

**THE CLOUD OF
OPPORTUNITIES**

DR. TOR TERRY SHAGUY

The Cloud of Opportunities
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*Thanks Lord God, the Creator and Giver of all opportunities,
for daily loading us with opportunities (benefits), granting us the
wisdom to recognize them and the grace to profit with them.*

DEDICATION

To my biological parents, Mr. & Mrs. Tyobon Shaguy who laboured as peasant farmers to give me the first opportunity not just to live but to acquire an education.

To my spiritual parents Rev. & Rev. Mrs. David E. Ameh and 1989 Benue Braves (Basket Ball) Team who gave me my first real opportunity to become a member of God's family.

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May all human bridges the Lord has raised for your destinies obey God in your lives. Amen.

Introduction



Everyone living can do more than what he thinks he can do.

- Henry Ford

Someone once said that the wealthiest place on earth is the cemetery. No question whatsoever. I mean, imagine all the presidents that took up their residence there having not attained their political destinies.

In Nigeria for instance, one time Biafran leader and the Ikemba of Nnewi, Chief D I M Ojukwu wrote of the late sage Chief Obafemi Awolowo: the best president Nigeria never had. But more pathetic still are those “presidents” that did not even aspire to the leadership positions of their wards or precincts, the billionaires that retired to the cemetery without touching their first million, the professors that switched off the lamp without even acquiring their first degrees, the music geniuses that

bowed there without doing their first lyrics, the literary-Nobel-prize winners who expired without penning their first word of prose, the world-record-creating-athletes whose only sport was eating and talking till they arrived the cemetery. The list is inexhaustible.

One acknowledges the fact that some of these folks took a sudden, irreversible and unexpected exit from this sojourn called life either completely unaware of their tremendous potential or more pathetic still, too young to even appreciate potential. From these classes of people, human-ity has no right to demand anything.

However, there is the class who bowed out, indebted to humanity. Those are they who were aware of the great treasure, call it talent, gift, endowment, ability, etc. invested in them by the Creator when they arrived this world. They were aware of their installed potential or ability or talent, etc. But, they either did nothing about it because they disparaged their actual value or they became victims of waiting for opportunity. The tragedy is that they waited limitlessly till their time ran out, their bells rang and they were transposed to the cemetery with all their installed wealth of talent and gifting. What a colossal waste! What a tragic loss! All such unexplored, untapped, unactualized talent and abilities gone to the great beyond! A great loss to humanity!

The greater tragedy is that this robber of destiny has long found permanent accommodation among all the peoples of the world. This criminal transverses colour, tongue, continent, religion, etc.

He is everywhere. Ever so glib. As subtle as the serpent, as devastating as cancer. He understands all languages. He communicates with all age groups. He knows the abode of the illiterate; he is familiar with the accommodation of the literate.

As smooth as oil. As insatiable as the grave. He has a gluttonous appetite for more victims. He is of many parts. He is a persuasive salesman. He is also an effective comforter and sympathizer.

His victims are either settling for far less than they are capable of doing and achieving or worse still, they are all together doing nothing.

Yet they are not only comforted by the logic of their lack of achievement, they are even proud of their ingenuity in having a ready explanation for their state of inactivity or underachievement.

They all drank from that illusory goblet called the wait for opportunity. They are hoping that one day the right something will happen to kick-start them on their way to fulfillment and greatness. That right and perfect something to them, is somewhere in their tomorrow. They are hoping that when tomorrow comes God will be more favourable to them than he has been thus far. An uncle will remember them when tomorrow comes. A wealthy relative will drop dead and bequeath them a bag of money. The national economy will improve, etc.

They are so sold on the possibilities of tomorrow, they are unaware that the cloud of opportunities has been present all the while and the showers of open doors

have been pouring all around them today.

