

LEADING WOMAN

ERYCA FREEMANTLE, the conscientious businesswoman living for global impact

By Kemi Ajumobi
Associate Editor

ERYCA is a Life Coach, Entrepreneur, Global Beauty Strategist, Counsellor, Property Expert, School Governor and Diversity Champion. Eryca is known to many as a leading figure. Her resilience and ability to keep going makes her an inspiration to women. With over 35 years' experience in the business sector, she has carved out a career as a leading expert, diversity specialist, educator, public speaker, wealth creation and a conscientious businesswoman.

A proud Black woman, Eryca has played a key role in influencing businesses to rethink their strategies on inclusion; her most notable campaign being the creation of 'Embracing All Tones of Women (E.A.T.O.W.)', which launched at the Houses of Parliament in England. She is in demand across the globe including England, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Gambia, Dubai, Turkey and USA. She has spent the last 15 years dedicating her life to building solid relationships in Africa.

From a young age, she has battled bullying, abuse and a horrific car accident which left her without hair, and she almost lost her leg too. Most people would give up after this amount of pain, but not Eryca.

Dedicating most of her adult life to fighting for her seat at the table as Black women in the UK do, she continues to champion women of colour. As every door closes, she finds more doors to knock on, and continues to fight for every woman to be the best they can be in their chosen field, irrespective of skin colour. Her fierce resilience and caring personality has inspired women of all ages to be the best they can be, and through her coaching and mentoring, she supports others to overcome issues which holds them back from taking the next steps on their journey to be the best version of themselves.

Her clients are worldwide. By providing her expertise in connecting professionals and high achievers, comes with access to valuable insights, inspiration, and opportunities. She provides the tools and expertise needed for her clients to embrace their power and build themselves up.

She has been featured in Forbes, Bloomberg, and numerous other publications. A Mentor, Ambassador and Life Coach for the Prince's Trust, and a former advisor to London College of Fashion.



Memories of childhood

I was sexually abused at age 4 to 6 years old by my uncle. He made me promise to hush and let no one know. He made me believe it was 'our' secret and I was not to let anyone know till I am 48.

I was bullied at school between the ages of 5 to 16 and was seen as the silly girl in school. I played the silly girl, I was abused, spat upon and beat up consistently. That was not all, I was repeatedly told I was ugly and I believed it. This went on every day of my life until I was 17. By this time, behaving abnormally became the norm for me.

When I got to my 20s, I was hit by a car in a petrol station whilst paying for my petrol. The result was really bad. I lost all my hair, had over 250 scars to my face, and almost had my left leg amputated. My leg was broken in 5 places.

Later in life, I went into

the makeup and property business. I chose makeup artistry because I wanted to help people cover up their scars on their face. I became one of the world's leading consultants in the beauty space, not really pursuing makeup artistry as I thought I would, but working for some of the biggest brands in the space. 1995 was very peculiar to me because, it was when I achieved one of the biggest breaks in my life.

At age 47, I had a nervous breakdown, 5 fibroid operations, full hysterectomy, hip replacement, open back surgery and was paralysed for two years. I lost my confidence and fought for my sanity all by the age of 50.

What keeps you going despite all you have been through?

I am not my past. I tell a lie if I say, sometimes, the memories of my past doesn't hunt me, but I have since decided that

it will not get the best of me. That is why I ensure I keep learning, making impact and positively influencing lives.

Leading professionals from the beauty, property, lifestyle and business communities from the UK, USA in pioneering diaspora trade visit to Lagos, Nigeria.

The E.A.T.O.W delegation aims to establish relationships with practitioners in beauty, business, wealth creation, arts and culture, including media and entertainment, creative and lifestyle industries.

This high-profile mission is the first of its kind and brings together prominent black professionals in business, leadership and professional roles across three continents: The UK, USA and Nigeria. The Mission is in partnership with the UK Department for International Trade, EbonyLife Media and Eb-

onyLife Place, and Bepta Travel.

The mission intends to provide UK and USA delegates with an exceptional platform to explore cultural, trade and investment opportunities

in Lagos, build influential networks and cement key business relationships. In addition, to celebrate accomplished women across diverse industries and countries, with the aim of inspiring others to achieve their dreams about having a successful career.

Why did you birth E.A.T.O.W? Why the mission to Nigeria?

Embracing All Tones of Women (EATOW) came about out of frustration in the UK. I was being told that as a black woman, I was never good enough.

The idea was birthed many years ago. I just didn't feel brave enough back then. I feel hard time moves, we grow, and I have grown. I decided to do it. We launched in 2019 at the Houses of Parliament and we have not looked back. We honoured women in the creative arts, beauty industry lifestyle, film and

entertainment industry. We first started with the beauty industry but realised excellence is everywhere.

I also think as older women, who we are doesn't often reflect on us. We must do the work to celebrate ourselves.

Why Nigeria? Well, Nigeria is my safe place, it is my home. I adore most things about Nigeria.

Being the first of its kind that you are doing here in Nigeria, what do you hope to achieve?

It is first of its kind for us in Africa however, since announcing this project; we are in talks with other female organisations who wish to sponsor and partner across several African countries. Funny, you start and you will be amazed how people champion what you are doing.

When we announced we were coming to Lagos, we were asked by over 39 people in UK and USA if they could join us.

We have a delegation of over 25 people joining us. They are experts in their professions. We have a few men too. We are holding a Business Summit on 28th October at EbonyLife place which is free however, the criteria is that you must be a professional person. We have limited spaces, but like-minded business people can register to hear our various panel discussions. The summit is being held the day before our exclusive awards.

More about your partners you are bringing in

Our team are men and women of the highest excellence in property, wealth creation, modelling and business development. One of our delegates even was the leading educational educator for Pat McGrath. Excellence at its best is what we are about. We can be reached on the following email addresses For general enquiries and trade mission, reach us at admin@eatow.co.uk. For event interest, reach us at events@eatow.co.uk

Read the concluding part of our interview with ERYCA FREEMANTLE on our website www.businessday.ng as she graces the cover of Women's Hub Magazine for this week.

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