

**ATTAINING
SELF-
DEVELOPMENT
AND
BECOMING AN
ICONIC
ADVOCATE**



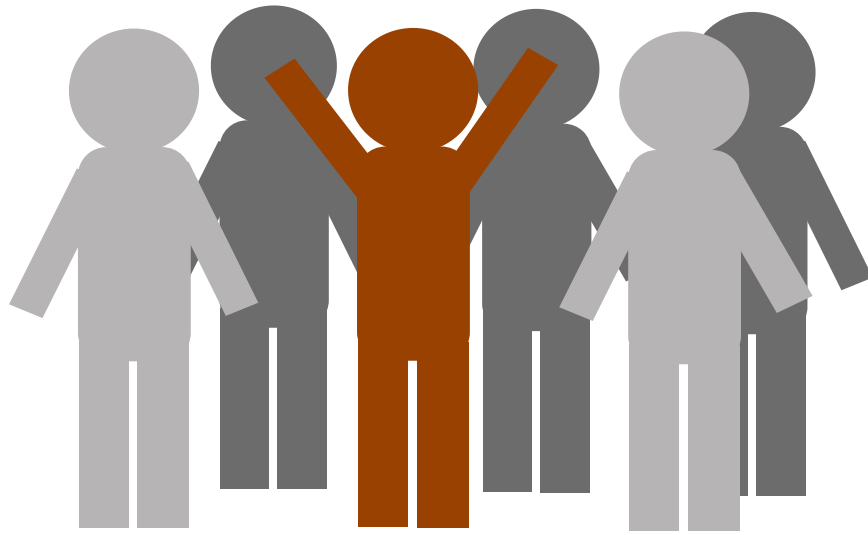
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Who is a Lawyer?



"A Lawyer is a student till he dies, once he considers himself not a student anymore, the lawyer inside him dies"

SELF-DEVELOPMENT DISTINGUISHES ACHIEVERS



No legal titan or brilliant advocate in the legal profession today attained great success without self-development. Indeed, it is this attribute that has distinguished the achievers from the others.

WHAT IS SELF-DEVELOPMENT ?



Self-development is taking personal responsibility for one's own learning and improvement through a process of assessment, reflection and immediate action.

WHAT SELF-DEVELOPMENT ENTAILS.

To ascertain what self-development entails the following question should come to mind.

- Where are you today? what are your strengths and weaknesses? where are the opportunities and threats?
- Are you competent to actualise your dream?
- Assessing yourself is the key to self-development because if you do not know where you have a problem you won't know what to develop.

WHAT ARE YOU? ARE YOU A "DEAD SEA SPEC"?

Water Flows in: These are persons who care only about themselves. They take everything in.

No water flows out: These are persons who derive joy in acquiring knowledge and storing it within themselves. They are selfish/stingy and they do not give out.

Lowest Part of Earth: These groups are ready to go so low. but they are equally cheating and lying.

3 Million Years Old: They are ancient and not willing to adapt to changes.

Not a Sea but a Lake: They portray themselves as what they are not.

How do you "self develop"?

"... to find where you belong you must move!"

"Sometimes the place you are used to is not the place you belong. You belong where you believe you belong. Where is that for you?"

Every journey begins with a step. The "road" to Self Development involves:

1. Vision
2. Goal
3. Focus
4. Zeal
5. Persistence
6. Positive mindset
7. Humility
8. Harnessing Opportunities
9. Personal Accountability
10. Innovation
11. Knowledge
12. Adapting to Change

1. VISION:



Is a realistic, credible, attractive future of where you want to be. So what do you want to achieve with your self-development? Do you know where you and your career are going to? Do you know where you would like to go? In short, do you have a vision?

It has been said that there are four kinds of people in the world: those who watch things happen; those to whom things happen; those who do not know what is happening and those who make things happen. Leaders are in the last category because they have to deliver through others.

2. GOALS:

You need goals to improve yourself and you need to write down because what gets done. Where do you want to be this time next year? when you track your goals, any achievement propels you to do more and you can take corrective actions in areas where you are lagging.

3. FOCUS:

Is the concentration of attention or energy on something. It is what helps you eliminate the interference between your potential and your performance. And whatever you focus on, you move towards.

4. POSITIVE MINDSET:

Your mindset is very important because it is the root of your thoughts, which drives what you focus on and eventually your choices and actions. Should it be positive so you make the right choices and act rightly or would you rather have a negative mindset that would make you a difficult person to live or work with? The choice is yours.

