

A special post-event publication for the 2026 SHIFT CONFERENCE LAGOS

ExecutiveEDGE

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by EnterpriseCEO



**The Shift That
Changes Everything**



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We are an enterprise media company. We are committed to the projection of ideas and changes that enable enterprise CEOs to achieve new possibilities.

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Identifying Large Market Opportunities in Business



At the SHIFT Conference 2026 held at Eko Hotel and Suites, Gbenga Victor Afolabi interviewed entrepreneur and business leader, John Olajide as part of the conference's discussions on leadership, innovation, and national transformation. During the session, Olajide shared insights from his entrepreneurial journey, beginning with his early business experiences in Nigeria and later building a successful healthcare technology company in the United States.

The interview also explored his decision to reinvest in Nigeria and Africa through Cavista Holdings, focusing on sectors such as technology and agriculture. Through the conversation, Olajide highlighted the importance of identifying large market opportunities, solving real problems, and maintaining consistency in business. The discussion provided valuable lessons for aspiring entrepreneurs and emphasized the role of entrepreneurship in driving economic growth and development across Africa.

Question

What inspired you to begin your entrepreneurial journey, and why are you now focusing more on Nigeria and Africa after achieving success abroad?

Answer:

My entrepreneurial journey did not start in the United States, it actually started in Nigeria. When I was about 11 to 13 years old, I used to sell turkeys and Christmas cards during the Christmas season. I would collect orders from people, add a margin, and sell the items for profit.

I also grew up in a business-oriented environment. My parents had only a primary school education, but they were traders and later became distributors for Unilever (then known as Lever Brothers). Every day they would bring sacks of cash home and count the money, so I was exposed to business early in life.

When I later went to study at the University of Texas at Dallas, my friends were preparing resumes to look for corporate jobs. Interestingly, I have never written a CV in my life. Instead, I was thinking about starting a business.

While in school, I realized two important things:

The healthcare industry made up about 20% of the U.S. economy, making it a very large market.

The internet and technology were rapidly growing and would transform the world.

So I decided to combine these two areas, healthcare and technology, because they offered a large market and rapid growth.

Eventually, while visiting my aunt who worked in a healthcare organization, I discovered they needed technology solutions. I offered to help and became their “computer person.” That experience eventually led to starting my company.

As for focusing on Nigeria and Africa, I believe there is a reason I was born here. I see it as a responsibility to give back and contribute to creating opportunities for others.

Question:

Many people want to shift their career path into entrepreneurship and achieve significant success. What three pieces of advice would you give them?

Answer:

1. Stay consistent and committed

Whatever you decide to do, stick with it. Do it repeatedly and let people know that this is what you are known for.

For example, if someone sells the best suya in a neighborhood and is there every day, customers will return and recommend the place to others. Over time, the business grows because of consistency.

However, if you sell suya today, akara tomorrow, and start a logistics business next week, people won't know what you stand for.

2. Solve meaningful problems

Entrepreneurship is about solving problems. Find a problem you care deeply about solving and dedicate yourself to it. When you consistently solve real problems, success will follow.

3. Build strong teams

People often say, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

The achievements of my companies are not only mine, they belong to the team working with me. Surround yourself with capable, committed people.

Question 4:

What major challenges did you face in your entrepreneurial journey?

Answer:

I faced many hardships, especially when I first moved to the United States as a student. Some of these challenges were very difficult, but I view them as opportunities to grow.

Instead of focusing on the obstacles, I always asked myself: “How can I solve this problem?”

This mindset helped me turn challenges into opportunities.

Question 5:

Some analysts say African businesses are mostly small and that the continent needs more large-scale companies. What is your perspective?

Answer:

I do not fully agree with that view because it often ignores Africa’s historical context. However, we are already seeing progress as more African companies grow into large and successful businesses.

Success tends to create more success.

For example, through Cavista Holdings we have invested in several sectors in Nigeria, including agriculture.

One project that surprised us was our cassava farm at Agbeyewa Farms. We did not set out to build the largest cassava farm in the world, but after experts visited the farm and analyzed it, they realized it might actually be the largest.

Question 6:

What important shift in your business has transformed your organization in recent years?

Answer:

One of the biggest shifts came from investing and solving complex problems in Nigeria.

In developing our agricultural projects, we had to overcome many challenges, lack of infrastructure, poor roads, and other limitations. We built roads and facilities ourselves.

