

Our Reconciled Journey: A Memoir on Leadership and Humanity

By Chris Emejuru

Our Reconciled Journey: A Memoir on Leadership and Humanity is a deeply personal story about family, adversity, identity, service, leadership, and the belief that humanity is strengthened when people choose to serve one another. Written by Nigerian American entrepreneur and advocate Chris Emejuru, the memoir traces the experiences, people, and pivotal moments that shaped his understanding of what it means to lead—not through power or position, but through compassion, responsibility, resilience, and service.

The journey begins in Alexandria, Virginia, where Chris was born, and continues through his childhood in Virginia Beach. As the first of five children, he grew up under the influence of parents who modeled two different but complementary forms of leadership. His father, a physician, taught him discipline, responsibility, and the importance of serving others. His mother, a nurse, demonstrated a quieter form of leadership rooted in compassion and protecting the dignity of others. These early lessons became foundational to the person Chris would eventually become.

His worldview was also shaped by people from cultures and backgrounds different from his own. A Pakistani teacher, Ms. Nazneen, taught him confidence and perseverance, believing in his abilities even when he struggled to believe in himself. His childhood friendship with Kaveh, whose family immigrated from Iran, taught him humility, character, and the importance of valuing intelligence over appearances. These relationships helped Chris develop an early understanding of himself as part of a world larger than his immediate community.

The path to adulthood, however, was not easy. While attending Virginia State University, Chris experienced significant academic and personal challenges. In 2004, he was hospitalized and diagnosed with schizophrenia. The diagnosis, combined with financial hardship, unemployment, and uncertainty about his future, changed the trajectory of his life. Instead of completing college in the traditional four-year timeframe, it took nearly a decade to finish his degree. During those years, he worked a wide variety of jobs, from delivering newspapers and washing dishes to working security, waiting tables, providing health care assistance, and staffing a hotel front desk.

Although those years initially appeared to be setbacks, Chris came to understand them as a period of preparation. They taught him patience, financial discipline, humility, perseverance, and the dignity of honest work. Most importantly, they strengthened his faith and his belief that a difficult chapter does not necessarily mean a failed life.

His years in New York City marked another important transition. While pursuing business opportunities and building relationships, Chris encountered people and ideas that expanded his understanding of what his future could become. His relationship with Shruti, an Indian woman he met in New York, exposed him to another culture and perspective while reinforcing his appreciation for ambition and personal growth. His attendance at the Young Leaders Assembly at the United Nations in 2015 became particularly significant. Surrounded by young people from around the world committed to peace and progress, Chris began to see his own ambitions in a larger context.

That sense of purpose eventually found a cause in Nigeria. During the 2020 EndSARS protests, Chris traveled to the Nigerian Embassy in Washington, D.C., to stand in solidarity with Nigerians protesting

police brutality, poor governance, and the conditions affecting young people across the country. The experience transformed his frustration into action. Rather than simply observing problems from a distance, he decided to become part of the effort to create solutions.

In 2021, Chris co-founded Lowase Group with Dr. Wonders Pibowei. The organization was created around the belief that young Africans should have access to the knowledge, opportunities, skills, and networks necessary to build successful lives and businesses. That mission expanded through initiatives including the African Truecaller Leadership Fellowship Program, Lowase Capital Partners, and the Pre-Money Insider. Through these efforts, Chris found that one of the most meaningful forms of leadership is creating opportunities for other people to succeed.

Service has remained a central theme throughout his life. A humanitarian experience in Costa Rica, where he volunteered at an orphanage, reinforced his belief that helping others does not require perfect circumstances. Despite limited Spanish, unfamiliar surroundings, and only a short amount of time, he discovered that compassion could cross language and cultural barriers. The experience strengthened his conviction that service begins with willingness.

His connection to Nigeria deepened through repeated visits to Port Harcourt and other parts of the country. What began as an appreciation of his ancestral homeland gradually became a sense of responsibility for its future. Chris reflects on Nigeria's enormous potential while confronting the challenges of poverty, corruption, insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, weak institutions, and political dysfunction. Rather than presenting himself as someone with all the answers, he offers his personal convictions about what Nigeria can become.

The second half of the memoir broadens from personal experience into reflections on leadership, democracy, humanity, and the future of Africa. Chris discusses the leaders who have influenced his thinking, including George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. His approach is not to endorse every position these figures held, but to identify individual qualities he believes are worth learning from—unity, resilience, courage, perseverance, service, and the ability to mobilize people around something larger than themselves.

At the heart of his philosophy is the concept of **Ubuntu**: the belief that our humanity is interconnected and that people become stronger through their relationships and responsibilities to one another. This principle connects his reflections on leadership, democracy, faith, economic development, environmental responsibility, and international cooperation.

The memoir concludes by returning to where it began: family. Chris reflects on the sacrifices of his parents and grandparents and recognizes that his journey was never his alone. The discipline, faith, encouragement, friendships, opportunities, and challenges that shaped him were all part of a larger story. His ultimate understanding of leadership is therefore not about becoming important, powerful, or celebrated. It is about becoming useful to others.

Our Reconciled Journey is ultimately an invitation to readers to examine their own lives. Through the reflections and “Living It Out” questions at the end of each chapter, readers are encouraged to consider the people who shaped them, the adversity they have survived, the causes they care about, and the legacy they hope to leave.

The central message of the book is simple: **none of us becomes who we are alone.** Leadership begins when we recognize the people who helped shape us and choose to use what we have been given to create opportunities, restore dignity, serve others, and leave the world better than we found it.

In the end, the journey from **“me” to “we”** is the real reconciliation at the heart of the memoir.