

PRIME EDITION, ISSUE 89

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AFRICA MAGAZINE

WHERE VISION
MEETS
IMPACT.

BEYOND MOTIVATION.

COLOMBE TEBILY

A VISION BEYOND BOUNDARIES



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BEYOND MOTIVATION

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CONTRIBUTORS

MS COLOMBE TEBILY
DR MAUREEN NENECHI
MS FATEMA ADAM (POCCA)
MS TSOTLHE NGAKAAGAE
MS MIRIAM NYIMBIRI
MS BUPE CHISHA

THE VISIONARY

DAVID NTALASHA CHISHA

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Dear Readers,

Motivation can inspire us to begin, but it is what we do after the inspiration fades that ultimately defines us.

Welcome to Edition 89 of Arise Africa Magazine, where we go beyond motivation to explore the mindset, discipline, resilience, and purposeful action required to turn ambition into achievement.

Across Africa, we continue to witness people who refuse to wait for the perfect moment. They are building businesses, creating opportunities, leading communities, developing ideas, and pursuing excellence despite uncertainty and adversity. Their stories remind us that progress is rarely the result of motivation alone. It is built through consistency, courage, preparation, and the determination to keep moving forward.

This edition is about that journey. It is about transforming inspiration into action, ideas into impact, and potential into purpose. It is about understanding that success is not simply something we hope for; it is something we must intentionally build.

Africa's future will not be shaped by those who only dream, but by those willing to act on their dreams. Every entrepreneur who creates, every young person who dares to lead, every innovator who solves a problem, and every individual who chooses growth over limitation contributes to the Africa we are becoming.

As you turn these pages, I hope you find more than motivation. I hope you find clarity, conviction, and the courage to act.

Because the question is not whether you are inspired. The question is: What will you do with it?

Keep rising. Keep building. Keep becoming.

David Ntalasha Chisha
Founder & Editor-in-Chief
Arise Africa Magazine

BEYOND THE BUZZPHRASE

HOW AFRICA MOVES FROM MOTIVATION TO MOMENTUM

Across Africa, motivation has become a language of its own. We speak confidently about an African renaissance, a rising generation, a continent of opportunity and a future full of promise. These ideas matter because vision has always been an important part of transformation. But there is a more difficult question that deserves equal attention: what happens after the inspiration fades? Motivation can start a conversation, but it cannot build an economy. It cannot finance infrastructure, create reliable electricity, establish efficient institutions or transform raw materials into competitive products. Those outcomes require systems, investment, discipline and sustained execution. For Africa, the challenge is no longer simply to inspire people to believe in what is possible. It is to build the structures capable of making that possibility real.

THE LIMITS OF INSPIRATION

There is nothing wrong with optimism. In fact, Africa needs confidence in its own capacity. The danger begins when optimism becomes a substitute for action. The continent possesses extraordinary natural resources, a vast consumer market, significant agricultural potential and enormous opportunities in energy, technology and manufacturing. Yet potential is not the same as productivity. The African Development Bank's Africa Industrialisation Index 2025 shows that manufacturing value added increased from approximately US\$285 billion in 2020 to US\$351 billion in 2025. Despite this progress, Africa still accounts for less than 2 percent of global manufacturing output and about 1.4 percent of global manufacturing exports. The figures illustrate the central challenge. Africa does not lack possibility. It lacks sufficient productive capacity to convert possibility into sustained economic value.

FROM POTENTIAL TO PRODUCTIVITY

The next phase of Africa's economic story must therefore move beyond celebrating what the continent has and focus more intensely on what it produces. Industrialisation, value addition and productive employment are essential to that transition. African economies that export raw materials while importing finished goods remain exposed to external price shocks and capture only a limited share of the value created from their own resources. The objective should be to develop stronger domestic and regional production systems, where agriculture feeds processing industries, minerals support manufacturing, technology enables new services and infrastructure connects producers to markets. Africa's development story must increasingly be measured not simply by the resources it possesses, but by the value it creates from them.