By solving these difficult problems, we developed new skills, knowledge, and capabilities. Interestingly, these capabilities are now helping all our other global businesses grow even faster.

In other words, the challenges we solved in Nigeria strengthened our organization worldwide.





Inside the CEO's Decision Clinic at the SHIFT Conference VIP Session

Behind the main stage of the SHIFT Conference 2026, held at Eko Hotel and Suites, an exclusive VIP session unfolded where ideas were not merely discussed but carefully examined and refined. Known as the CEO's Decision Clinic, the session brought together a select group of leaders for a focused, solution-driven conversation.

Unlike the typical networking atmosphere common at conferences, the Decision Clinic was designed as a utility table, a space where participants could present real challenges from their organizations and receive strategic guidance. The environment was collaborative yet purposeful, with every participant expected to contribute insights and perspectives that could help address the issues being discussed.

Guided by the SHIFTS framework, participants worked together to identify the constraints affecting their organizations and explore practical solutions. The session encouraged open dialogue and thoughtful analysis, ensuring that each challenge presented at the table benefited from the collective wisdom of experienced leaders.

Responding to the participants' questions were leadership experts and entrepreneurs including Nike Adeyemi, Sam Adeyemi, and business executive John Olajide. Drawing from their diverse experiences in leadership, entrepreneurship, and organizational development, they provided practical guidance to the participants.

One participant raised a significant question about scaling a company to the level of global firms such as WPP and expanding into the technology sector. The participant explained that their product was already being widely used in the United States despite the fact that the company had not yet begun formal marketing. They sought advice on whether it was the right time to seek investors and how their company could grow into a global brand.

