

LEARNING BY EAR 2012

"I am still human - A story of Africa's mentally ill"

EPISODE 8: "Changing attitudes"

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List of characters by scene:

SCENE ONE: VALERIE AND IRENE HAVE BREAKFAST TOGETHER

- Valerie (f, 19)
- Irene (f,19)
- Narrator

SCENE TWO: NIGHT OF PRAYERS AT KALAMA'S HOUSE

- Malemba (f, 35)
- Kalama (m, 40)
- Chumba (m, 16)
- Mixed voices (3 - 4 people, age and gender mixed)
- Narrator

SCENE THREE: KAPAKA RESUMES SEARCH FOR JOB

- Kapaka (m, 25)
- Cashier (f, 20)
- Patel (m, 40)
- Narrator

SCENE FOUR: IRENE AND VALERIE AT DR.MAHIRO'S

- **Valerie (f, 19)**
- **Irene (f, 19)**
- **Mahiro (m, 50)**

INTRO:

Hello and welcome to Learning by Ear. This is the eighth episode of the story entitled **“I am still human”** - a radio drama focusing on mental illness in Africa. Just to recap in case you missed out on the last episode: Malemba took her son Chumba to Dr. Mahiro, the only psychiatrist in the country. He suspected Chumba of having a brain disorder known as autism. And to Irene’s surprise, her friend Valerie returned to her room at the college, after running away and being lost in the streets. Finally, Kapaka decided to seek professional help from Dr. Mahiro after realising the danger he was facing: He is suffering from depression. Let's find out what happens next in this episode entitled **“Changing attitudes”**. We begin our story with Valerie and Irene having breakfast.

SCENE ONE: VALERIE AND IRENE HAVE BREAKFAST TOGETHER

1. **ATMO:** **IN IRENE’S ROOM**

2. **SFX:** **TEA BEING POURED INTO A CUP**

3. **VALERIE:** Thank you. Thank you, Irene. And thank you for offering me your clothes. I had no idea that the college had taken everything that belonged to me, and stored it.

4. **IRENE:** They had to give your room to another student. You know I have never told the administration about your condition. Except for a few friends, not many students know what you are going through.

5. **VALERIE:** But I am back now. I want to continue with my studies.
I feel fine.
6. **IRENE:** Valerie, I am not sure that's such a good idea. You came here this morning in a very bad state. I am glad that you say you feel fine, but for how long, Val? An hour, half a day? Then we go back to the same. Let's go and see Dr. Mahiro. Let's fight this thing together. I am willing to help but you must be willing to be helped.
7. **VALERIE:** Yes, of course I am willing. I do not want to hear the voices I heard again and if this doctor can help, then yes, let's go. I'm ready.
8. **IRENE:** Good. Tell me something, Valerie. When you hear those voices, what exactly do they tell you? And are they male or female voices?
9. **VALERIE:** I don't know. I just know that I feel threatened. And I also feel like those around me are threatened.
10. **IRENE:** Is that the reason you ran off from me in town like that the other night?
11. **VALERIE:** Maybe, I am not sure. Have I missed a lot at college?
12. **IRENE:** Well yes, you have Valerie, but not to worry. You can always take up your studies again when the doctor says

you can. Are you ready to go now?

13. VALERIE: (surprised) Ready? Ready for what?

14. IRENE: Oh no, here we go again...

15. NARRATOR: Valerie's last response takes Irene by surprise. She thought her friend was better! Keep listening to find out what happens next. In the same town, Malemba has told her brother Kalama that her son Chumba may have to live with autism for the rest of his life. Kalama, a fervent Christian, believes he has the answer to what man cannot achieve. So he secretly invited his "brothers and sisters" for a night of prayers to cast out the demons from his nephew Chumba.