They are so convinced the special moment will come from abroad through someone else that they are ignoring the prompting within themselves to put the gear of their lives into drive, get out there today and begin to do far more than they think they can do. My friend, tomorrow is an illusion. Today is in your hand. So, get up and make it happen. You have been under the cloud of your opportunities all along. Hundreds of opportunities present themselves to you every week. Get up and seize yours. By the way God is so fair you have an equal twenty-four-hour day today, as the richest man on earth; as the president of your country; as your greatest living hero and that same fellow from whom you are thinking your opportunity will come.

Remember, all opportunities come from above and not from abroad. Yes, God may use anyone or any situation as a bridge for you but you don't have to die on this other side just because one bridge broke or is overwhelmed by the flood of life. If you look closely upstream, you will see this other bridge has been there all along.

Those who call the bluff of the wait-for-opportunity syndrome turn out as celebrities. Why? It is because they look in the different place from the majority. Hence they lay hold upon uncommon achievement and the world has to acknowledge them.

They declined accommodation in the quarters of the waiters-for-opportunity. They took their today and

made it celebrateable. They made that extra effort and discovered that they could indeed do it. They refused to just wait or just manage. They aimed very high and then fired. They kept their eyes on their abilities and not the lack of it. They acknowledged and celebrated their positives and not their negatives.

They risked failure even as they tried. They saw that it was better to fail trying than to fail to try. They did not fail to try. They could have failed somewhere as they tried but eventually the day of celebration came. Former colleagues, who were prisoners in the prison of perfect-opportunity, would roll out the drums and praise them.

Where and when did the separation take place? It occurred at that point where the one group sold out to the delusion that their today is bankrupt and all their opportunities will come tomorrow so they are waiting for God or some other fellow to make that tomorrow happen. Meanwhile the other group thanked God for their today. They accepted wherever they found themselves as sufficient opportunity. The door that seemed locked; they put all their weight against it and it opened. They lived their fullest in today and each step they took with conviction and determination they discovered that yes, God is the one that presents the opportunities and He had been waiting for them since yesterday. They saw that they could indeed do more than what they thought they could do.

You must understand that apart from child bearing, most other issues men claim to wait for God, God has

in fact been waiting for them all along. Twice, Apostle Matthew recalls God as saying that when we bind (allow) He binds (allows) and when we loose (disallow) He looses (disallows) Matthew 16: 19 & 18: 18.

The truth therefore is that unless you live your today in the fullest possible, your tomorrow is a fraud. When tomorrow comes, because your today was wasted, your tomorrow will remain a mirage.

This book is intended to supply you the necessary impetus to get up now and start today that great exploit that will provide this generation and the ones after, something to luxuriate in, long after you make your exit. You have the right opportunity.

What then is opportunity? It is the working together of a combination of factors/events to prompt or propel you towards an achievement.

This book is part of that combination to precipitate you into attainment of your full potential.

Get going today and now!!!

1

Vital Condiments for Opportunity



And the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do...1Chronicles 12: 32

EVERY accomplishment or achievement in life is preceded by a chain of events or factors, which work together to the benefit of those who recognize the advantage presented by such circumstances. Of course, those who eventually profit by such factors are not necessarily the only people nor are they always the first people to whom such situations occurred.

In a good number of cases, the combination of these favourable factors may not seem so favourable at our initial contact. Similarly our first contact may just be with a single event in this chain of events. This explains why those who are able to correctly interpret these seemingly ordinary or even disparaging encounters and eventually

prosper by them are venerated and celebrated.

The interesting thing about any achievement is that anyone of the billions of people upon this earth could have been the achiever.

However, there are five major preconditions for appreciating opportunity, namely:

- Positive disposition
- Ability to recognize an event, situation or moment as opportunity
- Time
- Location and
- Preparation

POSITIVE DISPOSITION

This is a state of living a positive life. A state in which your life is surrounded with hope, excitement, interest and a willingness to get involved. This is a state in which you are always positive about your possibilities. When the shoulders of your inner man are kept high with hope.

