

**A TOAST TO WELCOME THE EXCELSIOR- ST JOHN'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION**  
**COMPEDIUM TO THE STABLE BY FESTUS OSHOBA**

The Johnian Eagle opened with 33 students on the 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1962. 58 years on, the Eagle is still soaring. It is a most cherished privilege to be asked to write this preface about the EXCELSIOR- a compendium about the St John's grammar School, Ile – Ife Osun State, Nigeria.

The founding fathers must have been well versed in the Characteristics of An Eagle and Why They Are Lessons for Good Leadership

1. Eagles Have Vision: If you ever happen to see an eagle sitting high above the tree or cliff of a stiff mountain, watch closely and see how attentive the bird is.

The body sits still and the head will be tilted side to side to observe what is happening below, around and above it. Even if its flying close by, you can observe how keen its eyes are looking for its prey. Eagles have a keen vision. Their eyes are specially designed for long distance focus and clarity. They can spot another eagle soaring from 50 miles away. Vision is a successful leadership characteristic

You must have a vision that guides and leads your team towards the organizations or societal goals. The vision must be big and focused. A big, focused vision will produce big results.

2. Eagles are fearless: An eagle will never surrender to the size or strength of its prey. It will always give the fight to win its prey or regain its territory.

Successful leaders are fearless. They face problems head-on.

3. Eagles are Tenacious: Watch an eagle when a storm comes. When other birds fly away from the storm with fear, an eagle spreads its mighty wings and uses the current to soar to greater heights. The eagle takes advantage of the very storm that lesser birds fear and head for cover.

Challenges in the life of a leader are many. These are the storm we must face as leaders to rise to greater heights. Like an eagle, a leader can only rise to greater heights if he takes up the challenges head-on without running away from it. This is yet another leadership characteristic.

4. Eagles are High Flyers: Eagles can fly up to an altitude of 10,000 feet, but they are able to swiftly land on the ground. At 10, 000 feet, you will never find another bird. If you find another bird, it has to be an eagle.

An eagle doesn't mingle around with the pigeons. It was Dr Myles Munroe who said that. Pigeons scavenge on the ground and grumble and complain all day long. Eagles are not. They fly and make less noise waiting for opportunities to strike their next prey or glide with the current of the storm.

Great leaders are problem solvers. They don't complain as the pigeons do. They love to take challenges as the eagle does when the storm comes.

5. Eagles Never Eat Dead Meat: An eagle never eats dead meat. In other words, an eagle does not scavenge. It only eats the meat from the prey it kills itself. Eagles eat raw and fresh meat What a great act of true leadership instead of the entitlement mentality of many youths.

A true leader spends time with people who are vibrant and liberal in thinking. You have to be with people who can think, make informed decisions and take actions. These are the people who bring changes to society. They are lively and active people.

There is a saying that goes like this: "People you hang around with and the books you read eventually determines the person you become."

6. Eagles possess Vitality: Eagles are full of life and are visionary but they find time to look back at their life and re-energize themselves. This happens at about the age of 30. What happens is that when the Eagles reach the age of 30, their physical body condition deteriorates fast making it difficult for them to survive.

What is really interesting is that the eagle never gives up living, instead it retreats to a mountaintop and over a five-month period goes through a metamorphosis. It knocks off its own beak by banging it against a rock, plucks out its talons and then feathers. Each stage produces a re-growth of the removed body parts, allowing the eagle to live for another 30–40 years.

There are times in your life as a leader that you must look back and take stock of your life. The good and the bad experiences you have been through as a leader. Are you keeping in trend with the current knowledge trend? Do you need to improve your certain areas in your life as a leader?

Great leaders are the ones that always do "check and balance" of their personal and professional lives and make an effort to learn things every day.

7. Eagles Nurture their younger ones: Eagles are known for their aggression. They are absolutely ferocious, however what is more astonishing with this bird is their ability to nurture their young ones. Research has shown that no member of the bird family is more gentle and attentive to its young ones than the eagles.

This is how it happens. When the mother eagle sees that time has come for it to teach the eaglets to fly, she gathers an eaglet onto her back, and spreading her wings, flies high. Suddenly she swoops out from under the eaglet and allows it to fall. As it falls, it gradually learns what its wings are for until the mother catches it once again. The process is repeated. If the young is slow to learn or cowardly, she returns it to the nest and begins to tear it apart, until there is nothing left for the eaglet to cling to. Then she nudges him off the cliff.

