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INTRODUCTION

The subject “achieving examination success” has generations through generations being an issue of discussion especially because of the myriad of opinions that seem to wake over it. While examinations aren’t the best test of one’s capacity, it has remained the only way to test how much a person knows.

Modern day education with its retinue of books leaves many students thinking that it can never be possible for anyone to get right through examinations with ease. Students continue to hope there could be short routes through the examination systems or they could do without it altogether. Stories of dropouts who have attained success are popular among students who think so and so dropped out of school and still made headway so why not I. Actually the fear is that of passing the examinations that arrive not necessarily because of the failure of the academic system being employed.

Examinations have always proved unpopular for many students (both young and old). The knowledge that examinations are close by will send initial shivers around

even the serious students in any class however prepared they are. Students often develop examination fever and pray that examinations are postponed. In a case the examination is postponed, the students elope in joy.

It's saddening in recent times the dwindling fortunes of students in local and international examinations. When one considers the amount of inputs that government puts into the education system, one would expect to see students soaring with high scores in their examinations. It's not being the case though and it has become a big issue for worries.

In a world where getting education is pivotal to how success and what opportunities arrives, passing examinations will remain a precondition for getting that success at least for some time, till a new system arrives. Many students know they just have to get around their examinations and those who can't choose to get help through malpractice.

Malpractice has become an issue of concern as government fights hard to battle the menace with little success. Parents and students, school proprietors and agents forge common front in support of the menace

because of the immediate gain that arrives. Sadly though, the future suffers as we send out half-baked graduates to society who becomes unfit to solve the myriad of society's problems.

As a teacher, over the years interacting with pupils and students, I have observed that the problem is not actually in the student's ability to study and pass their examinations. It is in their not knowing how best to study and pass the examinations. Students want to feel the joy of entering the examination hall confidently with their pen and pencils and smile out with joy knowing that what they have answered is good enough to give them the success they need.

Over classroom interactions, I have observed that most students don't know how best to read to stick to their brains. They even think they aren't good enough to pass their examinations or passing examinations is actually a task for genius. Some sincerely want to get around their failures but they seem handicapped maybe. They fear they may be mocked by fellow highflying classmates or their situation is actually an impossible one. The good news is their fears do not hold water.

After series of interactions, personal studies and experiments, I conclude that every brain is a genius. Personally too, I had my set of challenges that I had to fight over. I had my examination fears and failures but I learnt too and I am sharing those secrets that I have applied over the course of my studying here in this book.

There are actually no secret to passing examinations and soon you will discover too that it is no secret. It is a natural situation that arrives when we decide to align ourselves with the natural situations around us. Passing examinations comes naturally.

When I share these common secrets to my students and friends, they often laugh them off as jokes but those who actually follow them share testimonies to the fact that they work like magic. Sincerely, the ideas may seem as mysteries and like things you already know. If you know them, congratulations but read through again, you will discover you never knew them.

Passing examinations and getting As right at them is so easy that you will discover when you get through this book that you had actually being wasting your ability all the

while and you should have gotten better grades the last time than you do now.

There is no limit to how much your brain can do and that examination is mincemeat when you know it is actually no big deal to pass examinations and the student who is getting first-class is no way better than the guy who manages to get through school with a pass. Those who have actually gotten through examinations doing better will always say they never did what others never did; they just spent more time doing what others did.

During my days at the engineering faculty of my university, my friends and I always wondered at a tall pretty lady, a fellow classmate who always performed better than the rest of us males. She actually ran away as the best graduating student in our faculty. My mates had the notion that she was perhaps having extra affairs with the lecturers or was bribing her way. I observed however after carefully studying her movements that she was actually not doing what the other students including me wasn't doing. But she actually had a secret, a secret you will discover in this book as you read.

There is so much in this book that by the time you are through with it, you would be writing the next examination with ease and with better performance. There are actually twenty of them and that's so much to keep you probing your mind. You necessarily will not need all the twenty. All you may need may just be a combination of five of them.

The principles are mostly from personal experience and classroom experiments. They are written in simple language and down to earth. Chew them, they could be funny but think beyond the immediate laughter to the reasoning behind them. Have a Happy read.

BURN THE MIDNIGHT CANDLE.

When I was little, my teachers would often tell us to burn the midnight candle. Burning candles was common that time because we had no electric energy. It didn't have more significance than our bare minds could contain. However now, burning the candle around the midnight is of great significance not only because of the illumination that arrives around the room but also the illuminations that arrives of the mind especially now that we are very accustomed to the electric grid and small rechargeable lamps.

I shared to my students who were preparing for their university matriculation examinations the secrets behind the midnight candle. It seemed hilarious that I was asking them to switch of their bulbs and rather go for the candle choice. We got talking on why our teachers at school

would talk especially of the midnight candle. I told them that there was something special about the burning of the “midnight candle”. We could light candles in the evening or even in the early mornings of the day but they stressed the midnight.

Our teachers never thought about this statement they have made through the years. It was transferred from their teachers to them and they did same to us yet they never queried why they were asked to burn the candle at midnight. I got lots of “whys” and then sat down to find an answer to this question.

I am of the opinion that there is so much power in the candle light. Those into mysticism often use the candle light and even churches are known to light the candle light. There is actually some mental illumination that arrives as a result of the use of candles. The candle illumines our soul and opens it to the mental schooling that characterizes studying. Our soul is warmed up by its warmth allowing for a mental assimilation of what we are studying.

The choice of the midnight is necessitated on the quiet ambience that it presents for study as well as the interaction that we have with “hardworking angels” who

support the labor of those who study during that time with success. There is no theoretical proof of this but those who have succeeded through life tell us that they do most of the work in the midnight when everyone is asleep.

My students got giggling when I told them angels were actually at work during the midnight to bless those whose candles are lit with success. It doesn't seem an easy to understand belief but I have come to understand it as somewhat true.

In spiritual terms, it is said that between 11.30pm and 2.30am, the airspace is left open for interaction between the spiritual and the physical. I am not a specialist in this matter but I've accepted it as true after trying this out myself.

Those days at the university, I had tried out different reading techniques just so that I could help myself from the drastic position I had found myself. I had failed to develop a reading habit prior to entering into the university but I had to find a way around it soonest else it would be finding me out of school soon. This got me moving from one student to another who I felt had the ability I wanted. I caught up with a friend Amos who made

reading through the night his specialty and I first learnt from him the power of the night. Since I caught up with him, I've connected with his reading principle. He still reads through the night till today and he promises himself never to stop until he closes his eyes off this side of life.

I have being inspired by the many stories of students who have achieved success by just applying the principle of reading through the midnight.

When I talked of the use of the candle especially to my students, they ask if any other form of light can't be used. I stress the use of the candle because I am aware any principle being used by those in mysticism has an everyday application too. There is often a conscious awareness that arrives when you make use of the candle. If you try it, you would discover too. You just can't sleep off while the candle is lit. The thinking is for you to switch off the candle when you get tired. However reading with the candle takes sleep away from your eyes. Is there an experimental proof? I don't think so. However from my own personal experience, I have observed that keeping the candle lit lights you out of sleep altogether.

My academic performance began to change after I took conscious steps to apply the night along with my friends. Even though at the beginning I was given to sleeping when we went for our night classes, with time I overcame it. There may not be an immediate change once you decide to begin but the change arrives only after a few days. There is a certainty that within a space of three weeks when the habit forms, you have begun to coupe the benefits of the night sacrifice.

Yes, it is actually a sacrifice. I remember that at that time of the night prior to starting the night studying, I was often far asleep snoring off. Soon that time became a time for study and I couldn't enjoy the benefit of sleep. I had sleep lag at the initial time but success gains began to arrive with improved test scores which made me even more determined to continue in that path of success.

I'm often asked why I remember so much after many years since I left school and I could still teach clearly without looking through any reference. I tell them that I had labored through the night those days at the university. Those things that actually get stock in the night stay for so long. Even though I had the angel's thing to support my

high mental capacity, I naturally know it is the illumination that the night offered that actually got all that knowledge in my brain for so long.

It seems no secret at all burning candles. We burn candles every day and they don't cost much. However what we are unaware of is the much aid it gives to assimilation. While it may be odd switching off normal light and deciding for candles, using candles gives the aura of being serious. It's always great creating a serious aura. Students who know how to pass examinations and succeed at school work actually have an aura that just sticks with their classmates and teacher or lecturers that they indeed are successes.

DEVELOP A STUDIOUS AURA

I walked to a colleague of mine to ask for the solution to a simple sum. I had no understanding of the mathematical sum and I knew she had solutions to the problem. I walked up to her and asked if she could help me with her knowledge. I was shocked when she replied that I was actually pretending not to know because she knew I knew the sum. She went ahead to claim I was testing if she actually knew it and that she was not going to offer me any help.

