

The Exhortation

... Using Knowledge and Encouragement to EXHORT People and Businesses to GREATNESS.

Life Coaching. Business Coaching. Executive Coaching. World Outreach.

Encouragement: All We NEED!

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; because there is not effort without error and shortcomings; but who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly; and his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat." (Theodore Roosevelt)

One of the things we do well as human beings is to complain, to be quick in identifying where doer of deeds could have done them better, and even quicker in identifying what is wrong in everyone around us, everything people do, every machine, process, policy, event, et al, rather than commending the associated efforts. Those who are in denial of this fact are likely those who complain the most, for we all know somebody who never seem to be satisfied no matter what – a very demanding boss, grumbling employee, harsh parent, whining child, politicians, and even religious leaders and congregations that should be cognisant of God's biblical command to "do everything without complaining". Hear this: Despite miraculously crossing the Red Sea on dry land, the Israelites were said to have complained against Moses and God almost immediately after!

Meanwhile we all agree that we could use just a little, regular dose of encouragement from the people around us, we hardly receive any - and most likely hardly give any, too. And of course, we blame this "oversight" on our busyness, our lack of time, our forgetfulness. In fact, the word "encouragement" is basically extinct in our workplaces, and becoming unpopular in our homes as well. **Meanwhile, the feeling that our spouse, boss, coworkers, neighbours, friends, family, children, parents et al seem to only notice all of what we do wrong and barely anything we do right is becoming so prevalent and discouraging that many people no longer aim for the very best, but rather aim just to avoid the worst.** It is no doubt that the world is more sophisticated and richer than ever before, but somehow, mainly due to greed, lack of integrity and outright wickedness, the world has crossed over from been discouraging to depressing. News from around the world filled with increasing wars and rumours of war, homicides and suicides, petty thefts and corporate frauds, violence and terrorisms, teenage pregnancies and immature fathers, poverty and emerging terminal diseases, and now, the subtle elimination of human lives through abortions and euthanasia.

Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

1 Corinthians 10:24

What you do or say every minute of the day is directly tied to how encouraged the people around you will be. If we are not about being encouraging to others, we have likely become discouraging to them. All it takes for us to help make this world a better place is really to notice the effort of others much more than the obvious improvement opportunities. If we only knew how much we all actually desire encouragement, we will not withhold it from one another.

From my experience as a Life Coach, I strongly believe that your life can never be empty if all you do is seek to fill the lives of others! And this, I am committed to doing all my life.

Encouragement is the cheapest gift we can give to people, and yet the most appreciated. All it takes is a smile, an uplifting remark, a friendly stare, a compliment, a gesture, a slight deviation from our natural state of selfishness.

Our mind is the driver of our body, which is the vehicle, while encouragement is the gasoline the body needs to operate. For sure the vehicle is able to maintain high speed even when low in gasoline, but we are never willing to drive it too far with no gas station in sight.

Give me a hand, and I will walk a mile with you. Give me some encouragement, and I will carry you in my heart forever. We are quick to identify those who seem to purposely seek encouragement, when in actual fact, we should look no further than ourselves.

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Enhancing. Effectuating. Energizing. Equipping. Enriching. Enlivening. Empowering. Exulting. Elating. Exhilarating. Exciting.

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As if the current state of the world is not depressing enough to carry in our head even minute of the day, why even bother sharing that “constructive criticism” with someone who you never take the time to encourage, especially since he or she may be directly tied to these prevalent pains and chaos in one way or the other? Why miss the opportunity to enrich someone on your way to work with a smile or friendly stare instead of maintaining that cold face? Why not energize your families and friends with a “Have a GREAT Day” on your way out instead of being so ungrateful for the gift of life by choosing to be moody so early in the morning? **Why, for the sake of your own principles, standards and expectations, give up your right to be great and influential by withholding words of encouragement from the people that you are fortunate to be around?** In the words of Apostle Paul, “Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? But instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong (by withholding encouragement from others), and you do this to your brothers and sisters”.

Of the responsibilities we have in the world today, like being protective of endangered species, mindful of environmental pollution and global warming, philanthropic and engaged in communal volunteering, effective in leadership, and planting more trees than is being consumed, all of which are very noble and encouraging deeds, the most critical one is the duty of encouraging those around us everyday. This is what the world needs – way much more than the things we think it does! As we go about our day inspiring others with hope, courage, and confidence, freely giving them support, stimulating and spurring them with courage and spirit, they will in turn start doing the same. According to Proverbs, **“He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”** Also, “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.”

The 10 Simplest Ways to Live a Life of IMPACT

1. **Be quicker to provide positive feedback than constructive ones.** If you never encourage people when they make effort, you have no business providing them constructive criticisms.
2. **Be quick to respond to your emails and voicemails, and even messages like this newsletter.** Don't procrastinate or else you may never get to it, for a brief call or email in time encourages another. Encourage us, send us your feedback!
3. **When you compliment others, be very specific.** Rather than saying, “You look great!” it is more encouraging to say, “You look great in that dress!”.
4. **Use your silence and absence wisely, for it discourages the people who long to see you or hear from you.** Like Martin Luther King once said, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends”.
5. **Are you fortunate to have friends? Consistently support them, especially when they reach out to you.** As humans, we often find it difficult to seek the help of people who often turn us down; thus first think about how to encourage them rather than the ‘important’ activities we often overwhelm ourselves with. Besides, it may be the last time you see them.
6. **Are you privilege to be a manager or other form of leader? Never leave your place of work without having complimented those you lead,** for the desired productivity is closely tied to how encouraged your staff are. Employees are refreshed when managers stop by their desk to say “Hello”, and ask after their families. You and I know that life is not all about work. Be the leader you want your leader to be!
- 7) **Are you blessed enough to still have a spouse? Then make the exchange of compliments a consistent habit in your relationship,** for your marriage largely depends on how encouraged your partner is. Be each other's #1 Fan! In fact, the underlying reason for divorce is when a partner no longer feels encouraged by his or her partner. In other words, when the wife no longer takes the time to encourage the husband, his marital motivation weakens and slowly dies. Truly, you do not want someone else out there encouraging your spouse more than you do!
- 8) **Are you blessed enough to have children? You must compliment them more than you reprimand them,** for your top parental goal is to make your home where your children feel loved the most. **Are you blessed enough to still have parents?** Then never let them miss you! Hug them always!
- 9) **ALWAYS accept responsibility for your actions, regardless of how minute they may seem.** Refrain from making excuses, complaining or blaming others. If you make a promise, keep it, for your words are commitments, whether documented or not. Saying sorry is the most encouraging thing we can offer to the offended. Humble yourself!
- 10) **Be quick to phone or email people immediately after having sudden thoughts about them.** In this way, when they call you, you will not find yourself saying, “I have been thinking of you”. Remember that life is like water on a boiling pot; from cold to hot is quick, and evaporation is imminent.

Alex Nosa Ihama is a Life and Business Coach, and the Founder and Executive Director of The Exhortation Coaching Services, as well as the non-profit arm, The Exhortation World Outreach. For more information, visit his website, www.TheExhortation.com, or send an email directly to alex.ihama@TheExhortation.com.

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