True leaders are not bosses. They grow with their people. They strive to make individuals in the organization or society grow to their full ability. They teach and guide just like the mother eagle does. They never stop giving challenges but never-give-up empowering and directing.

In today's world, Michael Zuckerberg is richer than Africa's richest man- Aliko Dangote, yet he does not have massive industries like the latter. The key to his success is networking and this is best assimilated and developed through emotional intelligence and developing strong "people skills"

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize your emotions, understand what they're telling you, and realize how your emotions affect people around you. It also involves your perception of others: when you understand how they feel, this allows you to manage relationships more effectively.

In his book titled "Emotional Intelligence - Why It Can Matter More Than IQ" 1995, Daniel Goleman, an American psychologist, developed a framework of five elements that define emotional intelligence:

**Self-Awareness** – People with high emotional intelligence are usually very self-aware. They understand their emotions, and because of this, they don't let their feelings rule them. They're confident – because they trust their intuition and don't let their emotions get out of control.

They are also willing to take an honest look at themselves. They know their strengths and weaknesses, and they work on these areas so they can perform better. Many people believe that this self-awareness is the most important part of emotional intelligence.

**Self-Regulation** – This is the ability to control emotions and impulses. People who self-regulate typically don't allow themselves to become too angry or jealous, and they don't make impulsive, careless decisions. They think before they act. Characteristics of self-regulation are thoughtfulness, comfort with change, integrity, and the ability to say no.

**Motivation** – People with a high degree of emotional intelligence are usually motivated. They are willing to defer immediate results for long-term success. They're highly productive, love a challenge, and are very effective in whatever they do.

**Empathy** – This is perhaps the second-most important element of emotional intelligence. Empathy is the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs, and viewpoints of those around you. People with empathy are good at recognizing the feelings of others, even when those feelings may not be obvious. As a result, empathetic people are usually excellent at managing relationships, listening, and relating to others. They avoid stereotyping and judging too quickly, and they live their lives in a very open, honest way.

**Social Skills** – It is usually easy to talk to and like people with good social skills, another sign of high emotional intelligence. Those with strong social skills are typically team players. Rather than focus on their own success first, they help others develop and shine. They can manage disputes, are excellent communicators, and are masters at building and maintaining relationships.

Although "regular" intelligence is important to success in life, emotional intelligence is key to relating well to others and achieving your goals. Many people believe that it is at least as important as regular intelligence, and many companies now use emotional intelligence testing to hire new staff.

Emotional intelligence is an awareness of your actions and feelings – and how they affect those around you. It also means that you value others, listen to their wants and needs, and are able to empathize or identify with them on many different levels.

A Johnian must know that “whatever exists is already becoming obsolete” and to survive and thrive in this time of turbulence, you must be fast on your feet and prepare to deal with continuous changes and search for alternatives for greater results. Continuing innovations and improvement are essential to survival.

Johnian’s need to have a broad knowledge base of a wide range of subjects, from trade to rocket science and from history to current affairs. We should at any point in time or occasion have at least a general idea of the matter in question.

Acquisition of multiple competencies is a sine qua non for success in personal, private and public organizations

From cradle to the grave, Johnian's should realize that learning is for life. We need to catch up with the cutting-edge technology and developments available today in all spheres of human endeavor. It is essential to have multiple skills so that you can be classified as a "Jack of all trades and Master of All.

Everything else, including your qualifications could be meaningless if you do not apply your knowledge in solving some humanity's problems. If you solve people's problems, they will gladly pay your fees.

Almost everything that has a physical manifestation today was first conceived in the spiritual realm. It is therefore important that irrespective of our religious inclinations, we should be connected to that unseen supernatural power that influences the direction of affairs of man in order to discover more the purpose of our creation and therefore be a positive force to make our world a better place than we met it.

#### REFERENCES

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**Festus Odunayo Abimbola Oshoba.**

***MBBS, FWACS, FMCOPH, FCIA, MPA, FICS, MNIM, MPH, LLB, PGD BROADCAST JOURNALISM- NIJ***

***Chief Consultant Ophthalmologist and Chartered Administrator***

***President elect SJOBA 2020***