CAPITAL MUST FOLLOW POSSIBILITY

None of this can happen without capital. Businesses require financing to expand. Infrastructure requires long term investment. Industrialisation requires technology, equipment and skilled labour. Yet financing conditions across many African economies remain challenging, particularly for businesses seeking patient capital for long term growth. The question, therefore, should not only be who will finance Africa's development. It should also be how African economies can mobilise, retain and deploy more capital effectively. Stronger domestic financial systems, deeper capital markets, improved investment environments and greater confidence in institutions can help ensure that African savings and international investment are directed towards productive economic activity. Capital must follow possibility, but it must also be supported by environments where investment can generate sustainable returns.

INFRASTRUCTURE IS NOT A BACKGROUND ISSUE

Infrastructure is often discussed as though it exists separately from economic development. It does not. Electricity, transport networks, water systems, ports, telecommunications and digital infrastructure determine how efficiently economies function. Where electricity is unreliable, production becomes expensive. Where roads and ports are inefficient, trade becomes slower and less competitive. Where digital systems remain fragmented, businesses face unnecessary barriers. The scale of Africa's infrastructure challenge remains significant. The World Bank estimates that hundreds of millions of people in Sub Saharan Africa still lack access to electricity, while its Mission 300 initiative, together with the African Development Bank, aims to connect 300 million people to electricity by 2030. Infrastructure is therefore not merely about construction. It is about connecting possibility to productivity.



THE POWER OF A MARKET WITHOUT BORDERS

The African Continental Free Trade Area represents one of the continent's most consequential opportunities because Africa's greatest economic advantage may ultimately be its ability to function as a more integrated market. But signing agreements is only the beginning. The real test is implementation. Businesses need efficient customs systems, reliable transport corridors, compatible standards, digital payment systems and fewer non tariff barriers. A company should be able to move goods across African borders with greater predictability and lower costs. A continental market becomes powerful when businesses can actually access it.

INSTITUTIONS ARE THE INVISIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE

There is another form of infrastructure that receives less attention: institutions. Strong institutions create predictability. They help businesses understand the rules, enforce contracts, protect investment and plan for the future. Weak institutions create uncertainty, increase costs and discourage long term investment. This is why governance, accountability and administrative efficiency are not abstract political concerns. They are economic issues. Africa's transformation will depend not only on roads, factories and technology, but also on institutions capable of supporting them.

FROM TALKING ABOUT CHANGE TO ENGINEERING IT

The continent does not need another generation of promises without implementation. It needs a stronger culture of execution. That means measuring progress by outcomes rather than announcements, by factories operating rather than projects launched, by electricity reaching households rather than plans being published, and by businesses growing rather than opportunities merely being discussed. The shift is simple but profound: from ambition to implementation, from potential to productivity, and from motivation to momentum.

THE MOMENTUM AFRICA NEEDS

Africa does not need less inspiration. It needs inspiration that leads somewhere. The continent's future will depend on whether vision is matched with institutions, investment, infrastructure, industrialisation and regional integration. Motivation may encourage people to begin, but momentum is created when systems allow them to continue. The future of Africa will not be determined by how often the continent is described as the next great economic story. It will be determined by whether the structures being built today are capable of making that story real. Beyond motivation lies momentum. And momentum is built.

THE ARISE QUOTE

**“DON'T WAIT TO FEEL
MOTIVATED. START, AND
LET MOMENTUM FIND
YOU.”**

BUILDING THE DISCIPLINE TO KEEP MOVING

Stepping beyond motivation begins with accepting an uncomfortable truth: motivation is temporary. It is influenced by emotion, circumstances, energy, and environment. Some days we feel unstoppable; on others, even the simplest task can feel difficult. If our progress depends entirely on how motivated we feel, we risk becoming inconsistent. We start strongly, lose momentum, postpone our goals, and eventually question our ability to succeed. The difference between those who simply feel inspired and those who create lasting progress lies in what happens when motivation disappears.