Sincerely, I did not understand the sum but I accepted that because she thinks I should have understood it, that I should have understood it. What actually she was seeing around me was the aura that I had managed to create.

I had learnt to develop a studious aura right from high school. I knew from the word go that people naturally

assume I was so brilliant even when right inside me, I knew I was empty. This knowledge propelled me to want to know. I just wanted to keep to terms with what people assumed about me. If they think I know that's alright because I should know as a matter of right.

I have noticed that those who do very well academically, I mean those who have the capacity to pass examinations actually have this aura around them that tells you there is something up there in their heads and that they can actually deliver. We often called these kind of persons bookworms. They are often around books and books are always around them.

I am always of the opinion that if we create an impression to others, chance is we are placing a benchmark for which we must shoot ahead and become what we want others to think we are. It doesn't seem so easy for one to understand how our aura can help propel our studying capacity. I am actually of this opinion because I have noticed that there is a relationship between how we look and what we know. That's why adverts portraying academic achievements tend to show brilliant bright faced students.

From my own experience, I had always admired those students who looked just like their books. In high school, I never had that brilliant face like I knew brilliant students had so it was easy not to be considered good enough to answer questions in class or get assignments done. I did not even expect much from myself because I guessed I was not looking like the other guys who looked just like books. I was always looking rough and ragged. The first impression one would have had about me was maybe a cultist

As I grew older however and moved into the university, I knew I needed to look serious to be considered serious. I needed to drop that weird look because all that while, it didn't make me look like I knew and I did not court the right attention. True, I was weird and my dress sense was poor. When I assumed I knew, the initial repulsion that arrived from others would create in me the impression that I was actually nowhere amongst the class of high fliers, however hard I worked to prove myself.

Somewhere along the line, I needed to look like some serious student to be considered serious about my books. I needed an aura.

How did I do it?

- I decided I'd look great. I had a whack dress sense that was repulsive even to me. I knew somehow though, I had to find a way to repair my image which will also influence how I study. I am not trying to create a relationship between studying and how one looks. No. I actually was trying to look like the studious students that I knew so that I could be considered serious and then boost my confidence level. Yes, confidence is a huge boost for those who will have to study at school and pass examinations with ease.
- I was punctual at class. I never missed class. I was always in class even whether the lectures were available or not. It helped me keep abreast with all the happenings so that no one had to tell me so much. Rather I was always the one to be asked.
- I sat at the front of the class. I always had that thing about sitting at the front everywhere since I was little so it was no problem positioning myself around the front seat of my class. Yes, the serious students often sat at the front and I was finding myself with them at the front of the class.

- I made sure I had books around me every time especially amongst my mates. Don't think I am a Jacky. I just wanted to improve my academic aura so that more and more people think more highly of me and run towards me for their academic help.
- I smiled more often. I never kept a stoned face no matter what. The more I smile, it eased people towards me and I began to court attention.
- I found more people I could help. Guess what? The more people that came around for me to help them, the more fame and attention that arrived about my capacity to help and soon I was getting more attention.
- I made the library my second home. Most students made use of the library so they'd usually find me at the corner of the library. We usually assumed that the longer one spends at the library, the more serious a person becomes academically. There is no active statistic to support that but I realized that we tend to find the more serious students spending more time in the library than those who were less serious.

Creating the studious aura, the type that made passing my examinations easy didn't come easy. It took a period of time to be able to create the aura and then stay there. It was hard work because at first I was putting in so much energy but once it became a lifestyle, it was uhuru.

It came to a point a point when if I said I never knew I was thought to be lying even when it was the truth. Other students refused sharing knowledge with me because they assumed I only wanted to add their knowledge to the huge knowledge I already had. Some even assumed I was mocking them. I however knew that the aura I had created was having its negative side and I had to work even harder to be at that high standard my peers were thinking I was.

True, books know how to create an aura around those who open them often. If you do, before long, you would know.

TAKE A TREK

I have been used to walking long distance. I even had a tag around me for that. My friends nicknamed me Philipilis, a replica of the Grecian Philipilis. I found myself under the circumstance that life offered to have the prerogative of enjoying the huge benefits of trekking.

When I speak to my students about taking a long trek at least once a week, they laughed it off as some impossible task that I was asking them to do. Why should someone think of taking a trek over a long distance when there is public transport? What relationship does trekking have with passing examinations. They were cynical about my offer. I needed to make them see from my angle.

I try as much as possible to walk long distance at least once a week. What actually necessitated this are.

- **The need to stay fit.** Any serious student has to stay fit to study. When I walk long distance, I exercise my body and mind. I release pathogens from the body by

the sweat that pours out. The brain tends to walk effectively when it is subject to a mental reawakening that comes with exercises. I hardly fell sick however tedious school work was.

- **The need to absorb my surroundings.** When I walk long distance, it's often an opportunity to marvel at how change is happening. I discover new things very often and it gives me the privilege to mentally reassess my ability to analyze and produce quickly solutions to problems in society which my academic leanings can help me proffer.
- **The need to increase my mental capacity.** Sincerely, there has been medical proofs to the belief that exercise can help increase our mental capacity. Is trekking actually an exercise? Yes it is. The more we engage in exercising our body; we develop an increased ability to think. Our analyzing capacity improves remarkably and difficult sums become mincemeat.
- **To lose unwanted fat.** I don't know if you have observed this along with me but I have observed that those who do very well in examinations are not often

fat. It's actually rare to see a fat person come tops in class. Fat actually causes drag and becomes a burden for even the serious student who wants to succeed. The reason is that fat persons are susceptible to sleeping for so long and they easily get tired. When we walk out the fat, we become smart enough to take the responsibilities of the day in one swipe. Reading and preparing for our examinations will not become a problem.

- **The need to allow the production and continuous flow of blood.** Taking a walk could increase blood metabolism. The heart tends to work better and blood flows with ease. Heart attack becomes less of a problem. When the body produces and transmits blood effectively, it allows for the calmness of the mind. This does propels the brain to work effectively because of the effective flow of blood around it.

Often when I take a cross country walk around my city, I feel a sense of youth arrive. I study changes in my environment and even find a way to solve the problems that come around. As a thinking man, I know some of the best ideas are not the ideas gotten in the comfort of our

homes because that's not actually where the problems are. The problems are on the street. If we don't get on the street and look out for them, we will not get them.

I think the dearth of ideas by our scientist and engineers especially is because most of them have not entertained the benefit of taking the long walk around where they reside. There are many problems on our streets that bright minds could work out in their projects at school and see how to help society overcome those challenges. We constantly wait for foreigners to produce inventions based on their own experiences and local needs and import them here to apply them to solve our problems without tweaking them for our own effectiveness.

If our academic scholars at the universities understand that they don't need to browse the internet for projects, that they just have to walk round their cities for problems they could solve, our nation will indeed be a better place.

It's mind blowing a feeling that could arrive when you have a grasp between what you study at school and how it affects society. My interaction overtime has revealed that many students get to school only to come out saying that they never saw the relationship between what the

teachers or lecturers taught at school and real life. The truth is they are often wrong. They just never took a walk around to discover that all the scientific principles being taught at school actually find use in everyday life, only that the comfort of life eases that knowledge off.

I am very particular about taking a long trek around even your immediate environment. Businessmen can only find opportunities in a location when they walk around the location and see what isn't available which they think can be of market value. The boundless opportunities that abound in business appear mostly to those whose eyes will see from a slower pace than the everyday bus or taxi transport can afford.

From experience, I have observed that those who actually have a full grasp of what the lecturer or teacher teaches and can align those thoughts with their environment find it easier to store knowledge as compared to those who are incapable of relating what the teacher teaches with what they see around them. Trekking provides that platform for the interaction that is meant to aid the store of information and the capacity to remember them during

examinations. Information stored in object form can easily be remembered when we can visualize the object.

Trekking shouldn't be a difficult task if one desires to get ahead with remembering for the purpose of writing examinations. Just take a walk and make it solemn. You can easily do some of those minds and brain probing on the go and it is easier when you are walking.

I must stress that such treks should be leisurely done. Don't expect it to be easy a task at first. You have to push till it happens just the way you want it i.e. until you succeed in your examinations.

FIND THE READING TIME THAT BEST SUITS

I personally had this challenge when I began searching for how best to read, understand and pass examinations.

Because I had problems in my first year at school, I came into the second year with a determination to succeed and deal with my lecturers. I needed to look out for those who were already making headlines in our first year which wasn't farfetched.

I discovered that each high flying student I checked was doing things that were unique of them. I'll talk about the reading time here because it deserves mention and should be stressed that our brain clock works differently.

