

African Proverbs – 300 Inspirational Proverbs and Quotes

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The Wisdom of African Proverbs – Get inspired From 300 *African Proverbs* From all Around African Continent!

Here's a list of African proverbs from around African the continent. Some are known to come from specific African tribes, ethnic groups, or African countries, and others have an unknown source and are listed simply as "African proverbs." Some proverbs are romantic, some thought provoking and some perhaps a bit lost in translation.



Supposing doesn't fill the grain basket 'if' doesn't fill the larder. ~ Ovambo Proverb

There are no shortcuts to the top of the palm tree. ~ Cameroonian Proverb

All monkeys cannot hang on the same branch. ~ Kenyan Proverb

Those who are absent are always wrong. ~ Congolese Proverb

God has created lands with lakes and rivers for man to live. And the desert so that he can find his soul. ~ Tuareg Proverb

Do not allow the belly to make you useless. ~ Maasai Proverb

Little by little grow the bananas. ~ Congolese Proverb

If you overtake a leader, you break your neck. ~ Ugandan Proverb

The big game often appears when the hunter has given up the hunt for the day. ~ Igbo Proverb

A clever king is the brother of peace. ~ South African Proverb

Do not call to a dog with a whip in your hand. ~ Sudanese Proverb

Maasai Jumping Dance

The blame of the antelope is on the hunter. ~ Kenyan Proverb

Good music goes with good food. ~ African Proverb

Haste and hurry can only bear children with many regrets along the way. ~ Senegalese Proverb

A fully grown up tree cannot be bent into a walking stick. ~ Kenyan Proverb

No matter how full the river, it still wants to grow. ~ Congolese Proverb

Birds of all kinds will end up landing. ~ Egyptian Proverb

I shall come for the cows after the donkeys have grown horns. ~Meru Proverb

If love is a sickness, patience is the remedy. ~ Cameroonian Proverb

Other people's wisdom prevents the king from being called a fool. ~ Nigerian Proverb

Knowledge without wisdom is like water in the sand. ~ Guinean Proverb

Ingratitude is sooner or later fatal to its author. ~ Twi Proverb

The laughter of a child lights up the house. ~ Swahili proverb

Maasai Authentic Celebration

Even an ant can hurt an elephant. ~ South African Proverb

Examine what is said, not him who speaks. ~ Egyptian Proverb

One camel does not make fun of the other camel's hump. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

If you educate a man you educate one individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family. ~Fanti Proverb

The sun never sets without fresh news. ~Xhosa Proverb

The good mother knows what her children will eat. ~ Akan Proverb

When the mother goat breaks into the yam store her kid watches her. ~ Igbo Proverb

Even as the archer loves the arrow that flies, so too he loves the bow that remains constant in his hands. ~ Nigerian Proverb

Rich people cook their food in a potsherd. ~ Kikuyu Proverb

Sudanese Wedding in Khartoum

Rising early makes the road short. ~ African Proverb[clickToTweet tweet="Rising early makes the road short. ~ African Proverb #africa #inspiration #quotes" quote="Rising early makes the road short. ~ African Proverb"]

If the elders leave you a legacy of dignified language, you do not abandon it and speak childish language. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

The elephant does not limp when walking on thorns. ~ Ethiopian Proverb

An ox shits more than a hundred mosquitoes ~ Mozambican proverb

A person with too much ambition cannot sleep in peace. ~ Chadian Proverb

There is no return, worse luck for could I return, I would foresee what has come into the country. ~ Bantu Proverb

Around a flowering tree there are many insects. ~ Guinean Proverb

He is like a drum which makes a lot of noise but is hollow inside. ~ Sudanese Proverb

Coffee and love taste best when hot. ~ Ethiopian Proverb [clickToTweet tweet="Coffee and love taste best when hot. ~ Ethiopian #Proverb #africa #love #coffee" quote="Coffee and love taste best when hot. ~ Ethiopian Proverb"]

When the food is cooked there is no need to wait before eating it. ~ Kikuyu Proverb

