



The Torch



Edition #9

Remember, Woman



St Dunstan's
Wives,
Partners and
Widows

By Reese Leyva

Remember, Woman, you were born life giver, miracle creator, magic maker.
You were born with the heart of a thousand mothers, open and fearless and sweet.
You were born with the fire of Queens and conquerors, warrior blood you bleed.
You were born with the wisdom of sages and shamans, no wound can you not heal.
You were born the teller of your own tale, before none should you kneel.
You were born with an immeasurable soul reaching out past infinity.
You were born to desire with passion, abandon, and to name your own destiny.
Remember, Woman, remember you are more than you can see
Remember, Woman, remember you are loved endlessly.
Remember, Woman, your power, and grace, the depth of your deep sea heart.
Never forget you are Woman, divine, as you have been from the start.

Source: Women-s.net

Giving A Shout Out to Women this Women's Month

ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL
You Are Beautiful for the way You Think
You are Beautiful for the way Your Eyes Sparkle
when you Talk about Something you Love
You are Beautiful for the Way You Make Others Smile

Even When You are Sad You are Beautiful to your Soul

I have a physical disability that affects my ability to walk. James, my partner, is a St Dunstaner (war blinded) Come on a journey with me. Take a glimpse at my life. I hope, that it will help you, find the courage, to overcome your own personal obstacles and be a little kinder to those who are different to you.

**Disability need not be an Obstacle to Success.
We are Different not Less
Even though we are Disabled we are Able**

James and I have been in a successful relationship for more than twenty-five years. We have both worked for most of that time, I was recently retrenched and am not working currently. We have travelled, both in South Africa and Internationally.

The things that make our relationship a success are the same as those that make any relationship successful; trust, compromise, humor, and communication.

I recall early in our relationship we were peeling potatoes. James peeled and I check and dealt with any bits he missed. James just wanted to see something, and I just wanted to finish peeling the potatoes. That meant that either he had to wait for me to finish or I had to stop what I was doing, so he could see. It was then that I realized our relationship would always be full of compromise.

As a couple we have found that laughter is the best medicine. Always look for the funny or positive side of the story.

Let me share a true story about us as an example

One day we were at a factory shop looking for clothes. We were standing next to each other and I was looking at the colors and James was feeling some of the fabrics.

I looked over at James and saw he was feeling the shorts of the woman who was standing next to him. (Just to clarify for those of you whose minds went in the wrong direction-he was doing the blind tap tap look)

Me: "James Dear, there is someone in those shorts."

James: "Is she nice?"

Me: "Yes."

The Lady in shorts looked at us both and didn't say a word as she walked off confused. She didn't realize James was blind. Just as James had no idea there was a lady in the shorts he was feeling because she was both still and quiet.

Remember

You have good taste because you chose **him**
(Your Husband/ Partner/ St Dunstaner)

He has better taste because he chose **you**
(You Amazing Woman)

This article is in honor and appreciation of all the Wives and Partners of

St Dunstaners'

ALWAYS REMEMBER

YOU ARE BRAVER THAN YOU THINK

STRONGER THAN YOU SEEM

MORE LOVED THAN YOU KNOW

By Charmaine Delamere

Amazing blind females from Africa who are breaking barriers

by MILDRED EUROPA TAYLOR | Staff Writer October 11, 2018

Yetnebersh Nigussie



Yetnebersh Nigussie is a human rights lawyer — Light for the World

The female Ethiopian lawyer went blind when she was five years but education became a turning point in her life. Her parents enrolled her at the Catholic boarding school for girls with disabilities in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa before becoming one of three women to study law at Addis Ababa University in 2002, where for five years, she had to transcribe audio recordings of her books to facilitate her studies.

Nigussie has since helped establish the Center for Students with Disabilities at the Addis Ababa University and the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD).

The 35-year-old human rights lawyer has won several awards including her favourite, the 2017 Right Livelihood Award, also known as Sweden's alternative Nobel Prize.

The wife with two daughters was awarded 3 million Swedish crowns (\$374,000) which were shared among the three joint winners.

Nigussie speaks on closing the gender data gap and on how to include age, disability and other exclusion factors in 2017 in the video below:

[Video](#)

Taiwo Lawal



Taiwo Lawal is Africa's first blind photographer --- Konnect

That is the **normal work routine for the Nigerian woman, Taiwo Lawal**, believed to be Africa's first blind photographer who is showing the world that passion is stronger than obstacles.