How do I know? At my first year in school, I began reading vehemently round the clock, but my results didn't show I was actually reading. I wasn't assimilating what I was reading. My result turned out poor so I caught up with my

mates who were faring better. I did not actually tell them my goals but I had the intent that by hanging with them what they do could rub off on me.

One of the students I joined alliance, a young man by the name Lagos had the habit of reading from 8 am when the library opened to 8.pm when the library closed. I was actually dazed because I couldn't. I couldn't stay on my books that long even though I managed to try when I joined him.

I opted to join another wagon when I couldn't cope with Lagos. He was the night owl Amos who read 8pm to 7am. I caught up with him but I observed that by 12 am I was fast asleep while he kept reading only to wake by 6.am to discover it is already morning. I always left the night class with everyone having the impression that I had read through it. I was nicknamed professor. It was a great impression though as it helped create my aura and made people think I was studious but it didn't just work for me because I ended up wasting my time.

I observed the tall lanky Maria the lady whose story I had begun to share at the introduction and she spent only the evenings reading till when the library closes every day. I

always saw her at her corner in the library and you'd find her at that particular time. I had a problem here too. I just could not use the library effectively because I was easily distracted by the plethora of books that my mind wandered into every one.

Each of these persons was peculiar in the time they chose to read and they were very comfortable that time. I knew somewhere I had to find the right time when my brain was most effective. I observed that at the period of the day when our brain is most efficient, we could do so much that time than the rest of the day when the brain isn't functioning at its maximum.

I began to experiment with studying times till I discovered mine.

How did I experiment?

You sure want to undertake this experiment. The reason is because it will save you the stress of having to read when you just don't have to.

- I always suggest students start reading very early in the day say around 5am. It's best then because the brain is still fresh from sleep and has the capacity to

absorb. This is for those who love to keep their nights for their sleep. I recognized I loved to sleep but I had to make up for my sleeping time during the night so I woke up early in the day and began to read before I ran for lectures. I love students starting with this experiment because it's the easiest any serious student who wants to succeed can do.

- Next try 6pm to 9pm in the evenings. This is especially for those who are free in the afternoons to take a siesta. I expatiate on the need for rest later on. At 6pm, the atmosphere is calm and conducive for study
- Next, try the 12am-3am system. This works especially if you have spent a good time at school with the lecturers and then you have the late hours of the day for good rest before jumping to reading. I suggest that you read for three hours first before increasing to longer times. The goal is not to read for long but to understand so much within the shortest time.
- Then finally try the 12pm-3pm time frame. This is especially for those who are often free in the afternoons.

I have observed that the body tries to adapt itself and finds time by itself when it can relax for gainful thinking however tight the schedule around it has being. It is that time you are actually on the lookout for. Some person have that time for an hour, some two, some three depending on how stressful their daily activities.

The body knows that at a certain time, you should be busy at active work so it calms its nerves for mental studying work till later on when you have rested. It always finds a way to adapt in such a way as to get you rejuvenated and refreshed. How do I know? The times when I had lectures from morning through to evening, It was hardly possible to understand what I read when the lecturers were not in class. This was because my body adapted to receiving lectures only during that period. I would always return home to sleep only to wake up early the next day for study.

As my years in school increased and I had more free time and fewer courses, my body began to adapt to a new reading calendar. I found out that between time 11am and 1pm were just great for personal study, because the mornings were always free off lectures.

Knowing the time I understood most helped me shelve the other task away from that time. I ensured when it's just that time for personal study, I was at it. I always had a book around so that if I was doing something else, I'd just pick it up and read. The actual time that worked initially was 5-8am and it was just fine until I began to have more time and then also began to discover that there were other factors that affected my studying ability. I discovered I could not focus for long when I study.

I have said in an earlier section of this book that I often can't stay on a book for so long. You may have the same problem too. Not everyone can stay on a book for so long as one hour. It takes development overtime. The reason is sometimes hormonal, or distractions around or the presence of other task that also need your attention.

The next section of this book will reveal what I do to help me focus.

HOW TO STAY FOCUSED

I had struggled with staying focused even when I tried to read for so long. I needed to help myself if I had to make any breakthrough with studying but it was difficult trying. Each time I tried to break the one hour barrier while reading a particular course, I couldn't but I needed to cover the textbooks or materials that was expected of me. I struggled with this till I discover what just suit me.

My classmates were doing better in this respect. They could spend the whole day on one course and even finish large sections of a textbook. That wasn't the case however for me. I did not even understand most times what I was reading. I had a personal weakness. I discovered that if I had to understand a thing, I would have to read it over and over again. I wasn't gifted like a close pal James who had

the fast magnetic brain. Yet, I could not stay focused to finish even a page.

I decided that since my brain easily flies, that it was beneficial that my focus also flies, meaning I'd be setting multiple goals every day for my wandering mind. I arranged myself around lots of books, reading each one and everyone as the muse arrived for them. I understood that my brain did not allow for gulp reading but it did for little, little over a period of time that amounted to much. If I could read little of this subject, that subject and this subject within the period of three hours I would have done as much as covering a section of a book that would have still being done within the hour.

I knew my predicament was delicate. I needed to be a high flier and I was creating the impression that I was but I was having difficulty understanding the sums. No one would believe me if I said I did not understand. I just needed to make a way around it. I needed to read as many times as I could but as slowly too if I was to compete with my very knowledgeable friends who had magnetic brains.

I always had many books around me so that I could pick them at ease. When I initially started out trying this

strategy, just like doing anything new for the first time, it was difficult. However continuous persistence saw me develop a much stronger focus. I knew where my drive was and I knew what portion of the class was where I wanted to be. I knew if I had to get there, I had to work so hard.

The system actually worked for me. Little by little, with each passing day, the materials that looked gigantic became mincemeat. Yes I did not understand fast but because I focused on getting the task done, I kept at it returning every time to where I had begun. I still have to read over and over and over again to understand when I have to read but I am not deterred because I can take it easy one step after another till the result is achieved.

The truth remains that there has to be a high degree of focus, if you will make any headway studying especially for examinations. After my first year and I observed my gross product was below the target I had set for myself, I rushed to the notice board to check if there was any hope I could still make a second class upper. My CGPA was far below average and it would have taken a miracle to raise it to the point where I wanted it to be. I however knew what I

wanted and that was a CGPA of 3.5 and above. I just had to focus.

Every person who wants to pass examinations with ease must learn to draw inspiration and study tenaciously even if it takes being slow. Most students have learning difficulty not because they are incapable of actual learning but because they think they should know all immediately and roll on to something else. They lose patience and soon give up when all they expect to know do not get straight into their heads.

Focus allows space for slow and steady but sure upward movements. Only a few persons are so gifted with the magnetic kind of brain. Most persons though have to develop their own capacity slowly and painstakingly. They need the focus attribute to keep them going through the rigorous nature of the learning process.

Spending long hours at our books is very difficult especially for those who have not developed the virtue when they were younger. It doesn't seem easy a task even sitting with a book for an hour. I always suggest that one begins with just holding a book for as long a time as possible. Keep a book around you always even if you don't read. It's easier

that way because it helps you increase consciousness that there is a book that you have to read even if you don't know how to read it.

The farther away from a book, the farther the book moves away from you, the nearer you are to a book, the nearer the book comes to you. It's a principle that actually works. I've had a couple of friends who buy textbooks but who don't understand the workings in them however they just keep staring at it. Somehow by continuous staring, something could just pop into their brain. If our books are not open, they cannot be read.

The first act is having a book open, the next is staring at least for as long as you can and then follows reading. When I was little, my dad would always require that we read through till late in the night. I didn't like it because I always had to read after strenuous home chores. What we did then was just to place the books on the table and look into it hoping and praying that my father goes to sleep. Somehow though, something interesting always popped up that kept my interest on the book for longer.

The need for focus especially when we read for examinations cannot be overemphasized. When preparing

for examinations isn't time to begin to read every Jack and Jill book. It's a time when we gather all we have been taught through the term or semester into our brains. You strictly focus on what you have been taught and the region of the course or subject content for the term or semester.

Some persons read out of the scheme because either they were not in class to make notes or they got carried away with studying that they over read. Either way doesn't pass examinations. Because examination arrives from what has been taught, reading beyond the scope stretches your brain beyond what you should know for the examinations. I am not saying it isn't good to read as wide as possible. It's best of students but this should not be during preparations to pass examination or when reading for the purpose of examinations.

SIT DOWN

Students are not exempted from the rat race syndrome. If you get into any higher institution, you will observe the continuous movement of scholars from one part of the institution to another. There is a belief that we should be moving and if there is no movement of scholars, the university environment is considered odd or cold.

I had that notion too that I had to get moving. I had to know the happening places around town and the campus and I needed to feel the pulse and know the latest happenings. The time however it took to get this accomplished could have been used to study hard for my exams.