Baboons do not go far from the place of their birth. ~ Masai Proverb

The chameleon looks in all directions before moving ~ Ugandan Proverb

Lonely is one. ~ Maasai Proverb





Time destroys all things. ~ Nigerian Proverb

Little by little the bird builds its nest. ~ Nigerian Proverb

Numbers can achieve anything. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

A brave man dies once, a coward a thousand times. ~ Somali Proverb

Only someone else can scratch your back. ~ Kenyan Proverb

It's like removing a hyena from a pit. ~ Meru Proverb

Berber Guys Singing (Morocco)

He who does not seize opportunity today, will be unable to seize tomorrow's opportunity. ~ Somali Proverb

Misfortune of soup made of shanks and feet. ~ Xhosa Proverb

Rich people sometimes eat bad food. ~ Kikuyu Proverb

He who refuses to obey cannot command. ~ Kenyan Proverb

The cow that bellows does so for all cows. ~ Kenyan Proverb

The chameleon changes color to match the earth, the earth doesn't change colors to match the chameleon. ~ Senegalese Proverb

If an arrow has not entered deeply, then its removal is not hard. ~ Buli Proverb

Where error gets to, correction cannot reach. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors we borrow it from our children. ~ Haida Proverb

If you damage the character of another, you damage your own. ~ Yoruba Proverb

He who doesn't clean his mouth before breakfast always complains that the food is sour. ~ African Proverb





You cannot climb to the mountain top without crushing some weeds with your feet ~ Ugandan Proverb

Even the best dancer on the stage must retire sometime. ~ African Proverb

If you have no teeth, do not break to clay cooking pot. ~ Chewa Proverb

When the moon is not full, the stars shine more brightly. ~ Buganda People of Uganda

Leadership comes from God ~ Kenyan Proverb

The friends of our friends are our friends. ~Congolese Proverb

The elders of the village are the boundaries. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

Those who are born on top of the anthill take a short time to grow tall. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

When a fish rots, the head stinks first ~ Ghanaian Proverb

One foot isn't enough to walk with. ~ Egyptian Proverb

An empty pot makes the loudest noise. ~Kenyan Proverb

If you are building a house and a nail breaks, do you stop building, or do you change the nail? ~ African Proverb

Where a woman rules, stream run uphill. ~ Ethiopian Proverb

If a stranger comes to stay with you, do not forget when you lay aside his weapons that he is hungry. ~ Maasai Proverb