Anyone who gropes around this world with his spirit man already defeated and his personal ego or self-worth deflated can never encounter opportunity. Or to put it more correctly, he can never recognize his opportunity. You need to sustain a positive and enthusiastic disposition at all times. Once Satan convinces you that God and humanity are all in conspiracy against you, he will steal your joy. Then once your joy goes, your enthusiasm will also vanish. No wonder the scripture says;

...with joy shall you draw water out of

the well of salvation - Isaiah 12: 3

There is salvation or opportunities all around you but these are in wells. The weapon for laying hold is joy or enthusiasm.

ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE

This is referred to in spiritual parlance as sensitivity. It means to be able to recognize a situation as being propitious or good for the eventual attainment of a goal. This is vital to prospering with opportunity because as long as you fail to recognize timely or favourable events or conditions, the various opportunities you encounter daily will remain useless. Rather, you will keep hoping that one day, your expected break will come.

It is amazing how many people are daily presented with divine opportunity but because of insensitivity, they discuss openly in the ears of more sensitive others, who take these ideas and turn same into treasures. They are all around. You hear them snivel all the time. 'George really ought to be grateful to me, you know, I was the one who started him going with that business idea' 'Brenda has lost respect for the fingers that fed her. It was in my apartment we agreed she should run for the senate. I virtually forced her to agree to contest.'

What happened? They conceived the idea, despised themselves and sold it all to someone else. They were insensitive.

Recently Debby Bose my dear wife was at the market to shop for the family. She got to a shop manned by

two ladies in their sixties. The items of interest to her, had price tags but the other ladies would not care less. They could not read. One of them generously explained that during their teenage, they used every conceivable gimmick to escape school. They little guessed education would become such a treasure. What robbed these ladies of education? Insensitivity. They were not sensitive to the benefits of schooling. Many people are like that. Ability to recognize or be sensitive to your openings must be in place otherwise at best, you may remain a sign-board; always pointing others into their attainment but yourself not moving.

TIME

This is of paramount importance. For opportunity to occur, the time must be right. I mean if you arrange all necessary containers in the proper place and are expecting the rains to give you urgently needed water in the peak of the dry season, your opportunity may rather take long to happen unless Elijah's mantle also fell upon you.

You need to respect the logic of time. If again you are preparing to run for president of your country when you should be preparing for High/Secondary School examination, you certainly will make opportunity a mystery. The children of Issachar went into biblical reckoning for all generations, because they had the sensitivity or possessed the ability to recognize the times and what ought to be done.

King Solomon perhaps explained it all when he

declared in Ecclesiastes Three verse One, to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.

This time issue is of essence because whether you seek opportunity before or after the time, you will end up in frustration. You must recognize the time and put out your arsenal in the correct time.

LOCATION

The relevance of location cannot be overemphasized. There is a right location for every kind of opportunity. Rev. Olu David, my spiritual mentor says:

“if your location is wrong all your calculations will be faulty”. And how correct he is!

Now let us look at the world’s greatest salesman in this generation. He has broken every sales record there ever was. This fellow is red hot. I mean if he arrives your doorstep with the garbage you only threw away ten minutes earlier, he can still convince you to pay for it. Give him the best Air conditioner that technology can boast of. Send him to Siberia among the Eskimos for 12 months to make some sales. This time he will break another record as the sales-man that failed to clinch a single sale in twelve months. Why? Did he forget his sales language and charm? No. He was simply in the wrong location.

When you are in the wrong place your opportunities are simply on ice.

PREPARATION

The great American preacher, Jerry Savelle says that opportunities are conceived in the mind of God then passed over with all necessary ingredients, for accomplishment, to the prepared.

What he is saying – and I could not have agreed more – is that God conceives opportunities or openings for elevation, provision or achievement. A fair God, an impartial God, nay a Father who gives to all men liberally and does not upbraid, in His omnipotence, will cause such opportunities to become available to all. However, only those best prepared will locate them.