One could say that she defied the odds but for Lawal, she just refused to see them. Having been born blind, a twin and out of rape, growing up was tough for Lawal, as she went through life's difficulties in her home at Ondo State, Nigeria.

"We had no clothes to wear, only panties. People treated us badly, and sometimes, they threw stones at us. We were fed five-day-old food. We didn't have any choice then but to eat it. Now, I can laugh about it because it's in the past," she told **Sunday Punch in an interview**.

For someone who was also ridiculed many times in public places, she could have resigned to her fate but instead, she chose to work on her limitations to make something of herself – joining the community of photographers to challenge those who can see.

Prior to her photography training, Lawal, who believed that having a mind was enough for her situation, learnt a few trades which included bead-making and bag-making for four years. Her road to photography began with Emmanuel Effiong-Bright, the winner of the 2013 Verseidag Bowling Tournament, United Arab Emirates, who discovered her prior to the competition in Oshodi after she asked him to lead her to the bus park.

“She could have gone begging like others but she overcame all that. Our journey took 25 minutes instead of five minutes. But, it has been one of the best 25 minutes of the last 25 years of my life. I saw a blind person who spoke like someone who could see,” Effiong-Bright said.

Through his help and her photography instructor, Seun Akisanmi, Lawal began photography lessons which she initially thought was impossible due to her lack of sight

Akisanmi, who runs the academy (Elophotos) where Lawal took her classes, said teaching her was interesting though challenging.

“One must be extremely patient. Training her is like two to three times longer than that of a sighted person. But I’m also learning from her. I didn’t know how sharp her other senses were, and she always looks happy. She’s a bright student and has learnt a lot. There are some settings we can’t teach her but she can use auto-mode. She knows enough to do a mini-session for someone, which is a good start, and she can take good pictures.”

The 39-year-old whose specialty is in street photography said: “Taking pictures makes me happy. Also, it has helped me forget my past sorrows when some people didn’t appreciate me, and I endured a lot of insults.”

For someone who takes incredibly beautiful pictures despite her situation, this is how she knows she is aiming at a good shot:

“Whenever I take pictures, I know they would be beautiful because I see them in my mind.”

“If I want to take a picture, I would go to where the person is, and feel his location; then I would communicate with the person to sense the direction, as the sound of the person tells me where he or she is.”

Lawal and her twin, according to doctors, had only six years to live at the time of birth but the two have broken all barriers to become a success. Her twin is married with two children and Lawal continues to take the photography industry in Nigeria and Africa to the next level.



Taiwo (Right) at the 2013 edition of Nigeria Photography Expo & Conference — Twitter

She has already met big names in the photography industry such as American Joe McNally and recently, she won an award at the International Day of Persons Living with Disabilities, which was held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. In 2013, the award-winning photographer had her first ever public exhibition that was arranged by **NIPHEC (Nigerian Photography & Exhibition Conference)**.

Her story adds to the many amazing blind people out there on the continent who have overcome their limitations to contribute effectively to society.

Source: face2faceafrica.com

Scientists Discover How Blind People Know So Much About Appearances

By Sarah Sloat on May 27, 2019

"First-person experience isn't the only way to develop a rich understanding of the world."

The philosopher John Locke, who believed that true knowledge of the world could only stem from sensory experiences, thought that blind individuals could never understand the concepts of light and color. Locke, it turns out, was wrong. In a recent PNAS study, blind people demonstrate that they do understand what sighted people process through vision, proving that "visual" ideas don't actually require sight.

In the study published Tuesday, scientists demonstrated how blind people make visual sense of what they cannot see. While previous studies suggested that the most efficient way for a blind person to know that, say, a flamingo is pink, is to memorize that fact, this study demonstrates that blind people instead look at the world like scientists and make sense of the visual world through a catalogue of clues.

"First-person experience isn't the only way to develop a rich understanding of the world around us," co-author and Johns Hopkins doctoral candidate Judy Kim explains. "People often have the intuition that we can't know what we can't see."

This intuition is wrong, as Kim and her colleagues showed by testing 20 blind and 20 sighted adults, all around 30 years old, about their knowledge of animal appearances. The participants were asked to order a variety of animals by size and height and to sort the animals into groups based on shape, skin texture, and color. They were also presented with a group of animals and asked which one was not like the others.

In most cases, the sighted and blind people performed equally well on the test. They sorted the animals in predominantly the same way, and both agreed on which physical features comprised the predominant description of each group of animals. For example, both blind and sighted people described dolphins and sharks to be of similar shape.

