

Take It Slow

My dear Jil,

You are young. Don't take life in gulps. Take it breath by breath. You can't rush life. Life has its own pace. That is one hold life has over us. It is true we say: Do not leave till tomorrow what you can do today. But the corollary is equally true: Do not do today what you should do tomorrow. I do understand you want to accomplish, and that desire is driving you. But if you rush life you will make mistakes. And then your speed is slowed down. You've got to learn to pace yourself, to move sure-footedly in life. It's better than a crazed rush. Think of the man on a Lagos highway driving erratically at top speed to arrive fast at his destination. If he had an accident, that's the end of the journey. Even if it's a minor infraction he'll still be slowed down. And if he kills someone he's mired in trouble for years. He'll need to defend himself against the charge of manslaughter. Our haste can cause accidents. And when we have accidents in life, journeys can come to an end. Even if we survive the accident we would have lost considerable time and momentum.

In the same way, rushing into relationship, or rushing into marriage – such haste have been known to create life disasters. Of course not every rush into marriage ends in disaster, but the probability is high. It's the reality of speed. You're trying to do too many things at once. You're like the Lagos Danfo bus





driver rushing everywhere in one direction. He gets into headstrong juvenile competition with other road users, even when it's obvious there's no basis for one. Take yourself out of senseless competitions. Go at your own pace, face your own programme.

When we rush senselessly, we forget to build capacity for the future we're rushing into. The future will show us up. Get to know yourself. Get to know who you are. Get to know what you want. Get to know what you do not want. It does take some time to know these things but at least begin the journey to self-discovery.

Some things about yourself you'll realise in retrospect. You can't know them except you pass through certain experiences. It's why you need to trust God, to commit your way to the Lord. Life is too large. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths, Solomon wrote.

As per this gentleman, the gap in age between both of you has consequences. His age will always be relative to yours. That's not saying much older man / very young woman configuration can't work. I am however worried by the fact you don't really love him. That much is evident. You're in love with the idea of loving him, you don't love him. You want to play the life role of loving someone, of being responsible for a man.



You're also moved by the fact that he was there for you at the start of your business. That is all well and good but the definition of husband is not "a business mentor." And you don't reward someone with your life just because he did good to you. There are other ways to show appreciation.

Here's the danger in marrying someone you don't love: You'll be making yourself play a role, like an actress. That can only work so far and for so long. The love is simulated, it's not real. It's assumed responsibility. It's the synthetic love of a young woman who wants to be in love, to experience adult love and affair. Life tests the quality of such love. Life tests marital resolve, to determine the caliber and purity of the love we espouse. And life uses a variety of means to test the quality of our love, sometimes through trials and temptations.

When faced with a credible option is when some realise the mistake of rushing into marriage. It's then they discover what they should have wanted. And what they really want. Only then it's too late. They realise they rushed in when their wants were hardly formulated, when their desires had no configuration. Either of two things then happens: they bear the pain in agony and silence, or they begin to punish their partner. The fact he does not deserve the punishment soon begins to trouble their conscience, creating deep conflicts. It's a matter of time before both parties are dragged into depression by the gravitational pull of those inner conflicts.



Marriage requires maturity. And maturity takes experience, and the passing of time. And there is a level of maturity you can't have without going through trial. There are things you can't know in life without the passage of time. Some things can only come with age. A life tempered by trial has a chance to grow kind and compassionate, to seek to understand. It's been there.

When a life of immaturity takes on the big issues of life, it generates foolish life-altering decisions. Sometimes, just a little patience allows life to demonstrate to us haste can be harmful. Someday, you'll look back at life and thank God you didn't take certain decisions. And someday, you may look back at life and regret taking certain decisions. The past can never be perfect. The past will always be full of stupidities, incorrigibilities, foolishnesses... The past is past imperfect.

The problem comes when we wish for perfect pasts. Then we're full of regrets. The past can never be perfect. Judging the past is an exercise in futility. It's a chronicle you can't edit. It's out of reach. But you do have the present to contend with. Try and avoid stupid mistakes, especially in the area of marriage. Nothing is as potent as marriage. It's very deep, and it's a highly spiritual and symbolic quantity. The stupid mistake of today creates the past we deeply regret tomorrow. Marriage is that area you can't afford to make stupid decisions. It requires due consideration. Marriage is not something you rush into. It's not a race.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lene Andersen'.

Your mentor

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