Do not call to a dog with a whip in your hand. ~ Sudanese Proverb

Good millet is known at the harvest. ~ Liberian Proverb

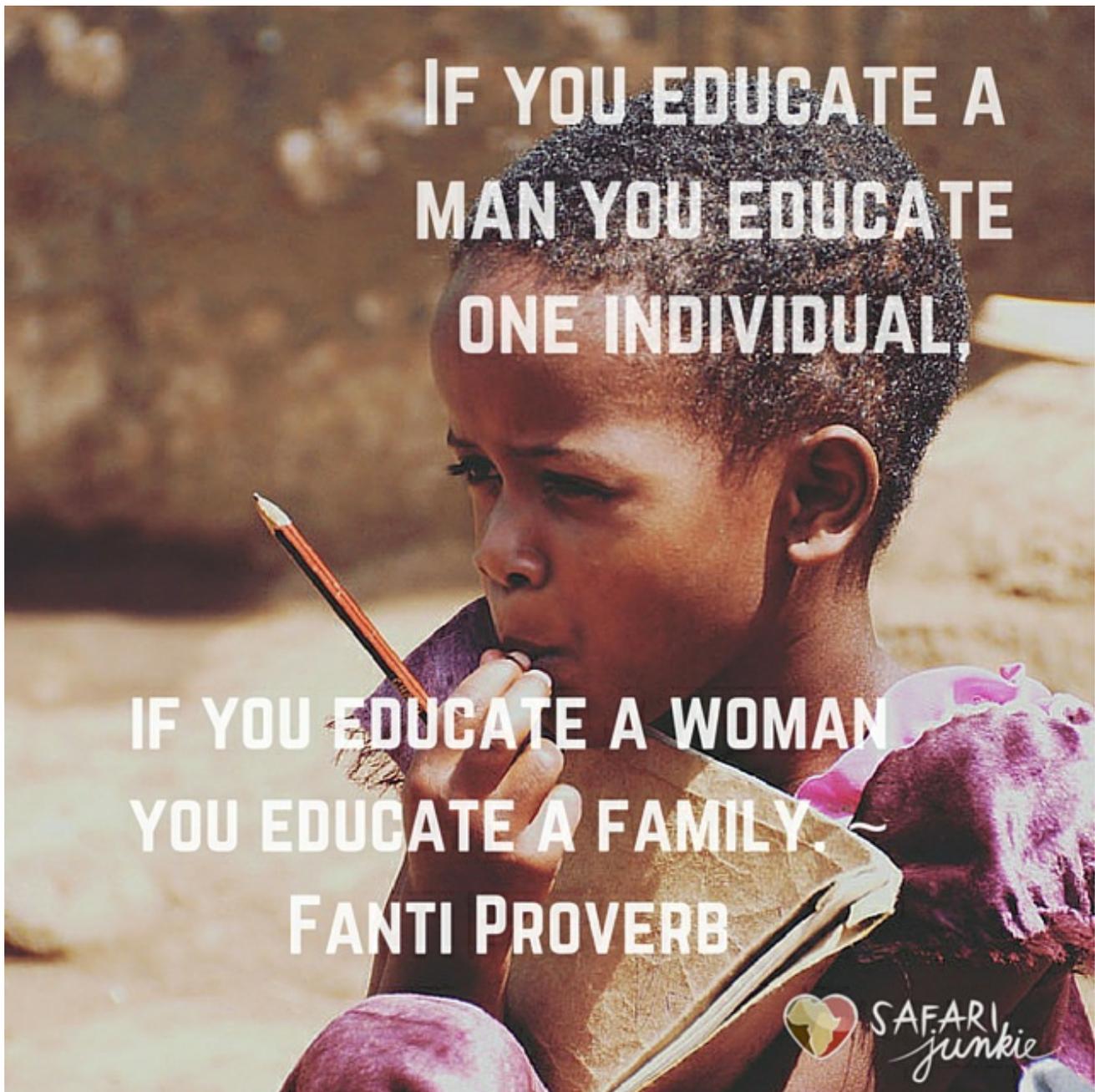
Family names are like flowers, they blossom in clusters. ~African Proverb

One fly does not provide for another ~ Xhosa Proverb

It is not the cook's fault when the cassava turns out to be hard and tasteless. ~ Ewe Proverb

It is the belly which daily gives thanks. ~ Maasai Proverb

No matter how big a child is, he cannot deny that he was once carried on the back of a woman. ~ African Proverb



If you do not know death, look at the grave. ~Kenyan Proverb

When the lion cannot find meat, it eats grass. ~Kenyan Proverb

When a woman is hungry, she says, Roast something for the children that they might eat. ~ Ashanti Proverb

One whose seeds have not sprouted does not give up planting. ~ Kenyan Proverb

A king's child is a slave elsewhere. ~ Zimbabwean Proverb

He who loves the vase loves also what is inside. ~ African Proverb

What is bad luck for one man is good luck for another. ~Ashanti Proverb

Prepare now for the solutions of tomorrow. ~ Congolese Proverb

The bee is the doctor of flowers. ~ Congolese Proverb

A bridge is repaired only when someone falls into the water. ~ Somali Proverbs

What is inflated too much will break into fragments. ~ Ethiopian Proverb

However much it rains on you, no wild banana tree will grow on your head. ~ Kenyan Proverb

A snake that you can see does not bite. ~ Mozambican Proverb





One who relates with a corrupt person likewise gets corrupted. ~ Kenyan Proverb

The words of the elders become sweet some day. ~ Malawian Proverb

More precious than our children are the children of our children. ~ Egyptian Proverb

The Rhinoceros never dances with the monkey. ~Nigerian Proverb

Confiding a secret to an unworthy person is like carrying grain in a bag with a hole. ~ Nilotic Proverb

