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The Law of The Stretch

I had become dissatisfied with my career at that point. Having started my career in Ibadan and having lived there all my life, I felt there was more. I remember how I felt there was a void within. Outwardly, things looked okay but inwardly, I was a mess.

I knew that if I wasn't careful, I would just settle into a comfortable zone and that may just be the end of my career. Everyone loved Ibadan- the cost of living was low and I had almost everything, at least compared to those within my immediate space.

One of the greatest mistakes you can make is to benchmark your life by those within your immediate space or circle of influence. You will think you're making progress until you get out and see others who will challenge you. And that was what I decided to do.

I saw a vacancy for a role in Lagos and I applied. Up till then, I had never worked in Lagos- save for a few trainings, attachments and banking school.

When I got the role, it was a major stretch for me. I didn't have a place to stay so I had to 'squat' with a friend for 6 months until I could pull resources together to get a studio apartment.

Those 6 months, I travelled to Ibadan every single weekend because I still had my apartment there. So I would travel to Ibadan on Friday evening and come back to Lagos Sunday evening- every single weekend for 6 months.

I got the role of a Branch Manager somewhere in Apapa at that time. I didn't know Lagos and it was my first experience. I recall that on my first day, I got to work by 6am and went round that Branch praying.

The security guards stared at me- I guess they thought what manner of mad man was this■. I was confronted with a situation that stretched my capacity. The truth is that oftentimes, you don't know you have that capacity until you are stretched.

There were days I would go round Apapa with a big diary. I took down the names of every company I could see and their addresses. There was no google map then. I divided those names and addresses between my sales staff and we went out

on cold calls.

I had sleepless nights thinking of how to dominate that environment and lead the branch to profitability. I held sales meetings every single day with my team. I recommended books for them to read.

I hung out with them at a spot called Kingstone Joe then especially when Apapa was blocked. We succeeded and we succeeded BIG.

That particular decision to take on an audacious move signified a major turning point in my life. Human beings love convenience and comfort. We would rather stay with the status quo than leave our comfort zone. We assume wrongly that we are doing well when we can do better.

The Law of Stretch is the reason sales people have their targets increased periodically. That is why audacious budgets are set. If you're not stretched, you can't grow. If you're not stretched, you will never truly know what you're capable of.

So, if you run a business in a small store, stretch yourself by preparing to get a second location. If you're making music in Ibadan, stretch yourself by making a move to Lagos which is the entertainment capital. Don't be comfortable with being a local champion in Akure.

You may be a big fish in a small bowl but in reality, you're a small fish when you get into a bigger bowl. The Law of the Stretch says that your life, business, career, finance or ministry will continue in its current or worse until you apply some force.

There are 3 major ingredients of change you must not neglect anytime your experience them. They are dissatisfaction, anger and pain. They are pointers to what can be done.

Apply some force this year. You're capable of much more.

Is 54: 2 (New Century Version)
"Make your tent bigger;
  stretch it out and make it wider.
  Do not hold back.
Make the ropes longer
  and its stakes stronger"

Bayo Adeyinka

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