What the two groups disagreed about the most was, strangely, the factor that the researchers hypothesized would be the most agreed upon: Color. Sighted participants sometimes had trouble describing the shape of an animal, but they always readily provided its color. Blind people did not. This outcome refuted the “learn-by-description” hypothesis, which posits that blind people learn about objects by hearing the way other people describe them. If this were the case, then the blind participants should have been able to identify color easily, since sighted people seem to always include color in their descriptions.

But color is what blind individuals were least able to identify. And so, the researchers argue that the “learn-by-description” hypothesis must be incorrect and that blind people must gather visual information in a different way: By deducing it from existing knowledge about an object and details related to it.



“In the absence of direct sensory access, knowledge of appearance is acquired primarily through interface, rather than through memorization of verbally stipulated facts,” the scientists write.

In other words, blind people take the scientific approach and infer appearances through other properties like taxonomy and habitat. This strategy works well for features like shape and textures; for example, birds have feathers and wings, so it’s implied that this holds true across bird species. Color is less easy to infer. Since there are a lot of animals that are the same color, it’s hard to deduce that, say, bears and ravens are black, based on the other things you know about animals.

But color inaccuracies aside, the research proves what blind people already know: You can have a rich and accurate sense of the world without actually seeing it.

And sometimes, the approach blind people take actually helps them be more accurate. Here, 55 percent of the blind participants and 20 percent of the sighted participants said that sharks have scales; the majority of that group said they have skin. In reality, sharks have fine scales — they are just difficult to see.

Abstract:

How does first-person sensory experience contribute to knowledge? Contrary to the suppositions of early empiricist philosophers, people who are born blind

know about phenomena that cannot be perceived directly, such as color and light. Exactly what is learned and how remains an open question. We compared knowledge of animal appearance across congenitally blind (n = 20) and sighted individuals (two groups, n = 20 and n = 35) using a battery of tasks, including ordering (size and height), sorting (shape, skin texture, and color), odd-one-out (shape), and feature choice (texture). On all tested dimensions apart from color, sighted and blind individuals showed substantial albeit imperfect agreement, suggesting that linguistic communication and visual perception convey partially redundant appearance information. To test the hypothesis that blind individuals learn about appearance primarily by remembering sighted people's descriptions of what they see (e.g., "elephants are gray"), we measured verbalizability of animal shape, texture, and color in the sighted. Contrary to the learn-from-description hypothesis, blind and sighted groups disagreed most about the appearance dimension that was easiest for sighted people to verbalize: color. Analysis of disagreement patterns across all tasks suggest that blind individuals infer physical features from non-appearance properties of animals such as folk taxonomy and habitat (e.g., bats are textured like mammals but shaped like birds). These findings suggest that in the absence of sensory access, structured appearance knowledge is acquired through inference from ontological kind.

Source: [Inverse](#)

Depression Symptoms and Warning Signs

Do you think you might be depressed? Here are some of the signs and symptoms to look for—and tips for getting the help you need.



What is depression?

Feeling down from time to time is a normal part of life, but when emotions such as hopelessness and despair take hold and just won't go away, you may have depression. More than just sadness in response to life's struggles and setbacks, depression changes how you think, feel, and function in daily activities. It can interfere with your ability to work, study, eat, sleep, and enjoy life. Just trying to get through the day can be overwhelming.

While some people describe depression as "living in a black hole" or having a feeling of impending doom, others feel lifeless, empty, and apathetic. Men in particular can feel angry and restless. However you experience depression, left untreated it can become a serious health condition. But it's important to remember that feelings of

helplessness and hopelessness are symptoms of depression—not the reality of your situation.

No matter how hopeless you feel, you can get better. By understanding the cause of your depression and recognizing the different symptoms and types of depression, you can take the first steps to feeling better and overcoming the problem.

What are the symptoms of depression?

Depression varies from person to person, but there are some common signs and symptoms. It's important to remember that these symptoms can be part of life's normal lows. But the more symptoms you have, the stronger they are, and the longer they've lasted—the more likely it is that you're dealing with depression.

