalp. It is the gateway to healthy hair.

7 BEST CARE TIPS FOR DRY SKIN

BY USIADE ISIOMA

As the temperatures drop, your skin actually goes through a change from being hydrated and healthy during the rainy season to becoming dry, chapped and itchy. The dry season's humid air helps keep skin moisturized, and we're also absorbing the nourishing minerals in vitamin D because of being outside in the sunlight more. Following the same skin care routine year-round may not work so well when the humidity drops. Without change in your skin care, dry air can make fine lines and wrinkles more noticeable. Dry skin can itch, flake, crack, and even bleed. By being more conscious of what you wear, what you consume and what you apply to your skin, dry skin can totally be kept at bay and docile with these easy tips.

1 Exfoliate

Use a light exfoliate scrub to get rid of the top layer of dead skin cells and expose newer healthier and brighter-looking skin.

As helpful as exfoliating can be, it's not



advisable to over exfoliate. Once a week is just fine.

2 Moisturize

after bath Invest in a good moisturizer and apply after a shower to avoid cracked skin. It traps existing moisture in your skin and leaves the skin supple.



3 No to hot showers or baths

Hot water is not a friend to your dry skin as it breaks down the lipid barriers in the skin, which decreases moisture. To help dry skin, take shorter showers using warm water and don't forget to apply moisturizer immediately after.



4 Hydrate to prevent dry skin

Drink lots of water. Adequate hydration helps rid the body of toxins that lead to dry skin and in turn, maintain a glowing skin. This is one of the most important steps to take for better skin. If you notice that eight glasses of water aren't cutting it for you, then add another cup or two. The more water you drink the better for your skin but don't overdo it.



5 Plug in a humidifier

Putting moisture back into your home's air helps prevent extreme dry skin. It helps treat dry skin and relieves flu symptoms as you sleep the night away.



6 Skip the lotion and use an ointment or cream

Ointments and creams are more effective and less irritating than lotions. Look for a cream or ointment that contains oil such as olive oil. Shea butter also works well. Other ingredients that help to soothe dry skin include lactic acid, urea, hyaluronic acid, dimethicone, glycerin, lanolin, mineral oil, and petrolatum.



7 Dress up with the weather in mind

Protect your skin when harsh weather is imminent. Cover your face, and always apply sunscreen. Also, it is important to wear layers of clothing when being active outside. If you experience sweating, you can take off layers and reduce wet clothes being close to the skin as they can cause irritation.



6 OF THE BEST CLARIFYING SHAMPOOS

R+CO OBLIVION CLARIFYING SHAMPOO:

This vegan friendly clarifying shampoo strikes the perfect balance between a deep cleanse and an everyday formula. It removes stubborn product residue and leaves hair ultra-glossy thanks to the Sicilian lemon, tangerine, eucalyptus and green tea formula.



PUREOLOGY PURIFY SHAMPOO: This clarifying shampoo has been designed to remove all build-up from your strands, including chlorine, hard water minerals, and styling residue. The formula is one of the very best if you have colour-treated hair, as the anti-bacterial ingredients clean strands without stripping colour or moisture. All that, and the shampoo is 100% vegan and sulphate free.



GREEN PEOPLE CLARIFYING VITATMIN SHAMPOO: If you want clarifying shampoo without all the nasties look to GREEN PEOPLE. The all-natural beauty brand formulated this clarifying shampoo to remove product build-up from the hair and leave it clean and refreshed. It's made without SLS/SLES, alcohol, parabens, phthalates and artificial fragrances.



TRESEMME CLEANSE & REPLENISH DEEP CLEANSING SHAMPOO:

This purse friendly shampoo has gained a lot. It's brilliant at what it does and works wonders with greasy hair.



BUMBLE & BUMBLE SUNDAY SHAMPOO:

If you feel like your hair is weighed down, limp and kind of lifeless, chances are you have product build-up on your strands. Everything from dry shampoo to heat protection sprays can cling to the hair over time leaving them flat and brittle. It has a weekly detox to get rid of product residue, hard water minerals, pollutants.



ACURE ORGANICS CLARIFYING SHAMPOO:

If you want a clarifying shampoo that doesn't strip your hair of moisture, it's best to hit up Acure Organics. Not only is the natural shampoo vegan, sulphate-free, paraben-free and cruelty-free, it's also great for detoxing your hair without leaving it straw-like. The gentle shampoo is perfect for everyday clarifying wash, gives hair a shine boost thanks to the organic argan oil but also removes product build up and leaves strands clean and fresh.