1. SYSTEMS OVER STATES

Motivation depends on how you feel. Systems depend on what you have decided to do. People who consistently achieve their goals do not wait for the perfect mood before taking action. They create routines, establish priorities, remove unnecessary distractions, and build environments that make productive behaviour easier to repeat. The goal is not to make every day perfect. It is to make progress possible even on the days when your energy is low. When your habits support your vision, you no longer have to negotiate with yourself every morning. You simply begin.

2. DISCIPLINE AS AN INTERNAL COMPASS

Discipline is often associated with restriction, sacrifice, and saying no. In reality, discipline gives us the freedom to remain committed to what matters most. It is the ability to honour a decision after the excitement surrounding that decision has faded. It means choosing the long-term reward over the immediate temptation and continuing to show up when nobody is watching. Every time you keep a promise you made to yourself, you strengthen your confidence. Over time, discipline becomes less about forcing yourself forward and more about becoming the person you have decided to be.

3. CLARITY CREATES MOMENTUM

It is difficult to move with purpose when you do not know where you are going. Clear goals create direction. A thoughtful strategy creates a pathway. Execution turns that pathway into progress. When your priorities are clear, you spend less time constantly deciding what to do next and more time doing the work that matters. Break the larger vision into meaningful objectives, identify the next practical step, and keep moving. You do not need to have the entire journey figured out before you begin. You need enough clarity to know what comes next.

4. RESILIENCE THROUGH THE JOURNEY

Every meaningful pursuit has difficult seasons. There will be setbacks, slow progress, disappointments, unexpected changes, and moments when your efforts appear to produce little result. These moments are not necessarily evidence that you are failing. Often, they are part of the process of learning, adapting, and becoming better. Resilience means refusing to allow one setback to define the entire journey. It means examining what happened, learning from it, adjusting your approach, and continuing forward. The strongest people are not those who never encounter obstacles. They are those who learn how to keep moving when obstacles appear.

THE REAL WORK BEGINS WHEN MOTIVATION ENDS

Motivation may give you the courage to start, but it cannot be expected to carry you through every chapter of your journey. Mindset gives you perspective. Systems give you structure. Discipline gives you consistency. Resilience gives you the strength to continue. That is what it means to go beyond motivation. Because the life you envision will not be built by what you feel inspired to do occasionally. It will be built by what you are willing to do consistently. Start with inspiration. Build with discipline. Move with purpose.





COLOMBE TEBILY: A VISION BEYOND BOUNDARIES

There is a point in every ambitious life when motivation stops being enough. The excitement of a new idea eventually gives way to the harder questions: What will you build with it? How consistently will you pursue it? And, perhaps most importantly, who will benefit from the journey? For Colombe Tebily, those questions appear to have shaped a career that refuses to fit neatly into one category. Her professional story stretches from wealth management in France to entrepreneurship, fashion, communication, cultural enterprise and social initiatives in Côte d'Ivoire. It is a journey marked not simply by the accumulation of titles, but by an expanding determination to turn ideas into platforms and platforms into impact. Her story is therefore not simply about motivation. It is about what happens after motivation has done its job.

A LIFE BUILT ACROSS TWO WORLDS

Professionally established in France, Tebily works in wealth management, operating within the financial and banking sector and bringing expertise in the structuring, management and transmission of financial and property assets. Yet her professional identity extends well beyond finance. Between 2007 and 2010, she undertook specialised studies in fashion in Brittany, France, complemented by exposure to European designers and the creative industries. The contrast is striking. Wealth management demands precision, strategic thinking and long term planning, while fashion and artistic direction demand imagination, visual intelligence and an instinct for expression. Rather than treating these worlds as competing identities, Tebily has incorporated both into a broader professional vision.

That ability to move between disciplines may be one of the defining characteristics of her journey. It suggests that reinvention does not always require leaving one chapter behind; sometimes it means allowing every chapter to contribute something to the next.