10 common symptoms of depression:

1. **Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.** A bleak outlook—nothing will ever get better and there's nothing you can do to improve your situation.
2. **Loss of interest in daily activities.** You don't care anymore about former hobbies, pastimes, social activities, or sex. You've lost your ability to feel joy and pleasure.
3. **Appetite or weight changes.** Significant weight loss or weight gain—a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month.
4. **Sleep changes.** Either insomnia, especially waking in the early hours of the morning, or oversleeping.
5. **Anger or irritability.** Feeling agitated, restless, or even violent. Your tolerance level is low, your temper short, and everything and everyone gets on your nerves.
6. **Loss of energy.** Feeling fatigued, sluggish, and physically drained. Your whole body may feel heavy, and even small tasks are exhausting or take longer to complete.
7. **Self-loathing.** Strong feelings of worthlessness or guilt. You harshly criticize yourself for perceived faults and mistakes.
8. **Reckless behavior.** You engage in escapist behavior such as substance abuse, compulsive gambling, reckless driving, or dangerous sports.
9. **Concentration problems.** Trouble focusing, making decisions, or remembering things.
10. **Unexplained aches and pains.** An increase in physical complaints such as headaches, back pain, aching muscles, and stomach pain.

Is it depression or bipolar disorder?

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic depression, involves serious shifts in moods, energy, thinking, and behavior. Because it looks so similar to depression when in the low phase, it is often overlooked and misdiagnosed. This can be a serious problem as taking antidepressants for bipolar depression can actually make the condition *worse*. If you've ever gone through phases where you experienced excessive feelings of euphoria, a decreased need for sleep, racing thoughts, and impulsive behavior, consider getting evaluated for bipolar disorder.

Depression and suicide risk

Depression is a major risk factor for suicide. The deep despair and hopelessness that goes along with depression can make suicide feel like the only way to escape

the pain. If you have a loved one with depression, take any suicidal talk or behavior seriously and watch for the warning signs:

1. Talking about killing or harming one's self
2. Expressing strong feelings of hopelessness or being trapped
3. An unusual preoccupation with death or dying
4. Acting recklessly, as if they have a death wish (e.g. speeding through red lights)
5. Calling or visiting people to say goodbye
6. Getting affairs in order (giving away prized possessions, tying up loose ends)
7. Saying things like "Everyone would be better off without me" or "I want out"
8. A sudden switch from being extremely depressed to acting calm and happy

If you think a friend or family member is considering suicide, [express your concern and seek help immediately](#). Talking openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings can save a life.

If You Are Feeling Suicidal...

When you're feeling depressed or suicidal, your problems don't seem temporary—they seem overwhelming and permanent. But with time, you will feel better, especially if you get help. There are many people who want to support you during this difficult time, so please reach out!

Read [Suicide Help](#) or call **1-800-273-TALK** in the U.S. or visit [IASP](#) or [Suicide.org](#) to find a helpline in your country.

How depression symptoms vary with gender and age

Depression often varies according to age and gender, with symptoms differing between men and women, or young people and older adults.

Depression in men

[Depressed men](#) are less likely to acknowledge feelings of self-loathing and hopelessness. Instead, they tend to complain about fatigue, irritability, sleep problems, and loss of interest in work and hobbies. They're also more likely to experience symptoms such as anger, aggression, reckless behavior, and substance abuse.

Depression in women

Women are more likely to experience depression symptoms such as pronounced feelings of guilt, excessive sleeping, overeating, and weight gain. [Depression in women](#) is also impacted by hormonal factors during menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause. In fact, [postpartum depression](#) affects up to 1 in 7 women experience depression following childbirth.

Depression in teens

Irritability, anger, and agitation are often the most noticeable symptoms in [depressed teens](#)—not sadness. They may also complain of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical pains.

Depression in older adults

[Older adults](#) tend to complain more about the physical rather than the emotional signs and symptoms of depression: things like fatigue, unexplained aches and pains, and memory problems. They may also neglect their personal appearance and stop taking critical medications for their health.

Types of depression

Depression comes in many shapes and forms. Knowing what type of depression you have can help you manage your symptoms and get the most effective treatment.

Major depression

Major depression is much less common than mild or moderate depression and is characterized by severe, relentless symptoms.

- Left untreated, major depression typically lasts for about six months.
- Some people experience just a single depressive episode in their lifetime, but major depression can be a recurring disorder.

Atypical depression

Atypical depression is a common subtype of major depression with a specific symptom pattern. It responds better to some therapies and medications than others, so identifying it can be helpful.

- People with atypical depression experience a temporary mood lift in response to positive events, such as after receiving good news or while out with friends.
- Other symptoms of atypical depression include weight gain, increased appetite, sleeping excessively, a heavy feeling in the arms and legs, and sensitivity to rejection.