Unity is the real thing ~ Kenyan Proverb

A bird that allows itself to be caught will find a way of escaping. ~ Cameroonian Proverb

Better little, than too little. ~ Burundian Proverb

If you are ugly you must either learn to dance or make love. ~ Zimbabwean Proverb

If there were no elephant in the jungle, the buffalo would be a great animal. ~Ghanaian Proverb

The brother or sister who does not respect the traditions of the elders will not be allowed to eat with the elders. ~ Ga People of Ghana

No tattoo is made without blood. ~ Mozambican Proverb

Live patiently in the world know that those who hate you are more numerous than those who love you. ~ African Proverb

A child one does not instruct on return, one instructs him when going. ~ Bantu Proverb

Suppression of hunger leads to death. ~ Kenyan Proverb

A canoe does not know who the leader is when it turns over, everyone gets wet. ~ Proverb from Madagascar

We should put out fire while it is still small. ~ Kenyan Proverb

Water that has been begged for does not quench the thirst. ~ Soga People of Uganda

Let it be a bite of a cockroach and fly with the wind. ~ Meru Proverb

The song of a stranger-woman is answered after she has gone. ~ Kikuyu Proverb

The humble pay for the mistakes of their leaders. ~ Tanzanian Proverb

Discord between the powerful is a fortune for the poor. ~ African Proverb

No person is born great great people become great when others are sleeping. ~ African Proverb

A person who has children does not die. ~ Nigerian Proverb

Dance, father, people's eyes don't eat, they just stare. ~ Bantu Proverb

Who ever suggested that rats should become chiefs? ~ Ugandan Proverb

Rain does not fall on one roof alone. ~ Cameroonian Proverb [clickToTweet tweet="Rain does not fall on one roof alone. ~ Cameroonian #Proverb" quote="Rain does not fall on one roof alone. ~ Cameroonian Proverb"]

He who dictates separates himself from others. ~ Somali Proverb

The jungle is stronger than the elephant. ~ South African Proverb

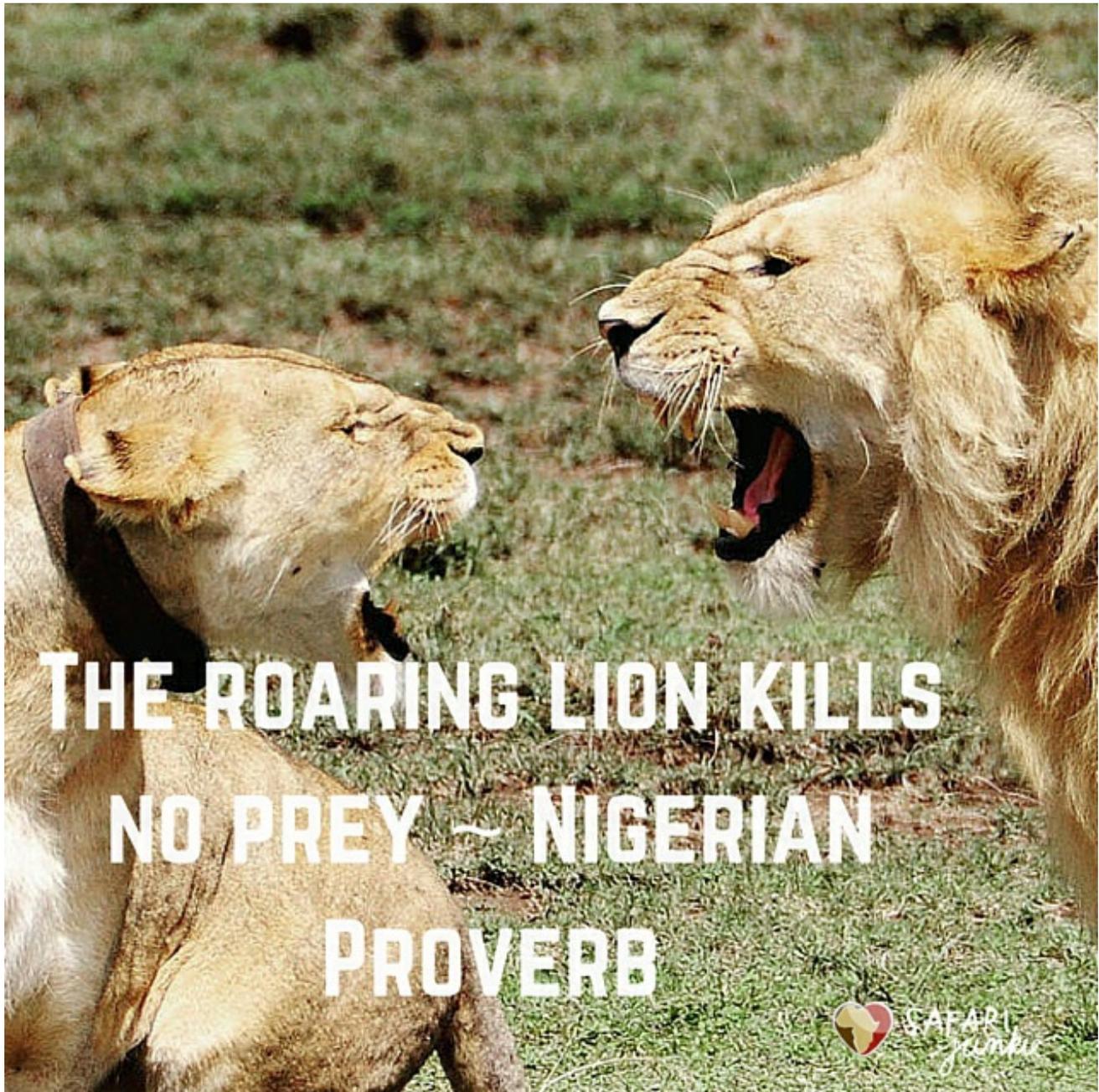
He has rubbed shoulders against a baobab tree. ~ Meru Proverb