FROM EXPERTISE TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The entrepreneurial chapter of her story took shape through ColombeTebily Consulting, a venture dedicated to strategic communication, public relations, personal and corporate branding, image management and artistic direction. The consultancy works with companies, institutions and public personalities, placing reputation, positioning and communication at the centre of its work. Here, professional expertise becomes something larger than an individual career. It becomes a platform. That distinction matters in an era when entrepreneurship is increasingly about more than starting a business. The strongest ventures create networks, generate opportunities and influence the way people, products and ideas are understood. Tebily's work across communication and creative direction reflects this broader understanding of enterprise.

PUTTING AFRICAN HERITAGE AT THE CENTRE

Her entrepreneurial vision also reaches into cultural preservation through AZIGBOO LOKUI, the textile brand she founded around Ivorian artisanal fabrics and traditional motifs. The brand seeks to bring local craftsmanship and cultural heritage into a refined contemporary marketplace while maintaining its connection to traditional design. There is something significant about that positioning. African heritage does not have to remain confined to nostalgia or historical memory. It can become a source of contemporary creativity, commercial value and international visibility. For an entrepreneur working between Africa and Europe, the opportunity is particularly compelling: to participate in a global marketplace without losing the cultural identity that makes the product distinctive.

BUILDING PLATFORMS, NOT JUST BRANDS

Tebily's portfolio continues to expand through initiatives that reach different sectors and communities. MIA, Make Up in Abidjan, was created as an international platform for the beauty, cosmetics and professional make up industries, bringing together brands, decision makers and make up professionals while contributing to the development of the sector. The significance of such a platform lies not only in the event itself, but in the ecosystem it creates. When professionals, entrepreneurs, creatives and brands are brought into the same space, conversations can become collaborations and visibility can become opportunity. This is a recurring theme in Tebily's work: creating spaces in which other people can participate, connect and grow.

WHERE SUCCESS MEETS SERVICE

Yet perhaps the most revealing part of her journey is found outside the commercial sphere. Through Le Graya Populaire, Tebily has supported initiatives that provide meals to people in modest communities. Through I-SOLA, La Journée de l'Influenceur Solidaire, she has mobilised influencers around charitable causes and support for vulnerable children. Her organisation Coco Ma Marraine focuses on direct sponsorship and assistance for disadvantaged children, including support relating to education, health and nutrition. These initiatives add another dimension to the meaning of influence. In a world where public visibility can be measured in followers, impressions and digital reach, there is a more enduring measure of influence: what happens when that visibility is directed towards someone else's needs. That is where success begins to intersect with service.

THE POWER OF REINVENTION

Tebily's story also challenges the idea that a successful career must be linear. Her experience suggests that professional identity can evolve through curiosity, education, entrepreneurship and the willingness to enter unfamiliar spaces. The financial professional can also be a creative director. The entrepreneur can also be a cultural advocate. The public personality can also become a social entrepreneur. These identities do not necessarily compete; when anchored in a coherent purpose, they can reinforce one another. Reinvention, in this sense, is not a rejection of who we were. It is an acknowledgement that we may become more than we originally imagined.

THE LEGACY QUOTE

“SUCCESS IS NOT ONLY ABOUT WHAT YOU BUILD FOR YOURSELF; IT IS ALSO ABOUT WHAT YOUR JOURNEY MAKES POSSIBLE FOR OTHERS.”

COLOMBE TEBILY





BEYOND MOTIVATION

This is the heart of the story. Motivation is powerful because it moves us emotionally, but commitment is what carries us through reality. It is easy to feel inspired when an idea is new, when people are applauding or when the possibilities seem limitless. The real test begins when progress becomes slower, responsibilities increase and the work requires persistence rather than excitement. Motivation can open the door. Commitment requires us to walk through it. For entrepreneurs, creatives and leaders, this distinction is fundamental. Businesses are not built by inspiration alone. Creative careers are not sustained by talent alone. Social initiatives do not create lasting change simply because the intention behind them is good. Vision has to be followed by structure, discipline, consistency and the courage to keep going.