SCENE TWO: NIGHT OF PRAYERS AT KALAMA'S HOUSE

16. (Kalama leads in singing a Christian song)

17. MALEMBA: Kalama, can I talk to you for a second? In private, please.

18. KALAMA: Brethren – keep praying and singing. The devil shall be defeated tonight! My nephew will be set free!

19. VOICES: Amen! Amen! Amen!

20. KALAMA: I will be right back.

21. SFX: **DOOR OPENING AND CLOSED**

22. MALEMBA: **(whisper)** Kalama I appreciate what you are trying to do, but why didn't you tell me that you planned a prayer meeting? Chumba does not like crowds! He does not like strangers suddenly storming into his life. I have told you this a million times before.

23. KALAMA: **(loud whisper)** Malemba, that is not Chumba. Those are the demons who don't want us to interact with the boy. They are scared of prayer and do not want to leave him. We must help Chumba.

24. MALEMBA: But Kalama, I told you that the brain specialist, Dr. Mahiro, told me Chumba's condition can not be reversed. It can only be controlled but there is no cure for him. He has this autism sickness.

25. KALAMA: What is impossible for man to heal is possible through prayer. Believe with us, sister, Chumba is going to be freed of all those demons that have tormented him almost all his life.

26. MALEMBA: Kalama, I used to think the same. But after the doctor clearly explained things to me, I think it's better to try what he has proposed. That is to train Chumba how to manage his behaviour, and to train me as a parent how to best handle him. The treatment will not totally cure him but it will make his unusual behaviour occur less.

27. KALAMA: So do you want me to...

28. CHUMBA: (starts to shout and make strange noises in the next room)

29. MALEMBA: Oh no! He is now reacting with aggression. Please tell them to stop.

30. KALAMA: Malemba, those are the demons, they are feeling the heat of the prayers. Stay with me on this, it's going to be a tough battle, but eventually, we shall overcome! Come, let's go back in.

31. CHUMBA: (makes more strange and louder noises)

32. NARRATOR: Many Africans believe that mental illness or breakdowns have to do with demons and spirits. And so religion plays a major role in forming society's attitudes towards those with mental illnesses. After finding out what she knew now, Malemba chooses to abandon part of her belief and to try therapy. But here is her brother Kalama, reluctant and rigidly saying only prayers could cure Chumba. Are we going to see a miracle? Stay tuned to find out.

Kapaka for his part, after agreeing to see Dr. Mahiro for counselling and beginning to take medication against depression, feels it is time to get back his old job. So he goes to see his former boss, Mr. Patel.

SCENE THREE: KAPAKA RESUMES SEARCH FOR JOB

KW begin

33. ATMO: **AT ALL-IN-ONE-SUPERMARKET (BUSY SUPERMARKET AMBIENCE)**

34. KAPAKA: Hi. Did you know this used to be my counter? I am
Kapaka,
by the way.

35. CASHIER: Excuse me sir, but I am too busy at the moment.

36. SFX: **BEEPING SOUNDS AS WHEN GROCERIES ARE SCANNED**

37. KAPAKA: Hmmmm....okay...okay. But I am coming back. That's my place there. I am coming back. You just keep warming my seat for me, okay?

38. CASHIER: You are crazy, man! Sorry, customer. I have to make a call.

39. SFX: **TELEPHONE BEING DIALLED**

40. KAPAKA: No, you don't have to make that call, I am going to Patel's office all the same. And I am sure by now he has seen me on the security cameras. Oh, right, there comes the boss.