Corona Virus

BY KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR

On the Global Scene

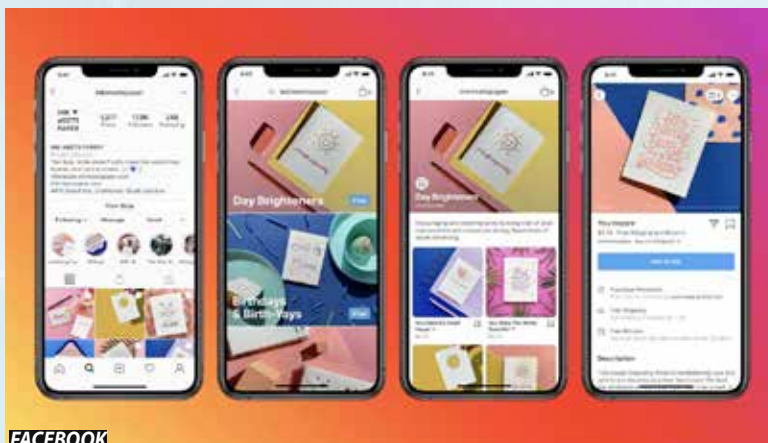
Facebook launches shopping service as more businesses move online

Facebook has launched a shopping feature called Shops, where businesses can showcase and sell products online. The move is thought to help businesses struggling during the pandemic by giving them another platform to sell their wares.

Shops will be free for businesses to use with the hope that the service bolsters consumer engagement and ad sales. There will be a check-out function to enable in-app purchases and stores will appear on business pages, Instagram profiles and through targeted adverts.

"Our goal is to make shopping seamless and empower anyone from a small business owner to a global brand to use our apps to connect with customers," Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg said in a video announcing the new product.

Facebook launched Marketplace in 2016 where users can sell personal belongings. Shops, meanwhile, is targeted at businesses who want to broaden their online offering. Other digital stores including Amazon and Etsy have reported sales increases over the course of the pandemic as consumers are forced to shop online.



FACEBOOK

Hanifa's 3D Digital Fashion Show Just Changed the Game

In a world where we don't know what the future holds for the fashion industry or fashion shows, Anifa Mvuemba is at the forefront of changing the game. On Friday, May 22, the Congolese designer of contemporary brand Hanifa debuted her latest collection on Instagram Live via 3D models.

The designer has been using 3D mockups for a while to convey ideas to her team during sample-making but says "designing content using 3D models and now an entire collection has been a complete game changer."



ANIFA MVUEMBA

The designer selected Instagram as her platform in order to create access and give everyone a front row seat to the detail and delicacy of the clothes. Shortly after the show, screen recordings quickly made their way to Twitter and went viral.

As the fashion industry continues to navigate life in the coming months and digital shows potentially become more common, Anifa is paving the way for true innovation and change.

Dolce & Gabbana are releasing a Rosé!

Dolce & Gabbana love to honour their native country, Italy, and their next project is just that. Another ode to the country they call home, the brand's latest venture is into Italian wine - more specifically, a Sicilian inspired rosé.

The rosé, which will be released in June, is a collaboration with Donnafugata, a Sicilian winery and features a blend of two vines, Nerello Mascalese and Nocera. Famed to the region, the mix is, as D&G put it, "an elegant bouquet of jasmine, enriched with delicate hints of wild strawberry, peach and bergamot."

Nerello Mascalese hails from Mount Etna and gives an earthy undertone, thanks to the volcanic soil. The Nocera vines are grown in Contessa Entellina and produce a rich, fruity flavour. All the grapes come from the 2019 vintage.

Overall, it sounds like a delicious drop.

The packaging is, of course, another ode to Sicily. Like the luxury brand's clothing designs, there's plenty there to signify the local Italian roots. The label was inspired by the iconic carts of Sicily and features a blush rosy palette — a nod to the bottle's contents.



DOLCE AND GABBANA ROSÉ

Serena Williams is the global ambassador for Stuart Weitzman

Stuart Weitzman has proudly announced the appointment of Serena Williams as its newest global spokesperson. The luxury shoe brand has kicked off the partnership with its latest campaign that sees the tennis pro as the embodiment of women as pillars of strength, hope and optimism for their communities. Photographer Ethan James Green captured Williams standing tall on a platform in a number of styles - the Aleena slide, the Nudist sandal, the Anny pump, and the Manila loafer - designed to lift the wearer up. "Now, more than ever, is a moment to focus on hope and moving forward," says Williams. "I want women of every generation to be inspired to do so, one step at a time." This campaign also forms part of Stuart Weitzman's ongoing philanthropic partnership with Vital Voices Global Partnership, an international nonprofit dedicated to investing in women leaders who drive global change.



STUART WEITZMAN

SERENA WILLIAMS

Gucci plans "new path" with catwalk schedule reduced to twice a year

Gucci's creative director Alessandro Michele has outlined plans to shift from the "worn-out" cruise, pre-fall, Spring/Summer, Autumn/Winter roster towards twice-yearly seasonless meetings in a series of Instagram posts.

It's the second luxury brand after Saint Laurent, owned by luxury conglomerate Kering, to hint at wider changes to how they market and sell fashion. The industry is facing a reckoning as sales plummet, and consumers rethink their priorities in a post Covid 19 world.

"This crisis represents a fundamental test for us all," Michele wrote. "Above all, we understand we went too far. Our reckless actions have burned the house we live in. We conceived of ourselves as separated from nature. We usurped nature, we dominated and wounded it."

The move by Gucci, often a leader in the sector, could signal a knock-on effect by others. The industry widely followed suit once Gucci announced it planned to ban fur in 2017.



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