FROM VISION TO IMPACT

Tebily's journey is also moving further into public engagement, with her candidacy for legislative elections in Gagnoa and a stated focus on local development, women's empowerment, youth inclusion and access to essential social services. It represents another evolution in a career that has progressively expanded from professional achievement towards broader questions of community, representation and contribution.

Whether she is operating in finance, fashion, communication, cultural enterprise or social initiatives, the central question remains remarkably consistent: what can a vision become when someone is prepared to take responsibility for bringing it to life? That is the difference between having an idea and building something around it.

THE LEGACY QUESTION

Every generation produces people who inspire others, but inspiration becomes truly significant when it produces action that continues beyond the person who initiated it. Businesses can create employment, cultural brands can preserve heritage, platforms can open doors, and social initiatives can bring dignity and opportunity to people who might otherwise be overlooked. That is why legacy is ultimately a bigger question than recognition. It asks what remains after the applause has faded and the spotlight has moved elsewhere. It asks whether the work created something useful, whether the vision opened possibilities for others and whether personal success became part of a larger story. Colombe Tebily's journey continues to evolve, but the trajectory offers a powerful lesson for anyone standing at the beginning of their own journey: you do not need to have every chapter figured out before you begin. You need the courage to begin, the discipline to continue and the vision to understand that what you build can become bigger than yourself. Because motivation may inspire the first step, but commitment determines how far the journey goes. And somewhere between the dream and the discipline, inspiration becomes impact.

THE LEGACY FRAMES





THE SKILLS THAT MATTER IN THE AI ECONOMY

Artificial intelligence is reshaping what it means to be employable. As automation and machine learning take over routine tasks, the labour market is placing greater value on capabilities machines cannot easily replicate. Navigating the AI economy therefore requires a deliberate shift towards skills that combine human judgment with technological fluency.

Digital Literacy and Technological Fluency

Basic computer literacy is no longer a differentiator; it is a baseline. In an AI-driven workplace, digital literacy means knowing how to work with intelligent systems, interpret their outputs and assess the quality of the data behind them. Across industries, workers increasingly need to use tools ranging from generative AI assistants to sophisticated data platforms while understanding their limitations, biases and potential errors.

Analytical Thinking and Problem-Solving

AI can process enormous volumes of information and identify patterns at remarkable speed, but human judgment remains essential. Analytical thinking means going beyond the data to understand context, implications and ethical boundaries. Professionals who can ask the right questions, assess AI-generated information and turn complex insights into sound decisions will remain highly valuable. Critical thinking is the safeguard against flawed or misleading automated outputs.

Adaptability and Continuous Learning

As technology evolves, skills have shorter lifespans. Software, tools and industry standards change rapidly, making a static skillset increasingly vulnerable to obsolescence. Adaptability is therefore becoming a defining professional capability: the ability to learn, unlearn and adjust as roles and workflows change. Those who embrace continuous learning are better positioned to turn technological disruption into an opportunity for reinvention.

Specialised Technical Skills

The AI economy also needs deep technical expertise. Machine learning, data science, cybersecurity, cloud architecture and AI engineering are among the capabilities required to build and secure increasingly digital organisations. Yet technical expertise alone is not enough. Specialists must also communicate across functions and translate technical complexity into practical business value.

AI is not simply eliminating human work; it is changing the nature of it. The professionals best positioned for the future will be those who combine technological fluency with judgment, problem-solving, adaptability and specialised expertise. The goal is not merely to compete with AI, but to learn how to work with it, question it and ultimately lead in an economy shaped by it.

THE OPPORTUNITY GAP: WHY AFRICA'S YOUNG PEOPLE NEED MORE THAN ENCOURAGEMENT

Africa keeps telling its young people to work harder, dream bigger and create their own opportunities. Across conference halls, universities and social media, the message is familiar: believe in yourself, acquire skills, take initiative and persevere. But what if the problem is not always a lack of ambition? What if, for millions of young Africans, the opportunity itself is missing?