41. SFX: **TELEPHONE RECEIVER BEING PLACED BACK**

KW end (alternative 1)

42. PATEL: **(trying to act friendly)** Kapaka, what a surprise!
Please follow me to my office.

43. KAPAKA: How are you, Mr. Patel? I am back!

44. PATEL: I can see that, I can definitely see that. Come in...come inside.

- 45. SFX:** **DOOR CLOSED ABRUPTLY**
- 46. PATEL:** **(changes tone)** What the hell do you think you are doing? I was told you had lost your mind, but I never expected it was that bad. Are you now threatening my workers?
- 47. KAPAKA:** Noo... no, Mr. Patel, you got it all wrong again. First of all, I never lost my mind. I was depressed, badly depressed, to the point where I almost... eh... you know... committed suicide.
- 48. PATEL:** Om shanti shanti shanti!
- 49. KAPAKA:** **(shocked)** Mr. Patel, are you already wishing that I was dead in your language?
- 50. PATEL:** No, those words mean in my language "peace in mind, speech and body". You need to start practising yoga. It is good for you, for your mind. It will help you.
- 51. KAPAKA:** **(surprised)** Yoga!?! What are you talking about? I came here to ask you to give me back my job. Not to start practising some Kung-fu.

52. PATEL: (offended) Hey, Kung-fu is Chinese!

KW end (alternative 2)

Listen, Kapaka, I am sorry but I can't re-employ you. You said you were depressed and this thing is contagious. If you come back all my cashiers could get it and then who would serve the customers? No, sorry, I can't help you.

53. KAPAKA: Patel, depression is not...

54. PATEL: (cuts him short) *Mr.* Patel, remember? MISTER Patel!

55. KAPAKA: Whatever, man! I thought you were educated and understood that depression is a mental condition. You can not infect somebody else with it.

56. PATEL: That's what science says, my friend. But we know better. We who practise spiritualism know better.

57. KAPAKA: Mr. Patel, you have treated me unfairly twice now: First when you fired me for no reason, and now because of my sickness. I am taking medication, and I have started psychiatric therapy. I am on my way to recovery, I firmly believe so. And when I am fine, I will make sure you pay for all the injustice you have done to me.

58. PATEL: Threats will not get you anywhere, Kapaka. Go to a mental institution or practise my religion. It will help you. Sorry, but I have a lot of work to do. And please don't harass my workers. If you do, I will call the police.

59. KAPAKA: This is not over PATEL, it's not over yet!

60. SFX: **DOOR OPENED AND CLOSED**

61. NARRATOR: One of the most difficult challenges for people suffering from a mental illness is being integrated back into society. Most people who have had a mental problem have difficulties regaining the trust and confidence of their communities. Kapaka is beginning to realise that it will be a long road before he can go back to work. As he leaves Patel's office at the supermarket where he used to work, Irene and Valerie are making their way into Dr. Mahiro's examination room.

SCENE FOUR: IRENE AND VALERIE AT DR.MAHIRO'S

62. ATMO: **AT DR. MAHIRO'S EXAMINATION ROOM**

63. MAHIRO: **(calls out in a tired voice) Neeext!**

64. SFX: **CREAKING SOUND WHEN DOOR OPENS**

65. MAHIRO: Yes, what can I do for you ladies?

66. (IRENE AND VALERIE TALK AT SAME TIME)

67. MAHIRO: One at a time, please. Haven't we met before? The slim one, I mean.

68. VALERIE: Have we? I don't know... maybe.

69. IRENE: My name is Irene, this is my friend Valerie. The two of you have actually met. She came here when she started hearing voices. It has gotten worse now.

70. MAHIRO: **(remembering)** Of course! I told her to come back, but she never did. I am sure it must have gotten worse since then. Tell me what happened. Because from her looks she doesn't fit the normal schizophrenic profile. She looks neat, tidy and well taken care of.

71. IRENE: I had a lot to do with that doctor. Valerie came to me this morning with almost no clothes on.

72. MAHIRO: Mmmh...

OUTRO:

That brings us to the end of our eighth episode, in this story on mental illness in Africa. Valerie has just learned that she might suffer from schizophrenia, a mental disease that is very complex and can have different symptoms and causes. Will Dr. Mahiro be able to help her fight it?

Will Kapaka ever find a job? And will Chumba get better? This and more in the coming episode. If you wish to listen to this episode again or to any other episode, please visit our website at dw.de/lbe. You can also follow us on Facebook. Until next time - bye bye.