5. PERSISTENCE

When obstacles besiege our path, we tend to lose focus and want to quit. Nobody promised us a bed of roses, not even in the legal profession- even roses have thorns-so we have to take the good, bad, ugly and beautiful that life deals us.

Remember: if you can not control the situation, you can control your response to it by choosing the right attitude

6. ZEAL:

You need a zeal for self-development. Zeal is what makes you assess where you are (current reality), decide where you want to be (vision) and identify steps to bridge the gap (Action plan and goals). It is what makes you check your progress and make corrections when you are off target.

"Working hard or hardly working?"

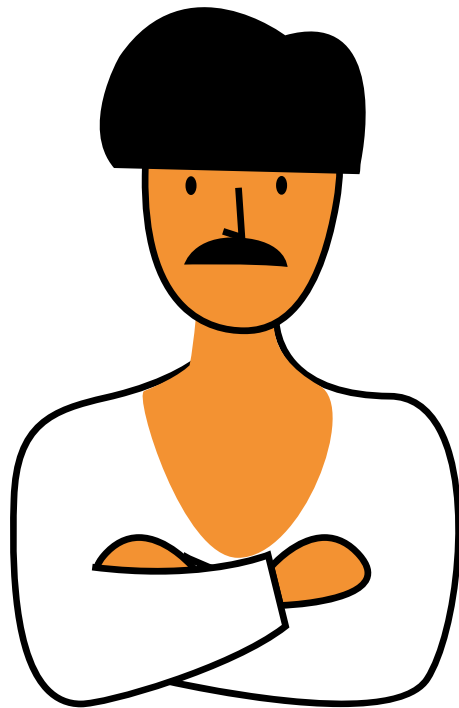
7. HUMILITY:



This is one of the traits of great leaders. Self-development is not about competencies on the job but also behaviours that will stand the test of time.

Do not pass the buck or point fingers: When something goes wrong do not look for who to blame; it will not get you anywhere. Blame is about shaming others and it creates fear, which leads to cover-ups and a lack of information on the current reality.

DO NOT TAKE YOUR SELF TOO SERIOUSLY:



You have to learn to relax and maintain a sense of humour in the midst of all this serious business for your sake and that of your team. Do fun things with them; genuinely treat them like colleagues; have social events, and celebrate success; because when you retire, they are more likely to remember the fun times than your fantastic disciplinary performance.

8. HARNESS OPPORTUNITIES:

Time is something that never waits for anyone so whenever an opportunity arises that can propel or develop you, use it. Do not procrastinate. Watch out for opportunities in any situation, even if it is not positive because, at times, they come when you least expect them. Do old things in new ways. Do not drag your feet, because it is better to try something than do nothing. For instance, career opportunities, networking/briefs. Turn your "opportunities" into income.

The people you associate with have an effect on the person you become. if you want to have the right way of thinking, move away from the wrong crowd and connect with people who have a positive mindset; people that can encourage you along the journey; tell you the truth and support you.

9. PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY:

Is an accountability relationship with oneself and an internal responsibility to be accountable. It means you claim total ownership for all your actions and their accounts without guilt or fear. It also means you stop blaming others, eliminate procrastination and victim thinking

The late Michael Jackson got it so right in his hit tune-Man in the Mirror:

I'm starting with the man in the mirror

I'm asking him to change his way

And no message could have been any clearer

If you wanna make the world a better place

Take a look at yourself and then make a change

10. INNOVATION:

Is about doing things differently, coming up with ideas, stepping out of your comfort zone and trying new things for improvement. without new ideas, you will become stale, old and relegated over people with newer, fresher ideas. You must be creative intellectually.

11. KNOWLEDGE:

Is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'expertise, and skills education'. That is the essence of self-development. Learn more, acquire skills, share what you know and use it to improve yourself, your reputation and your marketability.

ADAPT TO CHANGE: Only
"change" is permanent just
imagine you did not change from
the day you were conceived would
you be here?!!!

**"Don't resist change! Be part of the
solution NOT the problem. What do
companies do to problems? They get rid
of them!!"**

**"Adopt the 'kaizen' culture- a habit of
continuous improvement: Deliberately
endeavour to get better at what you do
by attending relevant training,
conferences, getting information,
reading books and rubbing minds with
other skilled individuals within and
outside your field"**

1. Mastering the craft:

A Lawyer's craft is advocacy. Advocacy involves a good command of the English language and mastery of the art of public speaking. Improve your command of the English Language. No matter what you are saying, people will take you seriously when you speak well.