A young person can have qualifications without a job, skills without a market, a business idea without capital, or ambition without the networks to open the first door. Yet the response is often the same: improve your mindset, work harder, keep going. The message has merit, but it is incomplete. Hard work matters, but hard work needs somewhere to go.

Africa's youth challenge is therefore not simply about motivation. It is also about access to quality education, finance, technology, mentorship, professional experience and markets. It is about whether a graduate can gain the experience required for a job they cannot secure without experience, or whether an entrepreneur can access the capital needed to grow. The distance between what young people are capable of achieving and what their environments allow them to achieve is the opportunity gap.

The growing emphasis on mindset can obscure these barriers. When success is presented mainly as a matter of attitude and persistence, failure can become a personal deficiency rather than a reflection of limited opportunity. Personal agency matters, but agency cannot substitute for access.

This does not remove individual responsibility. Young people still need skills, discipline, adaptability and initiative. They must prepare themselves for opportunities rather than simply wait for them. But individual effort produces greater results when institutions create conditions in which effort can translate into progress.

The private sector can help through internships, apprenticeships, entry-level opportunities and mentorship. Universities and training institutions need stronger links to changing labour markets. Financial institutions and investors can widen access to capital for promising young entrepreneurs. Governments should judge youth programmes by outcomes rather than activity: not how many people attended a workshop, but how many found work, built sustainable businesses or increased their incomes.

There is also a danger in celebrating exceptional success stories without examining the systems around them. The young entrepreneur who succeeds despite limited infrastructure is inspiring. But how many equally capable young people never receive the chance to try? Every celebrated success story should raise another question: what would happen if the conditions that enabled one person to succeed were available to thousands?

Africa does not need to abandon resilience, entrepreneurship or personal responsibility. It needs to place them within a broader understanding of opportunity. Telling young people to create their own future means little if they lack the tools, institutions and economic space required to do so.

Africa therefore needs to move the conversation from motivation to opportunity. Young people need confidence and skills, but they also need functioning institutions, finance, markets, infrastructure, networks and credible pathways into productive work.

The goal should not be to create a generation endlessly encouraged to overcome obstacles. It should be to build societies where fewer unnecessary obstacles stand between ability and opportunity. The question is no longer simply whether Africa's youth are ready for the future. It is whether Africa is prepared to give them a fair opportunity to build it.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK

Motivation starts the journey, but lasting impact requires discipline, purpose and action. These three books challenge you to think differently and turn intention into progress.

Atomic Habits – James Clear

Small actions, repeated consistently, create remarkable results. Clear offers a practical framework for building habits that move you towards your goals.

The War of Art – Steven Pressfield

Ideas mean little without execution. Pressfield examines resistance, procrastination and self-doubt, challenging readers to develop the discipline to do the work.

Start with Why – Simon Sinek

Purpose drives meaningful action. Sinek explores how clarity of purpose can transform leadership, inspire others and create lasting impact. Read to Think Differently. Act with Purpose. Move Beyond Motivation.

THE ARISE CHALLENGE

For the next 7 days, create before you consume. Before you scroll, watch or absorb someone else's ideas, create something of your own. Write a page. Record an idea. Design a concept. Build something. Learn a skill. Take one step towards the vision you have been postponing.

At the end of each day, ask:
"What did I create today that did not exist yesterday?"

DID YOU KNOW?

Impact is rarely built through inspiration alone. Consistent creation develops discipline, sharpens ideas and turns intention into progress.

Motivation may start the journey. Creation moves it forward. Pioneers are remembered not for what they consumed, but for what they created.

TOOLBOX

THIS WEEK'S TOOL: NotebookLM

Go beyond reading. NotebookLM helps you explore documents, research and ideas through AI, making it easier to ask questions, identify connections and develop new insights from what you already know.

