

Just Start

I appreciate people who start because I know in time, they're not going to be where they are, because they've started that journey.

I'm originally from Nigeria. When I moved here in 2012, I didn't plan to live here. My wife is from here. The plan was to visit America to meet my wife's family, and then go back to Nigeria. And I wasn't famous as an actor in Nigeria. Like, I was just starting to be known. But then I moved here and we decided to stay.

Okay, we're going to live in America - what am I going to do for work? And there's all sorts of suggestions you know - go back to school, become a plumber, become an electrician, you know. There's money in there, do that, but I'm a creative.

So, when I came here, I took acting classes for three years, down the street from here. I mean if you're married and you're an artist, you know how getting money, you know getting work - it's not linear; you can't predict the future. And I remember after taking classes for about two years, I was going to quit. I told my wife, I was like, honey we can't afford it. It's so expensive. We got bills, got the kids ... and my wife ... she said "You won't quit I want you to finish" and she said "Because I've watched you change as a person and I don't want you to lose that."

I can't even tell you how many auditions I went for as an actor and I did not book any role. I remember I came home one day and I was crying you know. I was talking to my wife and I just started crying out of frustration. And my wife said to me, "You know, you're right why don't we make our own film?"

Have you thought about auditioning without your American accent? Like just ... go in as yourself, Nigerian?

It was kind of like a story of my experience because it was about a Nigerian actor struggling to make it in America as an actor and making that film changed my life. It was like, 'Hey guys, this is who I am. This is all you get. I'm Nigerian. I speak Hausa. My life changed as an artist.

So, I wasn't trying to be, be something that I'm not.

So, if I look at my life growing up you know, in Nigeria in my 20s, I kept waiting for opportunities not knowing that I could create my own opportunity. It will surprise you. You might think you have nothing, but just start.

It doesn't matter. just write two three lines. Get a camera and film something. Go back and watch it again. And you start to learn, not just about your environment, but about yourself. Putting yourself out there, attracts people who are like-minded.

And like, I feel like you coming here, you know, all the way from Toronto to meet me That's what it's about. The connections we've made, you know like, do you get what I'm saying? It's like I mean ... We met on YouTube. - We were totally strangers. Total strangers, but now like honestly it's like we're building a bond you've been on my podcast. That's life!

You know, you build connections that go beyond what you create and as human beings we just learn to inspire one another. One of the hardest things to do is to start.

And I can't tell you how many times I've held back but also I realized that the struggle is, people think, they look foolish. What will people think? What would they say? I'm not good enough. So, I know it's hard. I know life happens, but no matter how stupid that idea sounds to you, your friends your family members. No matter how foolish your video looks compared to people who have been on YouTube for 10 years. You just got to start.

I've worked with some of the best actors in America not because I am better than anyone out there who is trying to get a job as an actor but because I started the journey of wanting to become an actor in America.

Please say your name before the camera.

-Benjamin Ishaku.

Alright Ben. Do you have monologue prepared for today?

- Yes, I do.

Okay. Let's start with that.

**What will you start today? Summarize it below.
Then share with the world and START!**