| If your mouth turns into a knife, it will cut off your lips. ~ Rwandan Proverb

Women have no chief. ~ Acholi Proverb

If your sister is in the group of singing girls, your name always comes into the song. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

The antics of a market buffoon provide laughter, but nobody prays that his child becomes the market buffoon. ~ African Proverb



A rooster is not expected to crow for the whole world. ~ African Proverb

To lead is not to run roughshod over people ~ Kenyan Proverb

If while climbing a tree you insist on going beyond the top, the earth will be waiting for you. ~ African Proverb

One arrow can knock down an elephant. ~ Kenyan Proverb

All errors are amendable. ~ African Proverb

A weaning baby that does not cry aloud will die on its mother's back. ~ Zimbabwean Proverb

No water without waves. ~ Kenyan Proverb

Even if you bewitch in the night, you will be known. ~ Kenyan Proverb

Glory does not come by calling. ~ Kenyan Proverb

He who cannot dance will say, The drum is bad! ~ Ashanti Proverb

The stick in the hand kills the snake. ~ Kenyan Proverb

A tree cannot stand without roots. ~ Congolese Proverb [clickToTweet tweet="A tree cannot stand without roots. ~ Congolese #Proverb" quote="A tree cannot stand without roots. ~ Congolese Proverb"]

Horn blowers, blow in unison. ~ Ugandan Proverb

A Tutsi liked to warm himself by the fire someone else took the bull. ~ Zinza People of Tanzania

Crying a lot does not give you peace of mind. ~ Burundian Proverb

If a leader loves you, he makes sure you build your house on rock ~ Ugandan Proverb

Old and new millet seeds end up in the same mill. ~ Acholi Proverb

If while climbing a tree you insist on going beyond the top, the earth will be waiting for you. ~African Proverb

Love is a despot who spares no one. ~ Namibian Proverb

When you mention the person with one eye, the one with the eye problem reacts. ~ Kenyan Proverb