Learn the art of public speaking. Identify when to increase your intonation to place emphasis on a point and when to lower your intonation to diminish a point. If you can drive home your point with one sentence, do not do so with a full speech. If you need to, look in the mirror every day and do your personal rehearsals. Talk to yourself like you were an audience. Convince yourself before setting out with others. Believe in your case or contention or argument, no matter what.

Judges have in the course of reading their judgments and Rulings, had causes to denigrate lawyers for bad oral and or written advocacy. In **MV Arabella V. Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation (2002) 15 NWLR (Pt 91) 570**, Aderemi JCA (as he then was) said:

"To say the least, the above five issues raised by the cross-appellant are very horrible. They do not indicate that a person with legal training has drafted them. It seems to me that an ordinary prose writer who has no learning in the profession of law will produce far better and knowledgeable issues than the above five issues. If the Profession of law will not be subjected to ridicule, I think counsel of the type holding himself out as representing the cross-appellant in this matter will do well to seek the assistance of able and well learned senior members of the Bar (and they are legion in Nigeria) to always help in vetting whatever processes he prepares before filing same in the Registry of any court"

On the other hand, a well-written address by my humble self received the commendation of **M.D. Muhammad JCA** in the case of **Chijioke VS. Soetan (2006)** **10 NWLR pt 990 pg.179 at 199:**

"... Kemi Pinheiro, Esq. for the respondent donated a fine brief of argument to us. it is particularly a parting gift to me as the appeal is one of those we shall be determining before my departure to the Port Harcourt Division... Mr. Pinheiro's brief has been commendably simple and enjoyable to read with succinct and resolute treatment of the issues therein"

Whether in oral or written advocacy, you must strive to display brilliance in your presentation in Court. It must reflect in what you write in your processes and more importantly, how you present your oral arguments. The best advice, be methodical. Take the points one after the other, introduce your point with a premise, relate it to your case and drive it home with your final conclusion

2 Understanding the Case:

This is one but many things. As a lawyer, you must understand the case you are prosecuting or defending on your client's behalf. You must do comprehensive research on that area of human endeavour, be it medicine, engineering, banking and commerce etc. You must know the likely limitation or disadvantages and/or objections to the case.

3. Proper Planning:

"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail"

Develop a strategy for your case and work through its pros and cons. Before every appearance in Court, I always do a case review and engage in discussions on the likely legal issues that may arise during the proceedings of the day. That way. I ensure that I am prepared for almost all legal confrontations.

Knowing the Judge:



I am an advocate for knowing your judge. When I say knowing your Judge, I do not mean seeking an audience with the Judge in the absence of the other party, No! That is highly unethical. What I am saying though, is that it would help your case if you understand the way and manner your judge likes to conduct proceedings. For example, some judges may not like you to cite more than one or two authorities.

Again, while some judges would appreciate you addressing them as "SIR", some would rather you restrict the address to 'My Lord'. Whereas some Judges would give you all the time in the world to argue or adumbrate, some judges would restrict you to only 2 minutes. Different strokes for different folks, it is.

The bottom line is, Judges are human as well and susceptible to similar behavioural patterns with other humans. Therefore, it is important to the success of a lawyer in the courtroom that he knows and understands his judge within the confines of law.

5. Good Grooming:

Dressing and appearance are serious business too. The proper outfit for a lawyer in the Courtroom in Nigeria is, for the male advocates, a well-laundered white shirt, bib and collar, pinstripe trousers and barrister's jacket (NEVER a Black Suit); and for the female advocates, white camisole, collaret, pinstripe skirt and barrister's jacket.

Whether you are a male or female advocate, be properly groomed. This has a way of making you feel confident and confidence is a lawyer's weapon.

REMEMBER,

- **SUCCESS IS EVERYDAY HABIT.**
- **IF YOU DON'T "DEVELOP" YOURSELF, OTHERS WILL!**
- **TAKE EVERY DAY IN COURT AS YOUR DATE WITH DESTINY.**
- **IF YOU FAIL TO PLAN, THEN YOU PLAN TO FAIL.**

Thank You

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Thank You