WHY IT MATTERS

Pioneers do not simply consume information. They interrogate it, connect it and turn it into something new. NotebookLM can help transform a collection of information into deeper thinking and better ideas.

Don't just gather knowledge. Make something with it.



FROM SILENCE TO VOICE: FIND YOUR VOICE. CREATE INFLUENCE.

For more than a decade, Fatema Adam, known professionally as Pocca, wrote without an audience. The Mauritian writer and poet filled notebooks with thoughts, questions and emotions, never intending them for publication. Writing was less a career ambition than a private refuge from the judgment that had shaped much of her childhood. That silence, however, was not the absence of a voice. It was where one was being formed.

Growing up, Pocca faced comments about her appearance, skin colour and ability to fit society's expectations. Over time, the words of others became part of her own internal dialogue. The deeper struggle was no longer simply what people said about her, but what she began to believe about herself.

Her experience points to a wider challenge facing young people: how many are shrinking themselves to fit expectations they never chose? How many remain silent because they fear rejection, criticism or simply being different?

For Pocca, writing became a way to reclaim that space. A blank page offered something the outside world often did not: freedom from comparison and judgment. Her private writing allowed her to examine identity, self-worth, pain and resilience on her own terms.

The turning point came when she decided to publish. After years of keeping her writing private, she took the risk of allowing strangers into experiences she had carefully protected. The response changed the meaning of her work. Readers began sharing their own stories of bullying, anxiety, loneliness and self-doubt. Her poems had moved beyond personal expression. They had become a conversation.

That transition offers a broader lesson about influence. A platform is not necessarily where influence begins. Often, it begins with the courage to articulate something others struggle to say. Pocca's vulnerability gave readers language for experiences they had carried silently themselves.

Today, she writes in English, French and Mauritian Creole, exploring identity, compassion, trauma, self-worth and healing. Her reach across languages reflects something larger: while circumstances differ across societies, the need to be understood is universal.

Her journey also offers a different way of thinking about leadership. Leadership is not always attached to a title or position. Sometimes it begins with authenticity the willingness to speak honestly and use personal experience to create value for others.

For Africa's young people, that distinction matters. In an age of social media and carefully constructed identities, visibility can easily be mistaken for influence. But being seen is not the same as being heard, and being heard is not the same as making a difference.

Pocca's story moves through three stages: silence, voice and influence. She first had to find the confidence to speak, then the courage to be heard, and finally the purpose to use that voice beyond herself.

The question for a new generation is not simply whether it has something to say. It is whether it will have the courage to say it and the purpose to make its voice count. Find your voice. Own your story. Create influence.

FROM POTENTIAL TO PROOF: THE NEW CURRENCY OF AFRICAN LEADERSHIP

Africa has no shortage of talent. Its universities produce graduates, its conferences showcase ambitious leaders and its professional networks are filled with impressive titles, qualifications and ideas. But beneath the language of potential lies a more important question: what have you actually built, solved, changed or delivered?

For too long, potential has been treated as an achievement in itself. A degree suggests capability. A senior title suggests leadership. A well-curated profile suggests influence. But none of these, on their own, demonstrate impact. In an increasingly competitive economy, the real currency is shifting from what people say they can do to what they can prove they have done.

This matters particularly in African leadership, where credentials and visibility can sometimes carry disproportionate weight. Qualifications matter, but they are only the foundation. Leadership is ultimately tested in the ability to solve problems, make sound decisions, build effective teams, create value and deliver results in difficult circumstances.

The same principle applies to careers. Young professionals are often encouraged to collect qualifications, attend conferences and build networks. All have value. But the stronger question is what sits behind the CV. What problems have you solved? What projects have you delivered? What have you improved? What can you show rather than simply describe?

This is where portfolios, practical experience and measurable results become increasingly important. A young designer can show the work. An entrepreneur can demonstrate revenue, customers or jobs created. A manager can point to improved performance. A professional can demonstrate expertise through projects, research or solutions that have made a measurable difference. Proof turns potential into credibility.