There is the temptation to always be on the go. It seems to be the in thing that one must be here or there or even everywhere. We are never tired of going but we seem to get tired of sitting. Sitting down for so long isn't fashionable. The latest designer wears reveal themselves

when the wearer stands, the most beautiful of ladies are only fully appreciated when they stand. Standing seems much easier and most appreciated.

In spite of all these eternal wrangling that pushes us to want to be on the go, those who actually succeed and pass examinations have to sit down longer than normal. You will need a new friend “chair” to partner you for this exercise. Mr. Chair is the secret behind those who pass examinations. He provides the platform to drag you to a position for gainful study. If you can’t sit, you can’t study.

My personal experience has been the platform upon which I have written this work. I loved football and spent most of my youthful time at it. The times I sat down were when I was either eating or watching television or when I chose to sleep. I was popular all around my little town because I had being to everywhere around her. That wasn’t however what I needed to pass examinations. I needed to sit down for longer and this time with my books.

The pressure to succeed and pass examinations was hard on me. My father was a diehard success enthusiast. I just must pass my examinations convincingly or head somewhere else. He had even offered me an option. It

actually dawned on me during my senior highschool days that I had been wasting all my time playing away when I should have been sitting and studying.

For the first time, I eloped desire to use the library. This happened only after my teacher had commented about my playful nature in class on my report sheet and I received the beatings of my life from my dad at home. From then, I began to sit more often. I sat during breaks in school and during free periods with my books. My brain was still developing and it was a bit a challenge for me but I sat down at my book for the first time. I interacted more often with my school library even though most times I read way out of what I should have been reading. The more I read, the more I knew. Yet I had the challenge of sitting for so long. Till now, I don't enjoy sitting so long but I've learnt to sit anyway because that's the secret to successful people.

A preacher shared a personal true life story to his congregation. He had failed to measure up in his academics through his lifetime at high school. He could not read. One day however, he met a friend who told him that he would help him with reading. The first advice this friend offered him was "sit down." It didn't seem possible that he

could sit for long because he was used to being busy moving from one act to another. But then he sat.

I've understood overtime that those who sit more will sooner be made to stand more and have people stand for them. Those who rush to stand will be forced to sit because they were unprepared for the responsibility of standing right. Standing is a huge responsibility and it requires one becoming an authority, this authority which only comes when one sits to study.

The benefits of sitting are enormous

- It provides a relaxed state for learning. It isn't easy reading a book while standing. Some people assume they can read on the go. Well today's technology allows for on the road study with listening devices but we are aware too that most of our study materials are in book formats. It will look weird to have a book on one's face while walking under the heat of the sun.
- Thinking is quite easier being relaxed. The sitting position allows for that ease of thinking that produces the kind of result that is intended. It is not that one cannot think well while walking but when one is relaxed analysis of difficult sums becomes even easy.

When one stands, it means it's time to apply that knowledge.

- Sitting allows you stay longer at a position for adequate time to study.

That moment you are thinking you just have to jump to that next act, just take a seat and sit. You don't have to rush. That next step requires you to just sit, relax, listen and read.

THE BEVERAGE ADVANTAGE

When I was little, cocoa beverage and milk was scarce commodity in homes. We scarcely had it in our home and when by chance it found its way in, it never lasted because we were always anxious to have it in every meal. My peers from the rich side of town had it on their dining tables and they always looked desirable and maybe more sound compare to those of us on the other side (the poor side).

A friend informed me about the benefits of taking chocolate beverages. He said that there were nutrients that the beverages contained that could help me become better than I actually was at my academics. I never believed it because I assumed it was mere adverts to draw customers by those companies producing the beverages. He said he wouldn't mind spending his last money to get a little sachet every day.

Over time, I have come to accept it as true that taking beverages helps the brain develop. Education scientists have revealed these beverages contain certain micro and macro element that spur the development of the brain.

I talked to a set of students about taking beverages. They laughed it off giving me contextual examples of persons who take them every day and have seen no change.

If you've being taking the beverages and there seems to be no change, there is chance you are not opening your books.

I'm not stating that taking beverages is a condition for success and I am not concluding on that. Taking beverages has the capacity to improve your brains capacity because of the nutrient contained in it. I had watched a research carried out by some Nigerian scientists at the University of Benin in Edo state Nigeria. They managed to develop a procedure for imputing what they called micro and macro elements in the right quantity, elements such as zinc, sodium, aluminum into the brains of morons to make them normal thinking person. They succeeded at treating a number of such problems. I discovered that those elements were also available in the beverages sold around

town. They concluded that dullness was because of the deficiency of some of these nutrients.

It is difficult to believe this when we look at those who afford these beverages and yet there are no corresponding changes in their performance. I observed that the problem isn't the capacity of the brain that is very well empowered by this beverages but the underutilization of the brain.

I know the difference between not taking beverages and taking them. I have observed that it actually works. I observed that any time I took a cocoa beverage, I am always refreshed and my vitality returns. I tend to work faster and better than without it and over time I look healthier doing much work than I used to.

I noticed that companies which engage in challenging brain and energy consuming tasks give out tins of milk and cocoa powder to help their workers stay strong, healthy with high mental vitality. These gives credence to the fact that beverages could help keep the brain fresh and active.

Beverages do not displace good food but it supplements for the nutrients that may have being lost during the process of cooking our food. Again, you must understand that good food is priority to developing the brain's

capacity. We are taught to eat balanced foods i.e. foods that contain all the six classes of food. The next chapter will show you how good food is important to staying bright and brilliant. Those who actually eat right develop their brains and do very well at examinations.

What goes into our body has the capacity to completely change how fast our brain works. What you truly need is a beverage advantage.

MIND WHAT YOU EAT

Passing examination or doing well academically is and can be influenced by the food we eat. A hungry man is often angry and this affects how he concentrates on his books.

First thing first, have food to eat. Most students in the third world face the dilemma of what to eat. Many go to school with empty stomach. I had my experience. Many times I went to school empty and observed that before it was noon, I was beginning to feel weak and tired. I couldn't concentrate on studying as I should because my body refused to cooperate with my passion for my books. At the end my result showed the difference. From when my finance improved and I had food to eat when I wanted it, my concentration improved.

Here is what happens. When there is no food in our home, our mind wanders away each time because either the worms in the stomach are hurting or you are thinking of where to get the next meal. It's a difficult scenario when

this happens. This takes away our focus and concentration and distracts us such that reading or studying becomes a difficult task. To be a successful student, there must be food enough not just to eat but to be filled.

Becoming a successful student however does not just depend on eating food. We have to eat right. We are taught to eat balanced diet. Balanced diet is meal that contains all the six classes of food. It is sad however that most folks in the third world hardly afford quality meals that contain these classes of food. It is necessary to note that eating right may not cost so much. Students are often advised to take meals that contain so many vitamins and to avoid foods containing fats in order to spur up the development of the vital parts of the brain, the cerebrum.

Proteinous food also helps to develop tissues that help the body fight against diseases. It is necessary that the body develops tough tissues to develop antibodies against sicknesses that arrive as part of studying. Carbohydrate containing food helps the body to maintain strength to withstand tough reading times. Water is a necessity to allow the building of blood and the transportation of necessary vitamins and nutrients across the body. Salt is

necessary to supply macro elements into the body as well as to stop the body from giving off too much water. It is necessary that we manage what we eat in order to allow our body the strength and capacity to develop.

Most times as students, we feel those who should eat right are those who come from well to do families or those who can afford it. Well, eating right is affordable. Everyone has each a piece of cloth, what we individually do is to cut it to our sizes. You can cook balanced meal with a dollar and some other person may have two to spend on one meal. Another may have three.

During my years at the university, I hardly cooked because I loved it fast. My friends however cooked and dined eating the best meals. I had more money than they did but they ate better balanced meals than I did because they knew what I never knew. I was always this guy on the move always thinking I had no time while my friends who were my classmates had all the time. I ate some of the best meals in their rooms while they never ate one in mine. I had more money, but they knew that eating right was a necessity to keep them going.

I always laughed at my peers then who gave their time to cooking and eating. I thought they never knew why they were in school. I thought that the university was for those who would devote 24 hours to their books. That wasn't true however. Whoever had helped me develop that mentality was wrong. It was actually a poverty stricken mentality I had developed just because I was short of funds during my early days at the university.

I stayed with a cousin during my first year and he was the eating type. He loved to cook and he had no money to manage his food hunger. He always collected money from me and I didn't like him much because he always talked so much about food like it was the most important deal in life. He would tell me that if he dies, his academic pursuit would be useless and that he could go ahead to get even higher degrees if he manages to get over today's hunger. I thought he was insane but now I know he knew what he was talking about. After many years in the university and out, I know very well that our stomach has to be filled to make meaningful progress in life else we will be making two steps forward and five steps backwards.

