



### **‘Why We Should Care’ - Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde**

What is social responsibility: Social responsibility means making sure that the people's quality of life and their human rights are not compromised to accomplish expectations and demands. For instance, purchasing goods and food that have been traded fairly, and manufactured in good conditions.

Social responsibility is an ethical theory that an entity, be it an organization or individual, has an obligation to act to benefit society at large. Social responsibility is a duty every individual or organization has to perform so as to maintain a balance between the economy and the ecosystem.

What then is Obligation: An act or course of action to which a person is morally or legally bound; a duty or commitment?

Good afternoon again everyone, I would love to address social responsibility on many levels but will for this conference, limit it to as it concerns entertainment.

Social Responsibility: In a rapidly changing world, one that sees many typhoons, earthquakes, wars and different presidents and tenures, one thing has not changed. Celeb worship! Many leaders have been in power and left power in the space of time that many entertainers have still remained in the limelight. What does this mean theoretically then, the people know you more, perhaps love you more, and perhaps ... TRUST you more...

How then have we reciprocated their love and trust, and how really can we help ourselves, the world we live in today and the one we hope to leave for our children with this privileged rare gift and opportunity that we possess.

1. **The unstoppable:** I have often referred to Nigerians as the 'Black Jews' friends have often laughed at this description of mine but... Think about it for a moment. Is there anywhere you will not find NIGERIANS? Is there anywhere NIGERIANS cannot succeed in? Are NIGERIANS not one of the most intelligent, industrious and 'just get on with it' 'creative and happy minds you know? We seem to be unstoppable when we choose... So surely, these must be God's own people too.

But...we all know we do not live right now like God's own people... So what's our obligation to our immediate community, what do we need...

2. **Form bigger bonds and societies:** every serious group or persons have societies, clubs, and associations whatever you want to name it why?

Because all intelligent people know their power lies in Numbers and unity of purpose! This is why every person that wants to take away your rights and power causes division (divide and rule) they target the selfish, greedy ones and approach them with gifts, money enticements that make them speak out from/against the group. It starts with deceit then a decision and division and finally disgrace. (The act of falling from grace)... Or loss of reputation or respect, esp. as the result of a dishonourable action.

You have all seen this in Nollywood movies you have an idea of what I'm talking about? It's THE SAME deception from the time of **Adam** and **Eve**, to how slavery started till today...

However, when we do have unified bodies and common goals and less greed and selfishness then we can begin to tap into our full potentials. This is one of the most effective forms of social responsibility, the ability to gather and have a common purpose and voice.

3. **Sticking together on basic minimums:** Now this affects our immediate community. The entertainment industry! Where there is no law there is no order. As entertainers, we should not only be organized we should be disciplined! We all have the days when we are not the richest... (You know what I mean, when everyone thinks you can give them something and in truth you could do with some hand-outs yourself) everyone goes through those situations every now and then, but even in poverty, there is dignity!

Therefore, I think as entertainers we should have basic minimum standards that we 'must' adhere to ... And where penalties are taken seriously for offenders.( in receiving payments and conditions for services rendered ).After-all, if we in entertainment do not even know the basic minimum way or manner a person should and must be treated, the worth of a human... Nigerian life , how then can we begin to phantom the level of inhumanity that is unacceptable that we might need to agitate By.

4. **Respect:** Yes this is Entertainment and so it's mostly about who the reigning ones are, who's trending, who's hot! Who's Boss! But as Africans I think it's important we don't forget whose Bros! We were all brought up to respect 'elders', 'seniors', 'older ones' e.t.c so why do we it is okay to be disrespectful as Entertainers? Let's not kid ourselves in the industry we individually know who our contemporaries are and who our 'seniors' are even if our seniors haven't or may never 'Blow', 'trend' or 'make it'. We can look and act 'Hot' when we are with the fans but when we are in the family we ought to know our boundaries. This is one of the bedrocks of a strong society, group or association. It is the foundation. It is a test of the content of your character.

5. **Education:** So [Lupita Nyong'o won an Oscar](#) for best supporting actress and now we all must go to school to be successful entertainers? Actually No! So what's all the fuss about, there are many actors and musicians who have won Oscars and Grammys who never went to school. Yes, but they might never boast of THE SAME amount of opportunities and in-dept. knowledge as those who went to school.

Is it compulsory for success in entertainment to be educated? No... Is it Advisable, absolutely yes? There are many layers to being famous or being a celebrity and Education prepares us for these layers so we can reach our full potential and be trusted with more responsibilities. Social responsibility as you can guess is a lot of responsibility and expression. You might at some point be required to speak to different types of group of people as I am doing right now ... Simply put, Talent will Never be Enough.

6. Election campaigning and political whoring: A few days ago, an angry colleague sent me a write-up on blogs about how it was insinuated that entertainers have aided politicians in perpetuating some evils... A totally purposeful write-up but poorly executed. Before I go any further let me point out that Omotola has never campaigned, hobnobbed nor partied with any Government! So people should please research before they mention names in public speaking.

Haven't said this, I agree with the message the writer was hoping to pass. Do I think that Governments should not be supported? No I do not think this. I have volunteered with no reward to help in the campaign of a candidate I believed strongly in some time ago. However, I believe as intelligent people and we are, we know even before campaigns who are not likely to be a good leader.

I've often heard musicians say: *'I'm just there to entertain, Just doing my job. I don't necessarily support'*. Note that this is THE SAME as you retweeting a message. You'll have a hard time convincing everyone that you don't agree with that message!

We know most times the pulse of the people and our conscience bear witness that these person(s) as the case may be are only out for themselves. They break rules, are not dynamic nor intend to be, do not have good moral or outstanding values / pasts. Why then as Entertainers and young people that the public wants so desperately to love and trust, do we 'sell' ourselves and identify/ ALLIGN with such individuals? This is our SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY as entertainers, it is our ethical obligation that we re-invest goodwill that we have so wonderfully garnered for the good of the society we trade in.

Although we all have our prerogative as to who or what we want to associate ourselves with, it is expedient to remember that 'celebrity' would be more effective as non-partisan except you are a member of a political party, which should then be clear. You can be friends if you choose with corrupt and un-trusted elements without aligning your Brand with what they stand for. Remember your brand will outlive theirs be careful what you plant with it.

Destiny is not a matter of chance but a matter of choice...posterity will remember to judge you... Choose wisely.

7. Leadership by example /using our influence right: finally, who is the Real leader. Who? WE ARE! We ARE THE TRUE LEADERS. We have been sleeping giants for too long. Let's wake up and lead by example Entertainers! In a continent with some of the strongest, most recognizable and loved entertainers, we can change things. Let's use our influence right. With this generation of Entertainers, if we choose, we will change history.

So the when Question arises Again... Why should we care? Because we can...because we do.

***This speech was delivered at the second edition of the Nigerian Entertainment Conference held on Wednesday, April 23, 2013 at the Grand Ball Room of the Eko Hotel and Suites, Lagos, Nigeria.***