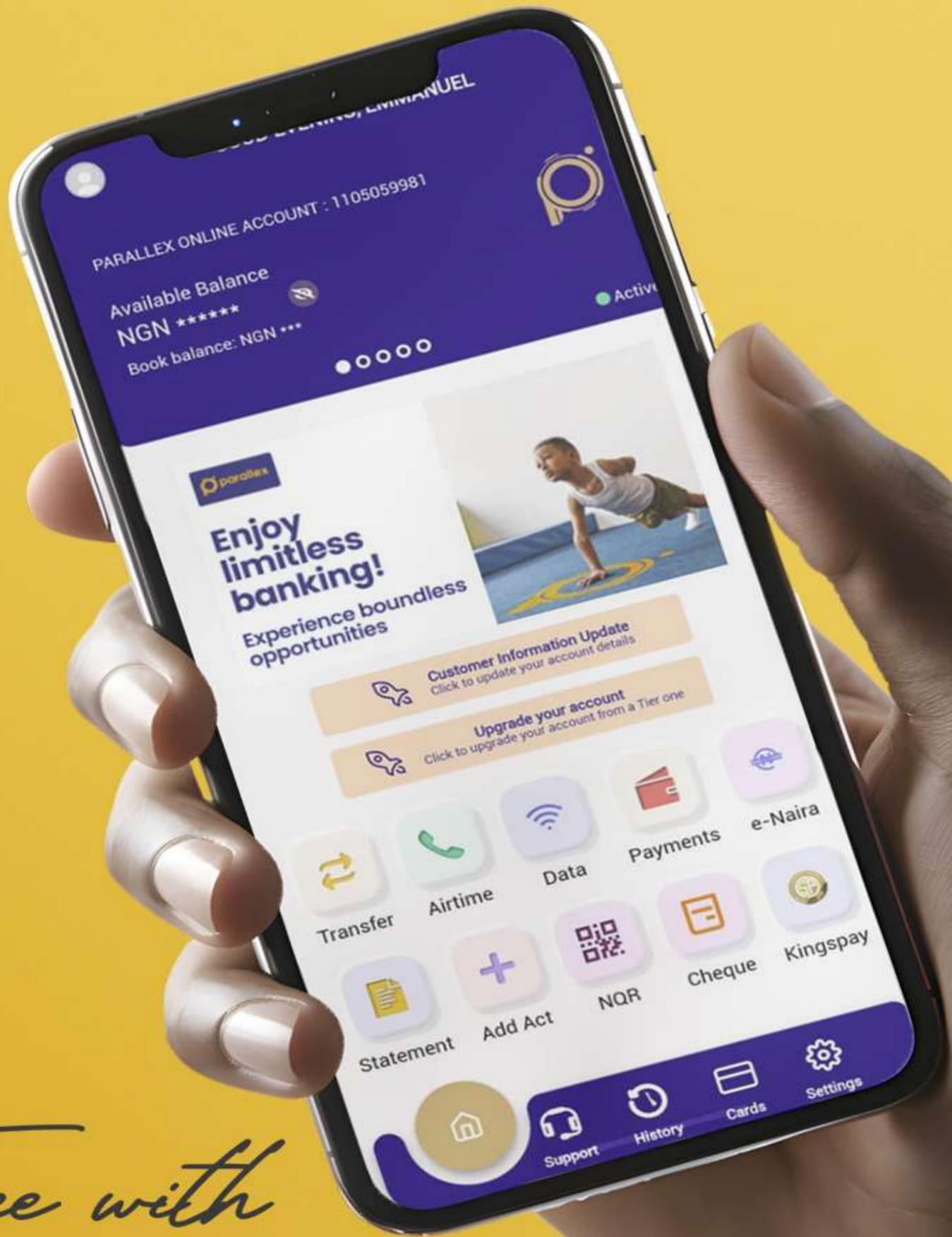


In response, John Olajide shared insights from his own entrepreneurial journey. He explained that he is not opposed to raising capital and noted that he himself invests in several companies, sometimes holding majority stakes and other times minority positions. However, he emphasized that entrepreneurs must ensure that the type of capital they bring into their business aligns with their long-term vision.

Olajide explained that in his experience, many investors approached his company after it had already demonstrated strong performance. While these investors offered growth capital, their expectations were often based on short-term projections of three to five years. In contrast, his own vision for the company extended much further, which sometimes made him question whether the proposed investment would truly add value.

He cautioned entrepreneurs that although investors can accelerate growth, they can also introduce pressures that may influence strategic decisions. Accepting investment often means giving up a portion of ownership and agreeing to meet investor expectations. For that reason, he encouraged founders to carefully consider their long-term goals before raising capital.

He also pointed out that many startups celebrate funding rounds such as Series A or Series B, but raising money should not be the ultimate measure of success. Instead, entrepreneurs should focus on building companies that create sustainable, long-term value.



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During the session, Olajide also introduced a simple framework for effective business execution. He explained that entrepreneurs must learn to separate important signals from the many distractions that arise in business operations. He recommended focusing on three strategic priorities: improving efficiency, extending capabilities, and transforming the organization for long-term growth.

The discussion further explored opportunities within Nigeria's economy, particularly in sectors with large untapped potential. Using agriculture as an example, Olajide explained that the country cannot fully industrialize without large-scale mechanized farming. Because the sector remains underdeveloped, it offers significant opportunities for entrepreneurs willing to innovate.

He illustrated this point with the example of cassava farming through his organization, Cavista Holdings. What began as an effort to supply cassava to processors that lacked raw materials gradually evolved into a broader value-chain strategy, including processing cassava and exploring its many industrial uses, from food production to pharmaceuticals.

Throughout the session, both Sam Adeyemi and Nike Adeyemi also emphasized leadership, clarity of purpose, and disciplined thinking as essential qualities for entrepreneurs and organizational leaders.

By the end of the Decision Clinic, the session had delivered far more than advice. It provided participants with practical insights, strategic clarity, and renewed confidence in their ability to tackle the complex challenges within their organizations. The VIP session ultimately reflected the deeper mission of the SHIFT Conference: empowering leaders with the thinking, tools, and courage needed to build impactful and sustainable enterprises.