Now I know I just have to eat to make my study meaningful and I know I don't just have to eat but I have to eat right too.

STUDY FOR APPROVAL

Some years ago I pastored a campus church at the university. I had students who honestly depended on biblical inspiration to succeed. One passage that often came to mind was this one “study to show you are approved, a work man which needed not to be ashamed”. Each time I came across this passage, I realized that there is an expectation of any student who wants to study to pass examination to study to attain approval.

When one looks at the word approval, the thought arrives that we are trying to get the approval of people to know we are actually hardworking. Well, getting approval could be in this light. I spoke to a group of students I had prepared for matriculation exams. I shared with them the personal experience I had when I was preparing for the same examinations many years back. I had read my books till people around me bore witness that I was actually studying.

I told the students that if people don't know they are reading, then they are not actually reading. I sacrificed to buy books and then I studied every time I could just to ensure I was prepared. I read everywhere and every time. I didn't care about who noticed but they noticed that I was putting in serious effort to succeed at the examinations. The actual approval though does not come from those who are watching but from the examiners who had designed the examinations.

When a laborer works at the factory, he waits for the supervisor to come over, inspect and give approval for the work done before it is transmitted for onward delivery. It's the same with passing examinations. You have to labor to study while the examiner examines your input at studying and your output on the examination sheet. Your goal as a student is thus to impress the examiner.

One Important thing to note is that you look at being approved by the examiner first before starting the studying. When you know the goal, you begin to work and walk towards it. Many students go ahead to study without any focal objective in mind. Normally, the supervisor has approval ratings which he gives to different level of work.

The examiner also has different approval grades which he gives to the student. It is thus important that before the student begins to study, he looks ahead to the approval grade which he hopes to have. This will spur him to put in effort to achieve it.

When we write examinations the goal is not just to pass the examinations but to obtain the certificate at the end of the program that requires the examination. The certificate is what proves you have actually studied. It is the approval that shows the knowledge had being obtained. In our academic environment however, the result does not prove the study. There are many first class graduates who are short of the knowledge to be qualified to have gotten first class while there are those who managed to come through at the bottom of the class are known to be so knowledgeable of their subject that job supervisors often query why they never made good grades at school.

Many students pursue grades ahead of knowledge and sadly, they are proved wrongly. There is actually no approval for such people even if they make great grades. Grades aren't knowledge and the true test arrives when

there is a need to show the knowledge that had being obtained at school.

Being approved is a dual function. You are approved first at school and then you get an approval outside school. Those who fake approval will certainly hit rock somewhere where they will be expected to prove the knowledge they have obtained. The crowd may consider grades ahead of knowledge but those who become valuable are those who are knowledgeable.

My classmates and I found ourselves in such an environment. Some of our lecturers looked out for what we could offer financially ahead of our getting knowledge. Sadly we fell into their trap and most of us saw no need to get knowledge since money could pay for the grades. Guess what? It was a trap. Soon we all finished school and most discovered they could not fit into the knowledge requiring environment of engineering. Some of us had to go get extra courses at extra cost to fit.

What I'm actually saying is that there is a need to put knowledge first ahead of approval. You will certainly be approved when you get the right knowledge. Study first, then the opportunity to show what you have will arrive

and then you will get the approval of those who should approve. The other way round is disastrous and will be detrimental to you.

Be sure to study and be approved.

BEAT YOUR TEACHERS AND LECTURERS

Every great lecturer expects his students to know much more than he does. Well, great lecturers are always working on themselves to improve and stand ahead of their students. They work so hard to pass complex information in the simplest ways for the students to understand. These lecturers are scarce though so students often come across those who are not worth the onus.

The fact that you think your lectures or teachers lack the capacity to teach you doesn't make you less knowledgeable or as they are. You have the right to compete, challenge and beat your lecturers. Even the best can be challenged.

Students who want to do well at examinations must aim to do beyond the bars of their teachers. Their teachers are great but teachers always try to place limits on their

students, I mean most. No teacher passes as much knowledge as he knows no matter how good he is in his subject matter. I learnt that the hard way.

When I was at school, I assumed my lecturers would pour everything at us. We were often advised to make jottings and listen attentively to the lecturers. It was good advice that time. However soon I observed that the advice was inadequate. When the exams arrived and we were jolted by the quality of questions that were a far cry from what the lecturers had taught, I knew my lecturers expected much more than they could offer us. I soon discovered that those of us who depended on their fairytale lectures would end up with “F”. We needed to up our game and study beyond what the lecturers offered to be even able to pass the lecturers’ examinations

My friend who spent more time at the library while we had perfect lectures from our lecturers often did better. I never understood why? I thought he was doing something else that I wasn’t doing. He always dared to leave the lectures classes and believed that he had the capacity inside him to challenge the lecturers. He was right. The time he spent at

the library was more valuable than the time most of the other students spent at the lecture rooms.

You are young and have a brain that is still fresh. You don't have to look up at your teachers for everything. They don't have as much time and brain to study as you can and even if they have that time, they won't study because their time is far spent. You have the capacity to challenge the lecturers and do beyond them.

There has to be a personal desire to acquire knowledge from any other resource other than your lecturers. Thank God there is variety of mediums these days; the internet, textbooks etc. Your lecturers never had the same opportunity in their time and they did as much as they did. You too have the huge capacity to do much more than they do.

Your lecturer and teachers don't have ten heads. By the way, they expect that you will be able to pass their capacity. Even those who are money conscious expect you to know much more than you know and most fear you even know more than they do.

Strive to make the best of yourself. Your lecturer and teachers are not the standard. Make yourself the standard.

MAKE USE OF YOUR PEN AND JOTTER

All through my years at secondary school, I never learnt the art of studying but I had noticed one attribute with my mom who is an academic scholar. She had lots of A4 papers which she folded in some way and wrote down everything she read. I never asked her why and that was my undoing. If I did, my studying habit would have improved and I would have had immediate success at the university.

When I got to the university though, I had trouble developing the best studying habit that suited me. I had a challenging first year and however hard I tried, my result turned out poor. I was quick to recognize the best students in class after our first year and I quickly began to attach myself to them watching and trying out what they did.

I noticed this attribute amongst all of them. They each had a way of making new notes from the lecturers' notes or their personal studying textbooks. They developed thorough dedication to writing everything out the best way they'd understand. One of them was Amos, he would often rewrite the notes afresh in his exercise books using very small writing fonts. Another was Lagos, Lagos made key points with bullets and arrows to direct him to their meanings. Nathan had a penchant for using A4 papers as his jotting paper. He'd divide the papers into two and make use of very small fonts. Everyone each had a unique way of rewriting what they had been taught. I began to try out the techniques and soon I developed one that worked for me

I tried my hands first with using notebooks. The challenge I had was actually taking care of the books. They'd go missing many times and I'd have to buy new ones. I knew I was a good failure there and I'd have to start afresh making notes. I decided that using notebooks wouldn't work. I began to make use of short papers which I carried with me everywhere, in my pockets and inside my textbooks. The technique worked and soon my grades

improved and I joined the ranks of those who were looked up to.

Studying without writing is no studying. It's like writing without pen. It's not possible. You will have to learn to write while you read especially if you want to keep the information for a much longer time. There is a huge relationship between the hands, the eyes and the part of the brain that supports academic brilliance.

There are some persons who claim they just read and it goes straight into their brains. If you check their results you will observe that they are around the average students in class. Those who do excellently well are those who know that the pen is a very powerful tool along with the jotter while studying.

I noticed that all the top students in class had a jotting culture that helped them remember everything they read. I also joined them too because I discovered on time.

Making notes may be time consuming and tasking. It helps, especially because there is a certain pace at which reading becomes studying. When we write while we read, we keep that pace and we can easily look through for the salient

points rather than going over the text book for a fresh study.

Again, when we make notes while reading, we are able to use words that we can easily remember and that are part of our everyday vocabulary than the one offered by the lecturer or textbook. It also makes us connect what we are studying with things we could use to remember maybe mnemonics or even living or non-living things.

Studying is more than just picking the book and reading, note taking while studying helps to kindle a desire to also make researches and to know more beyond what is available. It also ensures that salient points that should be noted are discovered. Reading just orally doesn't count for much because you may end up not remembering even the major points made in the passage. You will easily discover the major points and important points within a passage when you take notes.

Making notes also helps to provide you with an easily accessible picture arranged by yourself. It's difficult knowing where a particular problem has answers in your textbook using your mind's camera because the images of the texts in the textbooks are blurring. When you write,

the picture easily comes to bear in the mind especially during the examination hall.

Writing helps you create mnemonics that will help you.

