

Her Salary Went Up, but Her Savings Did Not : Katherine’s Story.

Katherine received her promotion on a Tuesday and Friday, she had already started planning how to celebrate it.

After six years in corporate employment, she had finally moved into a senior management position at a consulting firm in Lagos. Her new salary was almost twice what she used to earn, and for the first time, she felt that the long hours, missed weekends and difficult clients had finally paid off.

Her mother was proud. Her friends were excited. Her younger brother called to remind her that she had promised to buy him a laptop when she got promoted. Katherine bought herself a designer handbag.

It was not the first expensive thing she had purchased, but it felt different. She had worked hard for it. She deserved it. At least, that was what she told herself.

The Life That Looked Like Success

Within six months, Katherine’s lifestyle had changed. She moved into a more expensive apartment, upgraded her car and began visiting restaurants she previously considered too costly. Her weekends were filled with brunches, birthday dinners, short trips and shopping appointments.

Her friend Ruth noticed the changes. “You are enjoying your money now,” Ruth said one evening as they sat in a restaurant in Victoria Island.

Katherine laughed. “After everything I have been through? I deserve to enjoy my life.”

Ruth agreed. She also worked in the corporate sector and understood the pressure of building a career. But she had noticed something else. Whenever Katherine received her salary, she seemed to have already assigned every naira to something.

Rent. Car maintenance. Shopping. Family requests. Subscriptions. Restaurants. A new phone. Another trip. Her income had increased, but her savings had barely moved.

One afternoon, Katherine complained that her account balance was embarrassingly low. “I honestly don’t know where my money goes,” she said.

Ruth looked at her. “Maybe it goes where you keep sending it.”

The Family Pressure Nobody Talks About

Katherine’s financial decisions were not influenced by her salary alone.

Her parents had sacrificed a great deal to educate their children. Her father had worked for years as a civil servant, while her mother operated a small business. They believed that a successful

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child should be able to support the family.

Whenever Katherine visited home, her mother mentioned a relative who needed help with school fees, a family member who needed money for medical expenses or an old friend who expected assistance. Katherine rarely said no.

She also remembered growing up in a home where money was carefully managed. Her parents had postponed holidays, delayed home improvements and sometimes struggled to pay for unexpected expenses. She wanted to give them a different experience.

When her mother suggested that she should finally buy a bigger car, Katherine listened. When her father advised her to invest in land, she agreed. When relatives praised her new apartment and expensive purchases, she felt reassured that she was doing well.

But she was beginning to confuse being financially successful with looking financially successful.

The pressure was not always negative. Her parents had taught her to work hard, honour commitments and support people. Yet she had not learnt how to set boundaries around those responsibilities or make her own financial priorities.

The Evening Ruth Asked One Question

A few weeks later, Ruth invited Katherine to dinner at her apartment.

Ruth's home was comfortable but modest. She had a reliable car, a small investment portfolio and a plot of land she had been paying for gradually. She did not dress expensively every day, but she was deliberate about what she bought.

Katherine noticed a framed photograph on the wall showing Ruth standing on an empty piece of land.

"Is that your land?" she asked.

Ruth smiled. "Yes. I bought it two years ago. I am not building immediately. I want to hold it while I continue saving and planning."

Katherine looked surprised. "How did you manage that? You don't even earn as much as I do."

Ruth laughed. "That's because earning more and keeping more are two different skills."

She explained that she had started by tracking her expenses and separating her money into categories. She maintained an emergency fund, saved towards specific goals and avoided committing to major purchases simply because she could afford the initial payment.

She also researched property carefully. Before paying for land, she examined the documentation, investigated the location and sought professional guidance.

Ruth was not claiming that land was guaranteed to make her rich. She knew that property could be difficult to sell quickly and that infrastructure announcements did not always become completed projects. Her plan was to hold an asset she understood, not chase a promise.

Katherine went home thinking about that conversation.

The Difference Between Affording Something and Being Able to Maintain It

The following month, Katherine reviewed her bank statements. She discovered that the biggest problem was not one expensive purchase. It was the accumulation of many decisions she barely noticed.

A restaurant visit here. An unplanned transfer there. A monthly subscription she hardly used.

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Shopping whenever work became stressful. Supporting relatives without first checking what she could comfortably afford. She began making changes.

She did not sell her car or move into an uncomfortable apartment. She simply stopped treating every salary increase as permission to increase her expenses.

She created an emergency savings target, set a monthly amount for family support and began saving towards a property investment. She also reviewed her bank accounts and automatic payments, ensuring that her money was going towards things she genuinely valued.

When her mother next suggested another expensive purchase, Katherine explained that she was saving towards a long-term goal.

Her mother was initially disappointed. “But you are doing well now,” she said. “Why are you denying yourself?”

Katherine smiled.

“I am not denying myself, Mummy. I am planning for myself too.”

The Luxury of Having Options

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A year later, Katherine’s life did not look dramatically different from the outside. She still enjoyed good restaurants, dressed well and travelled occasionally. She had not abandoned the things she loved.

But she had become more intentional.

She understood that luxury was not only about owning expensive things. It was also about having choices. It was being able to handle an unexpected expense without panic, take time off work without immediately worrying about bills and make an investment decision without borrowing to fund it.

She had also learnt that supporting her family did not require sacrificing every personal financial goal. She could love her parents, appreciate their sacrifices and still make decisions based on her own circumstances.

One evening, Ruth asked if she had finally decided what to do with her savings.

Katherine smiled. “I am looking at property opportunities. But this time, I am not buying because somebody says I should. I want to understand exactly what I am paying for.”

Ruth raised her glass. “To making money work as hard as we do.”

Katherine laughed. For years, she had believed her promotion would solve her financial problems. Now she understood that a higher salary could create new opportunities, but only good money management could help her use them.

A bigger salary can change your lifestyle. A financial plan can change your future. The real luxury is not simply being able to afford more. It is building a life where your money gives you more freedom, security and options.

If you are ready to move beyond earning and spending towards building long-term assets, speak with De Velli Group about available land and real estate investment opportunities in Abuja. Explore the options, understand the documentation and payment terms, and choose an investment that fits your financial goals.