THE SHIFT NIGERIA MUST MAKE

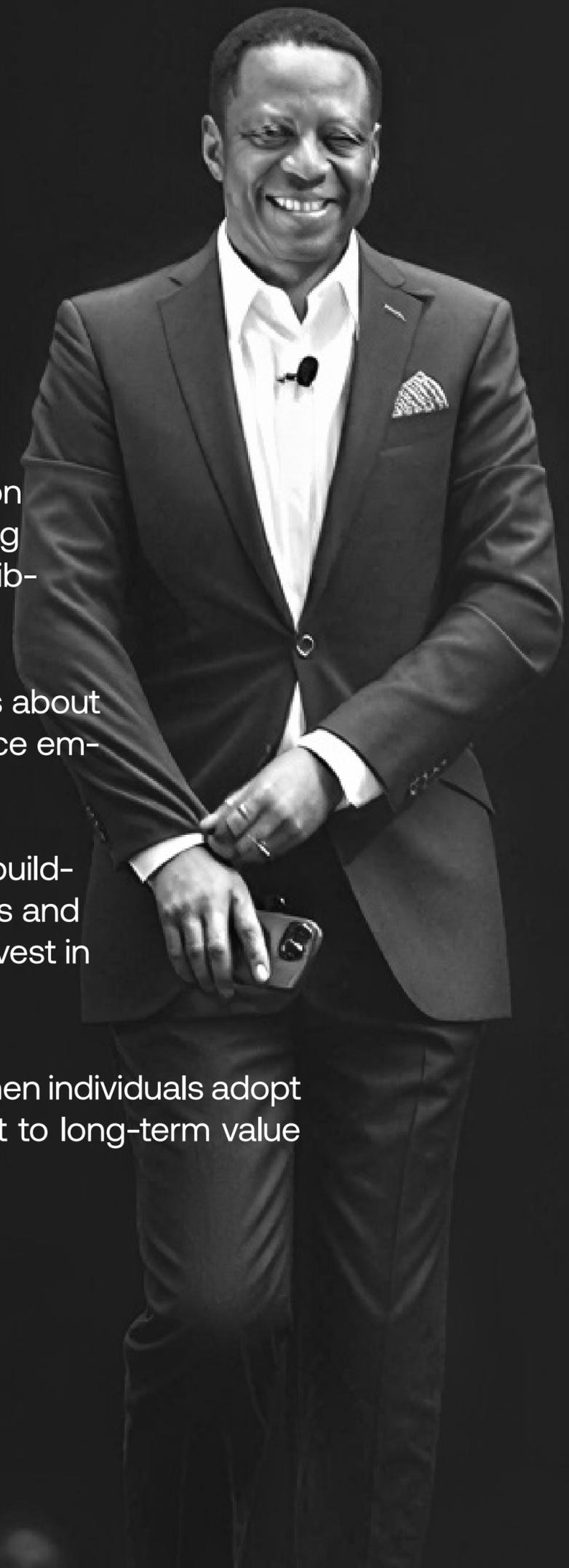
The SHIFT Conference 2026, convened by Sam Adeyemi, brought together business leaders, policymakers and young professionals to discuss leadership, mindset transformation and national development.

A key message of the conference was that true transformation begins with mindset change. Adeyemi emphasized that lasting progress in individuals, organizations and nations requires deliberate shifts in thinking rather than temporary inspiration.

Leadership expert Nike Adeyemi highlighted that leadership is about influence, not titles, urging leaders to maintain balance, practice empathy and prioritize rest for sustainable impact.

Entrepreneur John Olajide shared his journey from Nigeria to building Axxess, stressing that entrepreneurship should create jobs and societal impact. Through Cavista Holdings, he continues to invest in sectors like technology and agriculture in Nigeria.

Overall, the conference emphasized that nations transform when individuals adopt disciplined leadership, innovative thinking and a commitment to long-term value creation.



PEOPLE, NOT POLICIES, TRANSFORM NATIONS

John Olajide

At the SHIFT Conference 2026, John Olajide delivered a personal and compelling message that national transformation begins with individuals, not institutions. Reflecting on his upbringing in Nigeria, he credited his parents for instilling values of discipline, excellence, and respect for learning despite their limited formal education.

While studying telecommunications engineering at the University of Texas at Dallas, Olajide identified healthcare and technology as two sectors that would shape the future. This insight led him to found Axxess in 2004, which has grown into a leading North American home healthcare technology firm employing more than 500 people.

Beyond business success, Olajide emphasized using entrepreneurship to create impact. Through Cavista Holdings, he has invested in Nigeria across technology, tourism, fintech, and agriculture, including projects like Payzeep Technologies and Agbeyewa Farms, all aimed at creating jobs and strengthening local economies.

Olajide stressed that Africa's potential can only be realized through disciplined execution, long-term thinking, and consistent growth. He concluded by challenging leaders to take responsibility for building systems and opportunities that will drive lasting national progress.