Those who just read won't know the usefulness of mnemonics. Mnemonics helps you summarize large information in a unique coded pattern which only the writer knows the meaning. Once the scholar sees the codes he is able to detect what he has studied and stored under it. Using mnemonics is a topic for another chapter.

Just know that when you actually want to study, your face must be on your reference text, pen must be on your hands and then on a book or paper.

USE TITBITS AND MNEMONICS

When I had discovered the power of making notes with my pen and paper, I took to it trying to do what my peers were doing. I did not like the idea of recopying my notes like some of my other friends were doing because I wasn't good with keeping notebooks. I carried along short papers so these papers had to contain enough information in them to keep my brain cracking.

Though I used little fonts while writing, I wouldn't have been able to carry all the ideas in the book. I desired to be a highflying student but the reading style applied by my classmates wasn't making me work at my very best. There was no me around them. I needed a system that just suited me and I could do best with my lifestyle.

My major problem, which still is today is that of studying for so long. I hardly spent more than one hour on my

books at one time. I read, take a walk, rest, read, play a bit, and read. I wasn't and I am still not a book worm. I'm sharing these because you don't have to be a book worm to be the best in class or pass any examination. I knew a couple of book worms who read their books from cover to cover and were not part of the top half of the class. What they never knew was actually how to study to pass examinations.

I knew that I did not need to be a book worm to pass my examination. I just needed to know what worked for me. I needed to know how to balance work, play and rest in such a way that would suite me. My friend Amos never read during the day, another friend Lagos never read during the night. They knew where their strength laid and seized it.

Because I made use of little notes, I learnt to use tidbits and mnemonics. I leant the principle while studying a book by Brian Tracy "the psychology of learning". I learnt how to make a letter mean so much more than it is by placing images around it with a key word. I actually asked myself series of question. One of the question was "how did our teachers in nursery school teach us that we remembered

so much without any notes?” They’d teach us A for apple, B for ball etc. and anytime A was mentioned, what came to our head immediately was apple.

I thought that I could lesson a full note into just a word. I did this. Every topic has keywords. I noted the keywords and wrote them out then I used the first letters of the keywords to make a new word with each letter of the word representing the key word.

Take this text below for example.

Every time I drive, I check my spare tires and fill them to strength . While driving towards my hometown some time ago, I came to a barrier made by men of the road safety to check for spare tire and other necessities. I had forgotten to replace my spare tires

We are familiar with having spare tires in our vehicles. We are always anticipative of a breakdown and make preparations to ensure in a case when our tire loses strength, when there is no possibility for an immediate refill, the tires can be replaced. It is no problem if tire fail and it is replaced. The problem however is that we have carried that mentality with us.

Too many persons today live their lives with the spare tire mentality. We think our lives have spares so we run recklessly living our lives like it does not matter

Key words: spare, tire, vehicles, lives, mentality, road safety, hometown

Mnemonic: STVLMRH

After reading the text and noted the keywords, I memorize the keywords and then write the mnemonic on my paper. The mnemonic is what I write on my paper and go about trying to remember the words the mnemonic represents.

It worked for me and as many people who have applied it have shared wonderful testimonies of its great help.

Mnemonics helps you remember so much by having to remember just a little.

In the case of tidbits, the whole text is summarized in one sentence like this one.

People run their lives with the spare tire mentality thinking that like cars have spare tires, they have spare lives.

Using tidbits and mnemonics helps you remember for so long what you have studied for years. It may make you

seem like a genius but you did not put in more in input than those who are spending the night reading from text to text.

Try this principle and you'd begin to share your testimonies too.

READ WHERE YOU BEST COMPREHEND

Since I developed the passion to study, I loved it. I spent my extra times in the university library but soon I observed that when I go to study at the university library, I usually do not concentrate because I am always attracted to the plethora of books on the shelves. I often skim through every book on the shelves that attracted my attention that by the time I'm done, the time was far spent.

When I observed my weakness at books in the library, I knew that I had to find an alternative that worked for me. I needed to focus more on passing my test and examinations in school than just reading for the fun of getting new knowledge. I needed to avoid the library if I had to have any chance of passing my examinations. The library wasn't just my kind of place for studying for my examinations

When I joined my peers to night classes, I could not connect with my books because it gave me the ambience of being in a day class. Those nights in the classrooms were actually fruitless. I ended up wasting my time.

I however discovered a little corner of my school that was always quiet, where I spent my time alone. It was actually a deserted section of the school used by my Christian organization during night services and on Sundays but it was always quiet on weekdays. I would go with my books and study using some of the processes I've outlined here.

My friends always wondered what I do when I enter that section of the school every time. They came to assume that my secret to my academic success was right and they would always tease with trying to discover the secret. Of course I took some of them there once or more times. I discovered that when I was in school the only place I managed to make headway studying was only in this deserted corner.

I also had problems studying at home after school. What happened was that I discovered that when I sat at a certain corner of my house under a guava tree, I received so much inspiration to study.

I've heard some people say that they best understand reading on green fields. Some say they find their studying muse at the corners of their rooms, some inside their toilets, others on top of a tree, some in the library. It is only those who make an effort to study who discover where they can make good their studying time.

My experience with some of my peers also revealed the same principle. They had the same initial struggles until they discovered that place where they could make the best of their studying time. One told me he could never join me in the night classes because he was more adapted to reading in the library.

Someone may ask, how about if you live that location and you have to find a new place to read? Keep studying even if you don't interact freely with your studying environment. You will certainly locate a studying location in your new place soonest. If you study as a passion, soon where you study won't be a problem. Your body system adapts naturally once you have decided to pick a book even if you find yourself in a rowdy or not too comfortable environment.

It is recommended especially for those who are just kick starting a reading culture to locate where they know they easily comprehend and keep using that place. They may soon discover they won't require a place to study.

LAUGH OFTEN

I'm often asked why I laugh often. I love to laugh and I've noticed this attribute amongst those who do well at school and pass examinations. They are always happy people who also transfer their happiness to others.

When I started at the university, I had personal problems relating with my peers. I hardly smiled and when I did, it was half baked. This threw those who should have helped me from helping me. Some told me they were scared of me while others assumed I was cunny. It was one of the reasons I had few friends that time and did not know who to meet to solve my problems.

This changed though after I leant I was going to relate with people who were going to be of help to me. My face needed to change structure and how best this change could happen but by learning to giggle or laugh as often as I could. I did not need to attend any laughing school, laughter was in me but it needed to be activated.

I did not know how I'd change from sparingly smiling to laughing audaciously. I assumed it was a difficult task to try out but I tried it because I needed to change my performance at school and outperform myself. I needed to be laughter defined.

It was difficult because I wasn't used to it but I knew a friend who laughed regardless of his difficult situation. His situation was worse than I was and he got through life laughing it away. I watched him closely and envied him. I wished I could free my heart and open it to a happy laughing life. I knew I just needed to hang around him for some time before the lifestyle absorbs me and it did. Daniel was his name and every time I remember him, it's because he laughed often.

How could laughing have changed my grades. It did. My classmates noticed that I was always happy and certainly happy people attract other happy persons. They came roaming around me to help them with their problems. The more problems I solved the more in position to meet other people's needs I became. I had to take responsibility. These responsibly required that I studied more so that when my peers came around, I'd be in a position to answer

their fledging questions. The questions actually came in their numbers.

Many of my friends assumed I was an authority when in the true sense, I wasn't. I was using them as my launch pad, and propellant to enable me even study more so as to help them thereby improving myself too. I made so many friends who were dependent on me for my vast knowledge which I dished out masterly. My friends arrived from the different cadres of my course of study. Yes it improved my ego because I was proud of my feet but I was also able to find me which I sought to develop.

Sometimes my friends ask me why I laugh so often. They just didn't know me when I wasn't laughing. I was glad and I'm still glad today that smiling has stocked with me. These days it's so easy even if I don't have to study my books. I study people a lot and the best to way to have a mind open up to you is to smile and laugh often with them.

Sincerely, laughter even has healing and easing effects.

When you laugh while you study, you ease the brain and let the brain function at a bit higher capacity than it would normally do. Researchers have done extensive research on laughter's ability to trigger improved mental development

and they have concluded that those who laugh often tend to do better mentally than those who don't.

I noticed the change that occurred in my life after I took to laughing. It was huge. I jumped from being unknown in class to being amongst the top five and I could easily have beaten anyone. I attracted all sets of person, the high and the low and I was able to influence them with my new learned lifestyle.

Life is interesting especially to the man who has understood the power to laugh. It is even much more interesting to the student who knows how to read and write his examinations with that giggle on his face. Success arrives often for smiling people. If you see those flicks that denote success, you will often find the men and women smiling and laughing. Success at examinations carries the same demeanor. When success characterizes your struggle at school, you tend to smile with ease.

