

## ***FINDING THE PEACE IN SINGLE PARENTHOOD***

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“Life is one big road with lots of signs. So when you ride onto the road, don’t complicate your mind”, Bob Marley. Life is neither fair, nor unfair, but rather complex. Quiet often individuals would express their intentions of how their lives will unfold. For many young people, the intended path is as follows: grow up; get education; a great job; meet “Mr. Right”; get married; have kids; and raise a family. The same applies to boys – find “Ms. Right” and settle down.

However, in the complexities of life, these dreams do not always turn out the way they are intended. This growth pattern must always be understood as an intention, dream, and aspiration – and not so much a growth path with guaranteed results.

Any aspect of life that deals with human interactions cannot be guaranteed. The intention to get married is largely dependent on meeting someone who will want the same. It is not a “natural growth path”. Getting married and growing kids inside a family structure is dependent on a variety of social phenomenon. This may include the way one is socialized as one grows up, and equally, the way that those that one meets were socialized as well.

Earlier societies had higher levels of family and community socialization, and therefore prospects of getting married and raising kids within a family and community structure were highly possible. Today, those who live and grow up in urban areas are relatively less socialized in both community and family structures. There is more “I” than “we” in modern socialization.

The essence of life therefore, is that it is complex. It is complex because it is rooted in human interactions. Individuals have personal life agendas, and as they go through these agendas, there are interactions with given consequences.

Life therefore, is a natural and neutral phenomenon. So, when someone says that life is unfair – one actually means that his or her interaction with other people has not yielded the intended results.

Some of these unintended consequences may be the breakdown of a relationship leading to single parenthood. In many of these instances, many would ask – why me? And they would exclaim – “life is not fair”. In case of many women, they frequently say “he destroyed my life – who will marry me now?”

Unfortunately these are the seeds of victimhood. The eventual danger of course, is that a sense of victimhood robs of its host positive thoughts; energies; innovation and creativity required to succeed in life.

The challenge of life therefore is to make choices. It is the capacity and the ability to read the signs, and make appropriate choices. The challenge of life is to know the complexities of life and make choices. In the main, informed choices, see them through and accept the consequences and move on to make other choices. In fact, we all make choices every day. Whilst I chose to write this article, you also chose to read it.

However, given the fact that we live in an environment of social interactions, some choices that we make will not be ideal. In fact, certain things maybe imposed upon us. However, life must go on.

Thus, those who find themselves as single parents need to accept that they are in that particular situation. They have to make the best of it. In fact, most successful men today were raised by single parents – mainly the mother. Actually, many single parents who raise kids on a daily basis are women.

Accepting that one is a single parent has the following benefits: it unleashed the ultimate power and confidence in the self; releases guiltiness and resentment against the other parent; and creates a loving and peaceful bond between the parent and the child. It releases hate from the single parent, and therefore, he or she gets to be at peace with oneself.

I hear loud voices say: “it is not easy”. Indeed it is not ease and that is precisely the reason it must be done – to make the rest of the life road easy to navigate through. It is more like building a house. It is not easy, but if you need to sleep in a shelter away from rain and winds – hence a peaceful sleep, then you must go through the pains of building a house.

Single parenthood is a result of choices we make either consciously or sub-consciously. Even in instances where it has been imposed, at some point of that food chain, both parents contributed to that choice. Thus, individuals in that situation have an obligation to make the best out of single parenthood. In this regard, the point of departure is to find internal peace, and thus face the rest of life enthusiastically.

When individuals understand that life is complex, they then must accept that at times they will meet and engage with people who in retrospect they wish they had never met. However, it is counterproductive to remain in a moaning mood.

Any major progress in life starts with the acceptance of the situation one is, and the concerted effort to make the best from what one has, and is at. As Bob Marley infers – choose the progressive road signs at all stops of your life!