Each opportunity however has a life span. No single opportunity is forever. It must be utilized in the right moment or it could become insipid. It will lose its value. According to Ecclesiastes 9: 11, time and chance or opportunity are inseparable twins. Opportunity or chance is therefore nothing without time. For instance, if you determine to learn how to pilot an aeroplane but the plane and your instructor are only available the same week you are in the midst of your degree examinations, the opportunity does not exist. If conversely, you have now completed your exams and have all the time but your instructor is now vacationing in Obudu Cattle Ranch, Nigeria, with his craft, you are still out of business.

Remember, for opportunity to exist, all the factors must work together, although in most cases, initially, it may not so seem. Consequently, God who conceives opportunities and does not waste resources and who so

planned the world that opportunity must be exploited in their proper season, will in fairness, allow this to become available to all, but only those who are prepared will both locate and gain by it.

Biblical examples abound of people who prospered by their opportunities. Let's look just one of them up to give credence to our assertion that opportunity comes to the prepared.

David: Goliath was David's opportunity to national, and as it turned out, to everlasting fame. Jerry Savelle actually says Goliath made David King. I believe he is right. Yet, do you notice that this opportunity called Goliath was available for forty days before David came? Anyone of the thousands of Saul's army could as easily have been the one to bring Goliath down and become the national hero.

The difference was that David arrived prepared. He brought the following weapons:-

- A willingness to contribute to the war effort. You recall his eldest brother Eliab – who should know David– had accused him of a more than casual interest in the proceedings of the war. I think Eliab was right. David actually wanted a part of the action.
- A hunger for the prize. He enquired diligently to ascertain if the prize or reward was worth the effort. People who pretend that they do not care for the reward never really give their best. They are mediocre in their dreams: they are mediocre in

their deeds. I would never hire anyone who isn't expecting a reasonable wage. Why? Because his effort and contribution will also be worthless. It makes no difference to him whether we succeed or fail. You know, those who accept peanuts salaries have monkey mentality.

- Took exception to the reproach of the name of his God. He would not stand by and watch anyone reproach the name of his God. He brought this into the battle. Are you a Christian? If you fail at everything or worse still, live a nonchalant life, you bring the name of your God much reproach.
- The testimony of God's faithfulness and deliverance in his heart and mouth. He brought with him, faith, based upon appreciation of previous encounters with Jehovah-Rohi.
- A willingness to take risk. If you are the sort that can never take any risk, you will see a lion on your way all the time. Whereas this lion will only be a figment of your imagination, you will nonetheless fail to seize your opportunities for fear of failure, loss of comfort, etc.
- His sling. David brought all these weapons with him to the battlefield. This is a picture of someone who came prepared.

What do you think? Suppose after David saw the state of things and although all the other items above were in place, he had not brought his sling. If after assuring

King Saul that he would kill Goliath, he was dressed in King Saul's armour like they did, he rejected it for being strange like he did and rather decided to return home for his sling, he would never have gotten to face Goliath.

First of all, King Saul would probably have had him locked up or even slain for turning a matter of grave national security emergency into a joke.

Secondly, even if out of despondency Saul had permitted him to return for his sling because there was no alternative, Eliab would have made sure David did not re-turn. His brother Eliab would have sent word to their mother that David was about to commit suicide and they should keep him chained down at home by all means.

Thirdly, even if he did manage to elude detention from both King Saul and his mother, in the time it took to go home and return, such well-meaning and experienced war veterans like General Abner would have persuaded Saul that David was only suffering from a temporary seizure of juvenile fantasies. He would have reminded and convinced Saul that if David returned with his ridiculous sling and got killed like he was sure to get killed, Saul would go down into history maligned as the King who sent children into battles with slings against well-armed war veterans.

In the time being, David himself would have had time to hear and hear from everyone who told him it couldn't be done, that he would have developed faith for failure.

The conclusion is that if David had not come pre-

pared, he would never have gotten the chance to take on Goliath.

Thank God, he came well prepared. With his sling available, God arranged for all the factors to work together.

It happened to be in a place where he could find suitable stones in the brook. He picked five. Glory.