If you think you've been that happy chap but have never been successful at examinations, look again, you actually have not been seizing on your gift to make good of your studies. Happiness reflects on everything one does and

very much it reflects on how you study. If you study with a happy mien, you'd come out a happy success.

STUDY WITH THOSE WHO KNOW BETTER THAN YOU DO

When I was at high school, studying was quite difficult for me. The reason like you may know is the position factor. Students were less likely to share their knowledge because they assumed you'd be a threat to the position they were seeking. There is this selfish nature around students at high school. But I observed students too who studied together and I noticed that they did far better than independently. I noticed that the best students in class then often hanged around themselves.

I never had a reading partner at high school so I did not know how beneficial this was. I had studied all by myself and struggled with my deficiencies. My high-end classmates wouldn't share their knowledge with those at

the lower half of the class so it only took the very determined student at the bottom half to compete against the top. I was determined enough to face the challenge.

When I admitted into the university, I thought the university was more like the high school where the number one spot was for a limited one person. I made a couple of friends but these persons were actually more dependent on me. Sincerely, they were a drag. I shared the little I knew with them but I never got anything in return. They took from me but never gave. My result was disastrous. The saddening truth was that they had better results than I did. They didn't keep me as their only friend, they had other students in class who they also tapped knowledge from. They ended up getting more and knowing more than I did in my little corner.

After going through a difficult first year, I decided I was going to look out for the better students in class. At least after the first year, students began to note the more serious and brilliant students in class. I noted them too. I began to court them. They were far better than me at how they studied. I wasn't even a good student.

I began to look out for ways to associate with them. I would often go visiting their apartments and ask questions about one or two sums even when I knew the solution. That initial time, they'd say Eke not you, you should know this. I'd feel ashamed but I'd accept it anyway. I observed that each of them that I ran too had a special way they solved mathematical problems. They each studied differently and each had their set of students they influenced. They'd influence me too I agreed with my spirit.

Every time assignments was given, I'd first try my hands on them and then run around each of these better students to see how they go about the problem which they did in a much different way than myself. They'd put me through their way but I never copied their work. By the time I've ran around 3 or 4 persons, I'd turn to my private study and look through the work of these grade A students. These Students were considered too good to make mistakes but I needed to be an original too.

I combined procedures and with personal study, I got my own original solutions which I thought was better. I often assumed that there was chance they could make mistakes

which they sometimes made. My result transformed. From hardly scoring Bs to making straight As, it was astounding. Those friends thought I was like them because they see my original work. They never knew I had taken ideas from them.

Why I'm sharing this personal experience is to let you know that those who want to fly like the eagle first learn to flock with the eagles. While there could be lone stars, stars don't shine brightly alone. They shine brighter in combination with other stars. Most students are shy to share their academic problems with their peers. They keep their challenges bottled up inside them and regret afterwards that they never asked for help when they should have.

I knew a couple of mates who were not even average students but because they associated with those who knew better than they did, they got through the university. Those who thought they were too big to mingle had their wings broken and many of them had a year or two extras.

I discovered the power of association with an acquaintance of mine who kept to himself and never engaged any meaningful academic interaction with our mates. He never

mingled and he was singled out for bad grades. He never asked questions and answers never arrived. Yes, he might have had confidence about his own ability but iron has to sharpen iron. No iron becomes sharp by itself.

I learnt from his mistakes and you too can learn. Don't try to sharpen yourself by yourself. It won't work. You will need another sharp object to sharpen a blunt you. A major quality that must be associated with this process is humility and patience. Its tough having your mate put you through something you should know by yourself and your mate could even decide to put you on wait. It happens and has happened to me a lot of times. You know what you want and that person carries it, just be patient to get it from that person.

The kind of person you associate with at school have the capacity to either make you into a high flying student or make you into a low going chap. All those I looked up to made the top cadre of the class and I joined them. I wasn't the best but I learnt to associate with them and I joined their ranks. If you roam with mediocre, you'd certainly end up as one.

HAVE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR TEACHERS AND LECTURERS

This one could be very difficult for so many students. I never tried this though and most of my high flying friends never did but the best student in class did. That was the difference maker for her. Her name is Maria. She was close to every lecturer and had a good rapport with every one of them. I didn't. My friends and I were too to our books that we were unknown to our lecturers. Our lecturers too never cared to know their students. They only cared about those who came around them.

By the time we had realized this secret, my peers and I could only come behind the girl who chose to stand head high above the rest. I am not suggesting that you go seek favors. It's good you familiarize yourself with your lecturers so that they get to know you and associate with your capacity. Sometimes lecturers tend to assume that the students who had done well in their examination had helped themselves through some shallow means.

During my fourth year at the university, I offered a borrowed course from another department. I had failed at the test that was offered in the course. This propelled me to study hard for the examinations. I attended the lectures faithfully through the few months we had that course and I knew the lecturer quite well but he never knew me. I prepared and wrote the examination on that course with personal satisfaction and conviction that I was going to run away with an A.

Two days after the examination, the lecturer came looking for me. He asked me to see him at his office which I promptly did. Immediately, he asked that I rewrite the exams as he wasn't sure I wrote the exams myself. I defended myself and told him I could rewrite the exams

over and over again. He asked me to go seeing my confidence level. I was later told by my classmates who were closer to the lecturer that he actually wanted to fail me with the thought that I had cheated or seen the questions somehow before the examinations. He was only convinced when he asked about me from a number of my classmates who testified of my academic capacity.

I learnt from personal experience that not familiarizing with the lecturer could be detrimental to my quest for academic success. I had another experience with a lecturer whose course I had to fail because he assumed I had cheated in his course to pass. I had to re-sit the examination the next year.

I've heard lecturers make comments such as "I never knew him or saw him in my class" even to the brightest of brains just to justify the reasons why the students should fail their course. I have also had mates who were favored just because they familiarized themselves with the lecturers. I have always suggested this to wannabe students at the university that they quest early enough for class leadership opportunities so as to have the greater chance of mingling with the lecturers and obtaining favors. This principle may

not work elsewhere but in third world countries like Nigeria where everything is gotten by who you know and whose up there, opportunities as little as class leadership at the university has the capacity transform even the worse students in class the A grade students.

I am particularly persuaded by this principle because I've witnessed it work over and over again during my course year at the university. In our preliminary year, we had a class leader Richard who represented the class. He got favors before the lecturers and he had in his first year a gross product average of 4.56. That was in the first class cadre. My class mates and I were dazed because we were aware of his mental and academic capacity. Even the best students could not manage 3.00 but he outdid them.

We elected another leader Lawson who like Richard wasn't a grade A student. After that year, Lawson's grade had also spiraled from just below 3.00 to around 3.75. It was miraculous and sudden. We revolted and voted again for a new class leader David in our third year. Sadly, my class towed the same line of voting students who had low academic capacity. This was because the serious high flying students never showed interest for the position.

They were too busy to acknowledge that their academic work could have been made easier by seeking to represent the class. David too towed the same line, obtaining favors from the lecturers because he had the privilege of being close to them. His result also moved high. David wasn't even an average student but he joined the fifteen who came through with a second class upper division result. Richard and Lawson could not make the division at the end as they lost that closeness and had to depend purely on their own work

Try to forge a positive personal relationship with your lecturers or teachers. Offer them help where you can. Even the smallest services such as giving them recharge cards, helping them wash their vehicles or taking them to lunch could help foster a good relationship. Your lecturers could even help you with knowhow to solve little problems that you may come across in your textbooks. Some lecturers love having students come around them with problems. They feel those students are the serious ones and help them with solutions to their academic problems. Lecturers also connect with those who students who try offer them one help or the other.

You need those lecturers and you need to love them too. I've heard many students complain that they don't love the lecturer taking one course or the other. There have been proofs relating student performance to whether the students love their lecturers or not. Incredible results have shown that there is huge chance students will not love a subject if they dislike the lecturer.

During high school, my classmates and I had a female mathematics teacher who most of us never liked because she could not speak the English language fluently and had some other challenges. I never disliked her though. It happened that term that a class that students hardly failed mathematics became a class students could hardly get an A at mathematics. That term, only one A was produced of the thirty six students in our class.

Try always not to have a personal grudge or hatred for a teacher or lecturer. Do what you have to do and succeed where you have to succeed.

DO PERSONAL RESEARCH

I've observed that many students don't do personal research. They don't strive to get more information than what they have been told by their lecturers. I've also observed that many lecturers do not keep up to date with the latest information in their field.

Some of my lecturers at the university often bragged to us how they are able to keep the notes that they used in the seventies and eighties and they were using the same notes today in the twenty first century when the world has gone past them. It's amusing how much less than the prevalent knowledge those lecturers know. Most of them are not ready to study or get new knowledge. They keep lecturing the same old notes year in year out.