A tree does not move unless there is wind. ~ Nigerian Proverb

Love is like a baby: it needs to be treated tenderly. ~ Congolese Proverb

A quarrelsome chief does not hold a village together. ~ Malawian Proverb

The belly does not swell if a woman is not pregnant. ~ Maasai Proverb

We are what our thinking makes us. ~ Nigerian Proverb

To love someone who does not love you, is like shaking a tree to make the dew drops fall. ~ African Proverb from The Congo

A slippery person is not a king. ~ Kenyan Proverb

It is difficult for two long-nosed lovers to kiss. ~ African Proverb

The vultures would not land at the village in which there is a wise old man. ~ Meru Proverb

The strong bull is overcome when it limps ~ Ethiopian Proverb

The eye cannot penetrate darkness. ~ Maasai Proverb

He who learns, teaches. ~ Ethiopian Proverb

Copying everyone else all the time, the monkey one day cut his throat. ~ Zulu Proverb

The strong do not need clubs. ~Senegalese Proverb

When a king reigns, it is thanks to the people when a river sings, it is thanks to the stones. ~ African Proverb

If the palm of the hand itches it signifies the coming of great luck. ~ Lesotho Proverb

He who is unable to dance says the yard is stony. ~ Kenyan Proverb

The one nearest to the enemy is the real leader ~ Ugandan Proverb

The hen pecks and wipes its beak. ~ Kenyan Proverb

A flea can trouble a lion more than a lion can trouble a flea. ~ Kenyan Proverb

So many little things makes a man love a woman in a BIG way. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

When I think of the others's misfortunes, I forget mine. ~ Algerian Proverb

If a blind man says he will throw a stone at you, he probably has his foot on one. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

Every door has its own key. ~ Kenyan Proverb

Supposing doesn't fill the grain basket 'if' doesn't fill the larder. ~ Ovambo Proverb

Every fame has a foundation. ~ African Proverb

To neglect one's ancestors would bring ill-fortune and failure in life. ~ African Proverb

Happiness requires something to do, something to love and something to hope for. ~ Swahili Proverb

A bird that flies from the ground onto an anthill does not know that it is still on the ground.
~ Nigerian Proverb

You can not tell a hungry child that you gave him food yesterday. ~ Zimbabwean Proverb
[clickToTweet tweet="You can not tell a hungry child that you gave him food yesterday. ~ Zimbabwean #Proverb" quote="You can not tell a hungry child that you gave him food yesterday. ~ Zimbabwean Proverb"]

What has horns must not be hid in a sack. ~ Zulu Proverb

An okra tree does not grow taller than its master. ~ Krio (Sierra Leone) Proverb

He is a fool whose sheep runs away twice. ~ Ashanti Proverb

When your neighbour's horse falls into a pit, you should not rejoice at it, for your own child may fall into it too. ~ Yoruba Proverb



All heads are the same, but not all thoughts are the same. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

Even the fiercest leader in the world is overcome by sleep. ~ Malawian Proverb

Supposing doesn't fill the grain basket 'if' doesn't fill the larder. ~ Ovambo Proverb

Fear no forest because it is dense. ~ African Proverb

An empty pot makes the loudest noise. ~ Kenyan Proverb

One head alone does not go into council ~ Ghanaian Proverb

Birds sing not because they have answers but because they have songs. ~ African Proverb

A slave has no choice. ~ Kenyan Proverb

Children are the reward of life. ~ African Proverb from the Congo

Obstinacy does not redeem anyone. ~ Malawian Proverb

When a thing becomes perfect, it soon fades. ~ Moroccan Proverb

A man's wealth may be superior to him. ~ Cameroonian Proverb

No masika (rain season) without mosquitoes. ~ Kenyan Proverb

Only a medicine man gets rich by sleeping. ~ Kenyan Proverb

The rain does not recognize anyone as a friend it drenches all equally. ~ Ibo Proverb (Nigeria)

The betrothed of good is evil the betrothed of life is death the betrothed of love is divorce. ~ Malawian Proverb

Never marry a woman who has bigger feet than you. ~ Mozambican Proverb

No matter how beautiful and well crafted a coffin might look, it will not make anyone wish for death. ~African Proverb