Dysthymia (recurrent, mild depression)

Dysthymia is a type of chronic “low-grade” depression. More days than not, you feel mildly or moderately depressed, although you may have brief periods of normal mood.

- The symptoms of dysthymia are not as strong as the symptoms of major depression, but they last a long time (at least two years).
- Some people also experience major depressive episodes on top of dysthymia, a condition known as “double depression.”
- If you suffer from dysthymia, you may feel like you’ve always been depressed. Or you may think that your continuous low mood is “just the way you are.”

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

For some people, the reduced daylight hours of winter lead to a form of depression known as [seasonal affective disorder \(SAD\)](#). SAD affects about 1% to 2% of the population, particularly women and young people. SAD can make you feel like a completely different person to who you are in the summer: hopeless, sad, tense, or

stressed, with no interest in friends or activities you normally love. SAD usually begins in fall or winter when the days become shorter and remains until the brighter days of spring.

Depression causes and risk factors

While some illnesses have a specific medical cause, making treatment straightforward, depression is more complicated. Depression is not just the result of a chemical imbalance in the brain that can be simply cured with medication. It's caused by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors. In other words, your lifestyle choices, relationships, and coping skills matter just as much—if not more so—than genetics.

Risk factors that make you more vulnerable to depression include:

1. Loneliness and isolation
2. Lack of social support
3. Recent stressful life experiences
4. Family history of depression
5. Marital or relationship problems
6. Financial strain
7. Early childhood trauma or abuse
8. Alcohol or drug abuse
9. Unemployment or underemployment
10. Health problems or chronic pain

The cause of your depression helps determine the treatment

Understanding the underlying cause of your depression may help you overcome the problem. For example, if you are depressed because of a dead-end job, the best treatment might be finding a more satisfying career rather than simply taking an antidepressant. If you are new to an area and feeling lonely and sad, finding new friends will probably give you more of a mood boost than going to therapy. In such cases, the depression is remedied by changing the situation.

What you can do to feel better

When you're depressed, it can feel like there's no light at the end of the tunnel. But [there are many things you can do](#) to lift and stabilize your mood. The key is to start with a few small goals and slowly build from there, trying to do a little more each day. Feeling better takes time, but you can get there by making positive choices for yourself.

To cope with depression



Reach out to other people. Isolation fuels depression, so reach out to friends and loved ones, even if you feel like being alone or don't want to be a burden to others.

The simple act of talking to someone face-to-face about how you feel can be an enormous help. The person you talk to doesn't have to be able to fix you. He or she just needs to be a good listener—someone who'll listen attentively without being distracted or judging you.

Get moving. When you're depressed, just getting out of bed can seem daunting, let alone exercising. But [regular exercise](#) can be as effective as antidepressant medication in countering the symptoms of depression. Take a short walk or put some music on and dance around. Start with small activities and build up from there.

Eat a mood boosting diet. Reduce your intake of foods that can adversely affect your mood, such as caffeine, alcohol, trans fats, [sugar and refined carbs](#). And increase mood-enhancing nutrients such as Omega-3 fatty acids.

Find ways to engage again with the world. Spend some time in nature, care for a pet, [volunteer](#), pick up a hobby you used to enjoy (or take up a new one). You won't feel like it at first, but as you participate in the world again, you will start to feel better.

When to seek professional help

If support from family and friends and positive lifestyle changes aren't enough, it may be time to seek help from a mental health professional. There are many effective treatments for depression, including:

Therapy. Effective treatment for depression often includes consulting a therapist who can provide you tools to treat depression from a variety of angles and motivate you to take the action necessary. Therapy can also offer you the skills and insight to prevent depression from coming back.

Medication may be imperative if you're feeling suicidal or violent. But while it can help relieve symptoms of depression in some people, it isn't a cure and is not usually a long-term solution. It also comes with side effects and other drawbacks so it's important to [learn all the facts to make an informed decision](#).

Source: Helpguide.org

Announcements



It is with great sadness that we had to say goodbye to Reinette Popplestone on July 25th, 2019. Our deepest sympathy and condolences go out to her family and friends

Birthday Wishes



Brian Figaji celebrated his 75th Birthday. We wish him all that is well and wonderful



Upcoming Events

Annual General Meeting - 13 September 2019

Long Cane Rally - 26 October 2019