An argument ensued between my classmates and a certain lecturer over the use of certain materials in a metallurgy

class. I was personally ashamed that my lecturer whose duty it was to give us the latest information on current materials being applied in the automobile world had no knowledge that certain composites were already in use. We argued it over until everyone agreed that we needed to do a research and return with results to the next class.

Any student who wants to stay ahead in this twenty-first century must do all that must be done in the area of constantly getting new information. There is so much out there. So much new information finds its way into the internet every now and then and only the studious research minded student actually knows.

In our modern day, the use of the internet cannot be over emphasized. It's way too important these days. There are so many social sites that help people connect. Studious students have to spend less time on social site and more time on much more informative websites.

Don't accept all that you are told by the lecturer or your classmates hook line and sinker. There is always more information around than they often will share. No lecturer will offer you all that you should know. They actually don't

know all they should know. They also need to be informed. You can be that informant.

There is certain knowledge that I obtained during my university days that I could never have gotten if I never did personal researches. My lecturers never shared that knowledge. Some of them assumed they had to be secretive about the information they share just so that the students could always look up to them in awe. Sadly though, we never did. We never knew they even knew much more than they were telling us.

I've questioned many first-class and other high flying students and they share the same secret of trying to do more than their teachers would offer them. They do not accept all the teacher says as final. Rather they get extra information.

Sometimes new extra information could mean easier way of solving a problem. Increasingly what new researches do is to give us faster better ways of doing our work. We even find similar problems that we are tackling especially through the internet and this gives an extra advantage over the lecturer and the other students who don't.

A colleague of mine boasted about the number of books he had. Well, so many students boast about the number of books they have in their personal libraries. What they don't boast about is the number of books they have read. I too did that. Yes I had an e-library of at least 1000 books but I never read close to 100 books. But I showed off the books to my mates.

Doing personal research keeps you some knowledge distance off your peers. I often bragged about what I knew especially because I was amongst people who never read. The little extra knowledge I had paid off in the way I communicated and I often showed off some new knowledge I came across in my short studies. I was always looked at in awe and that even propelled me to study even more.

The little extra minutes of personal study pays.

STAY OFF SOCIAL MEDIA

There's this trend amongst students. They love to socialize and they love it on the social media sites. You will often find them on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or any of those other social sites. This trend is killing the studying habit of students. Many students who should be spending their time studying now spend most of their time on the net.

Every time I go online on Facebook for example, I find students actively chatting their way. Sometimes I chat along and mock their time waste. Its saddening that the time that should have being used for gainful studying is wasted on gain-less and reckless chit-chat.

It is very disturbing that the internet which should have being used for research and further studies is being wasted on unprofitable communication. So much studying time is

wasted and worthless information is transferred through this mediums.

I am not saying social media sites are altogether bad. They are good for communication when it is well managed. You have to have a time for them. You have to know when and how to use them. The problem however is that students hardly organize their time to know when to use the medium and when not to. They are carried away by the often false stories that are propagated by this medium. Every one minute wasted counts and on social media, it could be full of regrets.

Social media could be interesting but the mistake many students make is that rather than facing their books, they choose to Facebook. Rather than twitting important points from their notes and interacting with their mates, they tweet celebrity news and meet strangers. Some students have being negative statistic of those who have followed strangers to their doom

Even when I am not doing serious work, social media is often a distraction that should be avoided but it just takes my time and keeps me returning to it every time. The

catchy headlines are distracting that they draw attention towards them.

In today's information savvy society, one would ask "is it possible to do without social sites?" the question I'd ask in reply is "why not?" You can practically manage how you use this medium. Think about the negative effects of unprotected sex, the sexually transmitted diseases and the stigma that comes with them. You can as well think of social media in that light especially if it is compromising your studying time.

Any student who wants to do well and go far must disconnect from the trend. They have to learn to use their less busy time doing something that will be beneficial to their academics. A good number of would be successes have had it damaged by the frequenting of social channels. They have met friends who have ended up leading them to their doom.

There is a profitable use of social media like joining groups that support research or encourage the finding of solutions to problems especially in your field of endeavor. The sad fact however is that the social media has being the plotting ground for some of the world's nightmares. Young people

are being recruited through the medium to carry out distal acts such as fighting wars and pushing for gain-less revolutions that have taken human blood and have led to no real outcomes. It is sad that very scholarly minds have fallen prey to these medium and have allowed vain tinkers seize on it to spoil the great future that was so promising.

You have a great future that shouldn't be controlled by the whims of the social media. You can manage to do without it for now till you are through with academic work. This will help you save time and useful energy that you can further direct to your academic. Remember your examination is the only proof you are actually good. Its good you put in all your energy to see it work.

ALWAYS BE PUNCTUAL

Punctuality is the soul of business. Its same with academic work. I have always observed that the best students in school are often the ones who make it to class early. They often are the ones who wait for the lecturers to arrive and if the lecturer isn't in class, they are with their books.

I learnt being punctual from my days at primary school that it became part of me through my days at the university. I would often make the early morning class ahead of my lecturers. Some of them were strict and tough especially with time. They would never allow a student enter the class after they had entered. Some of them seized that to make students fail but some did that to encourage the students to make changes to their time keeping.

I remember I would often see my more serious colleagues either in the classroom or around the classroom block studying their way with some problem. This was always

the chance to meet them and I always seized the opportunity to have them help with some of my problems.

Curriculums of many universities ensure that the only condition for students to write examinations is at least 70% attendance of lectures. Some even go ahead to declare 10% of the grades for attendance. Many times, the grade for attendance has been the saving grace for students. A student who gets say 35 after writing the test and having examinations could always have the extra 10 to give him a pass if he has been punctual. I knew a couple of lecturers who took their attendance immediately they came into class just to ensure those who came after them never partook in the largesse.

Serious students don't joke with their attendance score. However early the class, they would often be earlier. I often had lectures by 7.00 am. While this was difficult, students would often be seen around the class by 6.30 especially with a strict lecturer. My classmates who stayed far from the school community would choose to hang around the school campus till the next day just to attend the lectures and save their grades.

Being punctual requires sacrifice. You might have to miss breakfast sometimes and may have to wake early. Serious students however should form the habit of waking early.

I have this belief about early angels. I have noticed in my little school that the pupils who end up top in class always made it to school early. I've never seen those angels but the belief seems to work with many testimonies to that regard.

Pastors would often talk to their members about the need for them to make it to church early. You might have heard those testimonies of people who made it to church and met with angels. It's true and the same goes for school work and every other business. Those who make it early get the early benefits.

All through my years at the university, I observed that the best students in class were always punctual and just in time for their lectures even when the lecturers seemed to lack depth with their lectures. It is inspiring to note that if you consistently take your lectures serious, it will show also in your personal study. Both work together. Even though what the lecturers say is only a guide, it is good you hear those guides, they could turn out to be the easiest

route to the problems of that course. I've experienced that at least from the lecturers who knew their onus.

This attribute can also rob off in other areas of your life especially in the outside world where you are expected to be punctual at work or for an interview session. Many persons have lost their jobs because they were just one minute late. How about those who made it earlier? Did they have two heads? They showed they were much serious for the opportunity than the one who came latter

How serious you are for a task easily reflects in how early you turn up for it. No one needs to tell the managers you are serious. They know from the time book and this build trust and even give you a great opportunity to have doors open for even greater opportunities.

If you truly want to pass your examinations with ease, make it early to school and your lectures.

THERE IS GOD IN THE MIX

Success will never be complete without the one who gives life. I never had any meaningful success at school until I connected with God. I am a testimony to what change can happen because God got in the mix.

I had often engaged myself with activities at our Christian fellowship that my friends assumed the source of my knowledge was from there. Well, I'd say I was propelled there to reach for the top where only God aims for. I learnt from my bible teachers that all those who associated with God were hardworking and that failing was a disappointment to God. It sure was to those that failed. I didn't want to be a statistic so I worked hard so that God would add his part.

Sincerely, the secret to true success is God. God is the success in our failures. He is anything and everything and he is too successful to ever fail. I'm pragmatic about this.

When I entered the university, I had prepared my mind to put church activities out. To me, I needed to stay away from the church on campus altogether because I did not need any distractions from my academics. I was wrong. God was the necessary distraction I needed to have if I was to make any serious impression at school. After my first two years struggling, I had to find my way to church.

God is capable of doing anything and everything and he owns success. The bible supports us with quotations that can spur up our tendency towards achieving great things. It carries guiding principles and innovative principles peculiar to only God. God is the altruistic success; he is the source of good success.

To be candid, if God is out, it won't be long before what seemingly seems like success begins to crumble. I've learnt that so I add God first and let the success be astounding. If you've been failing, especially if all you have tried doesn't work, you'd always be advised to try God. Try God. Get

God in the mix. Let God take a place first and see why you will not come first.

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