The shift also matters for entrepreneurship. Africa does not need more businesses that exist primarily as ideas or impressive pitches. It needs enterprises that solve real problems, serve real customers and create sustainable value. The strongest entrepreneurs are not necessarily those with the most compelling stories, but those who can demonstrate that their ideas work beyond the presentation.

For leaders, the test is even greater. Titles can be awarded, but trust must be earned. Influence can be claimed, but impact must be demonstrated. The leader who consistently delivers, develops people and leaves institutions stronger than they found them builds something more valuable than visibility.

This does not make qualifications irrelevant. Education provides knowledge, professional credentials establish standards and networks create access. But they become more powerful when converted into capability and results. Potential earns attention. Performance earns trust. Impact earns significance.

Africa's next generation of leaders therefore needs to move beyond the language of what it could become and towards evidence of what it can do. The question is no longer simply whether someone has potential. It is whether they have begun turning that potential into something tangible.

In a continent rich in ambition, talent and ideas, the competitive advantage may increasingly belong to those who can move from promise to performance, and from performance to measurable impact. The future will not be built by potential alone. It will be built by people who can prove what they are capable of doing.

WHAT I WOULD TELL MY YOUNGER SELF



If I could sit across from the young girl I once was, I would tell her that what people say about her does not have to become the story she tells herself. Growing up in a broken home, facing rejection, bullying, body shaming and criticism, I began to believe I was not good enough. At my lowest point, I questioned the value of my existence and attempted suicide. Today, I would tell her: do not make permanent conclusions about your life from temporary circumstances.

At thirteen, I encountered a message that challenged how I saw myself. I began asking: What if I am not worthless? What if my life matters? What if my future does not have to be dictated by my past? Those questions did not change my circumstances immediately, but they changed my perspective. Through faith, learning and deliberate choices, I began rebuilding my identity. I learned that your beginning may explain where you start, but it does not determine where you finish.

I would tell my younger self that motivation is not enough. Inspiration may start you, but discipline, preparation and consistent action move you forward. I began reading, developing my skills and taking responsibility for my growth. My career in accounting and finance eventually led to leadership and continued professional development. The lesson is simple: prepare before the opportunity arrives.

I would also tell her not to spend her life waiting to be chosen. Some doors will open; others will not. If there is no table available for you, create one. Build your competence, solve problems and create value. Rejection does not mean you have no value; sometimes it means you must create another path.

Guard your identity. The way you see yourself influences your decisions, habits and direction. You cannot control every voice around you, but you can decide which voices deserve authority. Through difficult seasons, my reminder has been: "I can do it, and regardless of the difficulties, I will prevail."

I would tell her that success is not simply qualifications, positions or recognition. It is what you do with what you have learned. My professional journey expanded into training, mentoring and coaching, helping professionals and women grow in leadership, financial wellness and personal development. Personal growth becomes more meaningful when it helps someone else grow.

Do not make recognition the destination. Awards and titles are temporary; the person you become and the lives you influence matter more. Sustainable growth also requires rest, reflection and renewal. You do not have to destroy yourself in pursuit of success.

Finally, never underestimate what is possible because of where you began. Africa has no shortage of talent, intelligence or resilience. What we need is the confidence to believe in our capacity, the discipline to develop it and the courage to create opportunities rather than wait for them.

Looking back, the greatest transformation was not that my circumstances changed, but that they stopped defining me. The girl who once questioned her worth became a professional, leader, mentor and coach who helps others recognise theirs.

If I could leave my younger self with one message, it would be this: believe differently, learn continuously, prepare deliberately, create where there is no table, persevere through difficult seasons and, when you find your place, make room for someone else. The past may explain where you began. It does not have to determine where you finish.



**"THE GREATEST
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COMMITMENT."**

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+260 954 178 181



dcntalasha@gmail.com



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