NIKE ADEYEMI ON LEADERSHIP, BALANCE AND THE POWER OF INFLUENCE

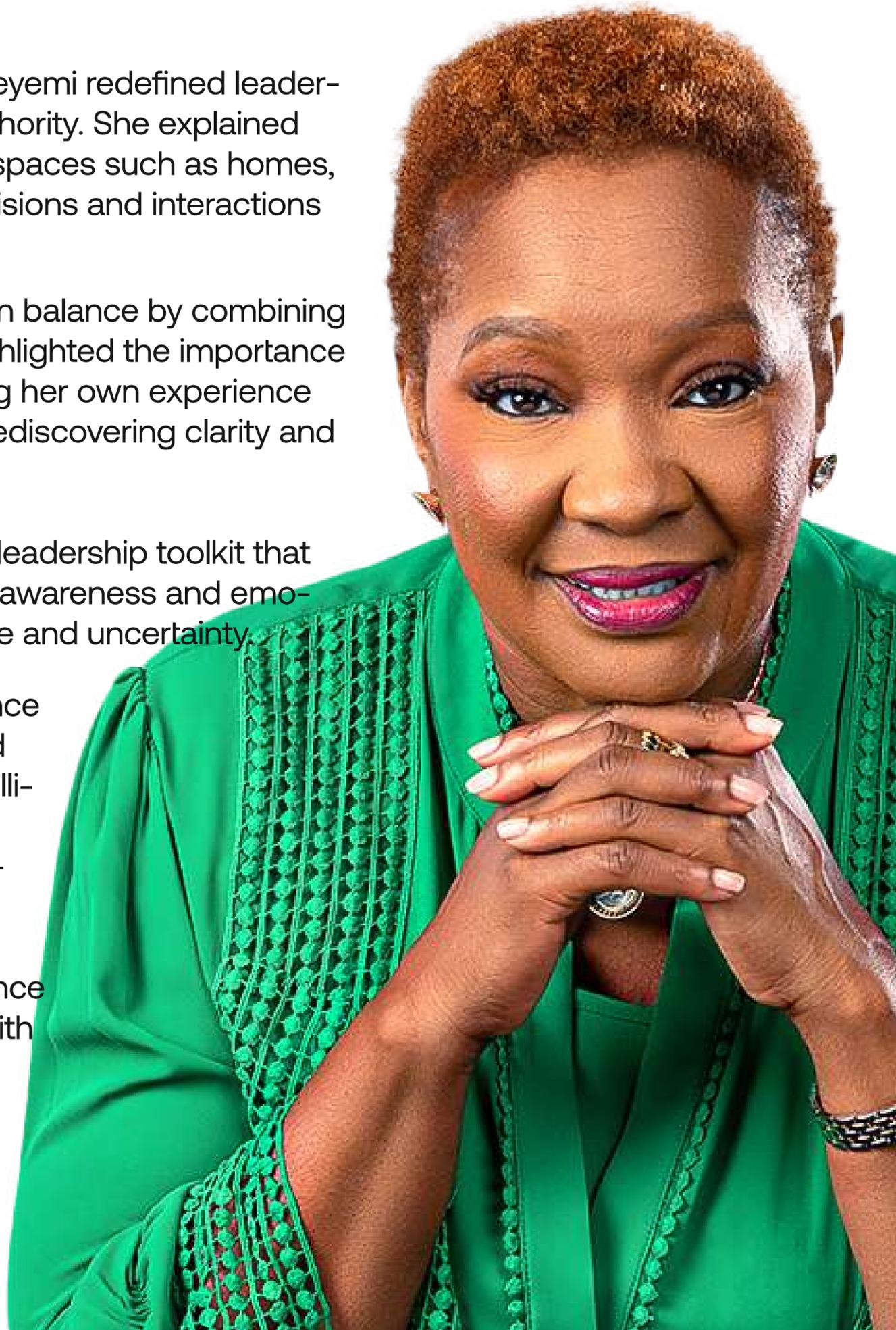
At the SHIFT Conference 2026, Nike Adeyemi redefined leadership as influence rather than titles or authority. She explained that leadership takes place in everyday spaces such as homes, classrooms and workplaces, where decisions and interactions shape the lives of others.

Adeyemi encouraged leaders to maintain balance by combining faith with practical wisdom. She also highlighted the importance of rest for sustainable leadership, sharing her own experience of stepping back from exhaustion and rediscovering clarity and renewed purpose.

She advised leaders to build a personal leadership toolkit that includes qualities such as gratitude, self awareness and emotional discipline to help navigate pressure and uncertainty.

Adeyemi also emphasized the importance of clear communication, delegation and empathy. She noted that emotional intelligence remains a critical leadership skill even in an era shaped by artificial intelligence.

She concluded by reminding the audience that leadership is not limited to those with titles but is a responsibility anyone can carry through positive influence.





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