The heart of the wise man lies quiet like limpid water. ~Proverb from Cameroon

Hope does not disappoint. ~South African Proverb

Those who accomplish great things pay attention to little ones. ~Malian Proverb

A child's lie is like a dead fish in a pond that in the end, always comes to the surface, explains his mother. ~Luo proverb

If two wise men always agree, then there is no need for one of them. ~ Zambian Proverb

If you are filled with pride, then you will have no room for wisdom. ~ Tanzanian Proverb

The key to a healthy body is a good head. ~ Somali Proverb

If the wind blows, it enters every crevice. ~ Egyptian Proverb

The more feathers a chicken has, the bigger it looks. ~ Zambian Proverb

Don't fight a lion with a stick. ~ Maasai Proverb

Do not tell the man who is carrying you that he stinks. ~ African Proverb from Sierra Leone

Where there is no shame, there is no honor. ~ Ethiopian Proverb

When your neighbour is wrong you point a finger, but when you are wrong you hide. ~ Ekonda People of the Congo

A crowd can easily overpower a bull. ~ South African Proverb

It is the grass that suffers when elephants fight. ~ Kenyan Proverb

If we put a hammer in every person's hand, could they all become blacksmiths? ~ Ghanaian Proverb

There is not such a thing in the world as a sheep of many colours. ~ Masai Proverb

The roaring lion kills no prey ~ Nigerian Proverb

Even in the monastery there is occasion for song and merriment. ~ Ethiopian Proverb

Being happy is better than being king. ~ Nigerian Proverb

A boat cannot go forward if each rows his own way. ~ Tanzanian Proverb

A little rain each day will fill the rivers to overflowing. ~African Proverb from Madagascar





The growing millet does not fear the sun. ~ Acholi Proverb

You don't need a light to see someone you know intimately at night. ~ Ghanaian Proverb

Gold should be sold to the one who knows the value of it. ~ African Proverb

Slowly, slowly, porridge goes into the gourd. ~ Kuria People of Kenyan & Tanzania

You cannot force water up a hill. ~ Maasai Proverb [clickToTweet tweet="You cannot force water up a hill. ~ Maasai #Proverb" quote="You cannot force water up a hill. ~ Maasai Proverb"]

When a strong man sends a message, he sends it with a weak man ~Ethiopian Proverb

A child does not laugh at the ugliness of his mother. ~Ghanaian Proverb

A deaf ear is followed by death and an ear that listens is followed by blessings. ~ Samburu Proverb

A big fish is caught with big bait. ~ African Proverb from Sierra Leone

Wealth is like hair in the nose: it hurts to be separated whether from a little or from a lot. ~ Malagasy Proverb

If you think you have someone eating out of your hands, it is a good idea to count your fingers. ~ Nigerian Proverb

Even the Niger river must flow around an island. ~ Hausa Proverb

Where you will sit when you are old shows where you stood in youth. ~ Yoruba Proverb

Leadership does not depend on age. ~ Namibian Proverb

Words are sweet, but they never take the place of food. ~ Ibo proverb [clickToTweet tweet="Words are sweet, but they never take the place of food. ~ Ibo #proverb" quote="Words are sweet, but they never take the place of food. ~ Ibo proverb"]

A single bracelet does not jingle. ~ Congolese Proverb

Pretend you are dead and you will see who really loves you . ~ African Proverb

A woman is never old when it comes to the dance she knows. ~ African Proverb

When the baobab tree has fallen, the goats start climbing on it. ~ Malian Proverb

Eat when the food is ready speak when the time is right. ~ Ethiopian Proverb

One who causes others misfortune also teaches them wisdom. ~ African Proverb

When the powerful sit, they are none the weaker. ~ Ugandan Proverb

Too much discussion leads to a quarrel. ~ Ivorian Proverb

He who tells the truth is never wrong. ~ Swahili Proverb [clickToTweet tweet="He who tells the truth is never wrong. ~ Swahili #Proverb" quote="He who tells the truth is never wrong. ~ Swahili Proverb"]

If you do not have patience you cannot make beer. ~ Ovambo proverb

An intelligent enemy is better than a stupid friend. ~ Senegalese proverb