By the way, David used only one stone to finish Goliath. What happened to the remaining four? In our book, *THE 4 STONES OF DAVID*, we explain how David used each one of those stones. They are all in the Bible. Get your copy.

Yes, Goliath was an opportunity. He could have made anyone famous and maybe even king. David only happened to be the one to seize this opportunity because he was prepared.

You can never overemphasize the need for preparation. Year in year out, the world stands to salute famous athletes, artists, professionals, etc. These celebrities stumbled upon opportunities to set or create world records in their chosen fields.

Let us take the 100meters in athletics for example. A number of factors need to work together for a record to be set and accepted as valid. The relevant body must organize the competition. The athletes must be drugs free. The wind must be within acceptable limits. The field must be made of good competitors. The tracks must be in good condition. The visibility must be perfect. The timer must be the conventional one. The athletes must

be healthy.

When all these conditions above are all working together, they make up what we refer to as opportunity. This is a season of opportunity for a new world record in the 100meters dash. It is a season of opportunity for 100 meter runners all over the world. But do you know who this opportunity will appear to and be seized by? The runner who has spent time on his speed, stamina, weight, health, concentration, take-off and has come to this competition registered and is ready to compete. To such a runner, this will be his opportunity.

There may be some other runners who perhaps are faster but who are sitting in the stands. They have not practiced, are overweight and are not even registered to compete. To such people all the other factors are working together but their lack of preparedness has robbed them of this opportunity.

In football (soccer), teams are allowed to register at least 2 players for each position per season. There have been some cases where the reserve goalkeeper did not taste action for the whole season. Yet he must keep practicing in preparation. In the next season, before the first half is over the first choice goalkeeper goes down with a minor injury, a fever or he must make an urgent trip to attend to pressing family matters.

At last, the reserve goalkeeper gets his opportunity. In a number of cases, although the reserve goalkeeper was intended to start only that particular match, he puts up such superlative performance that for the rest of the

season and even permanently, the hitherto first choice goalkeeper is relegated to the bench.

Now what do you think would have happened if the reserve goalkeeper had said, ‘the first choice goalkeeper is doing so well, there isn’t the likelihood that I will ever play at this club. Let me stop training until, either he moves away or I move to another club’?

I suppose his opportunity would never have happened. Most likely, his club would have sacked him pretty much earlier.

There is this other living example. A young ambitious man in our former local assembly started making plans to travel abroad for a professional career in soccer, since about 1995. This young man, then in his early twenties apparently had talent. He obviously had faith. He certainly was focused on what he planned to become: a professional footballer in one of the western European countries.

You could reach out a hand and touch his optimism. It was so glaring. He surfed the Internet seeking the right break. He made calls to contacts abroad. The issue was his prayer point for a reasonable period. Focus and determination, you couldn’t accuse him of lacking any.

The years rolled by, nothing doing. The Pastors prayed with him. We also counseled him. His faith and focus were contagious. Still, the years went by. We became very concerned. Gradually, we began to receive understanding. He had no club in Nigeria!!! He was not playing even for a primary school team. He was not playing for a 10th

division team in Nigeria!!!

We became both scandalized at his technique and incredulous at his sincerity. Time was running out. By now, it was around 1998/99.

Bro, please get up and do something while you wait for the European opening' we pleaded. What we were afraid to tell him was that we no longer shared his optimism and that age was gradually taking sides with his adversaries.

However, our brother could not be swayed. In the meantime, between the periods 1995 to 2000 plus, I faintly remember seeing him in training kits a few times. It could not have been more than five times. We met more regularly at the cyber cafes around town.

This 2005, I ran into him somewhere on the streets of Ibadan, Nigeria. He had not as at then, travelled even to next-door Benin Republic for that professional career. Yes, he is somewhere around his early thirties.

Indeed, opportunities abound all around you. However, your personal enthusiasm must be in place, you must be sensitive to them, you need to be time conscious, you must be in the right location and be fully prepared to be able to identify your opportunities and prosper with same.