

Learning by Ear 2014

Crossroads Generation – Season 4: Facing New Challenges

EPISODE TEN: Is It Possible?

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INTRO:

1. **NARRATOR:** Hello there and welcome to the tenth episode of Crossroads Generation. This is the fourth season of our ongoing drama about the challenges young Africans face. Last time, Sama revealed to Kadu why she has always been guarded about letting him visit her at home:

2. FLASHBACK: EPISODE 9, LINES 101-105

***KADU:** Your sister? I know you have brothers. You never told me you had a sister.*

***SAMA:** Well, I do. Her name is Noni.*

***KADU:** Why didn't you tell me?*

***SAMA:** Because my sister is... is... She's different.*

***KADU:** I don't understand. You won't let me see her because she's different?*

3. **NARRATOR:** This is one reason; the other is that Sama's parents insist on keeping Noni in chains. Nevertheless, last time, Sama agreed that Kadu could meet Noni. Meanwhile, Kadu's elder sister Mercy had a row with her husband Niki, and ran away to her friend Tina's. When Niki came round to apologize, and to take Mercy and their daughter Linda home again, she agreed to go with him - but on one condition:

4. FLASHBACK: EPISODE 9, LINES 84, 87-90

***MERCY:** We have to see Counsellor Margaret again. (...)*

***NIKI:** I'm not going.*

***MERCY:** Then we're not coming with you. It's as simple as that, Niki!*

***NIKI: (SIGHS)** Okay, fine! I'll go and see Counsellor Margaret with you.*

***MERCY:** Good! Because we already have an appointment.*

5. NARRATOR: Margaret has given Mercy and Niki support and advice in the past, to help them come to terms with Niki's HIV infection. Today, though, Niki and Mercy have a very particular topic they want to discuss with the counsellor. Let's find out what it is in today's episode, "Is It Possible?" Mercy and Niki are already at the counsellor's office, where they hope they'll get some answers...

SCENE 1: MERCY AND NIKI AT THE COUNSELLOR'S

6. **ATMO: EVENING, QUIET NEIGHBOURHOOD, BIRDS CHIRPING**
7. **SFX: DOOR OPENS**
8. **SFX: FOOTSTEPS OF TWO PEOPLE WALKING IN**
9. **MARGARET:** Hi Niki, hi Mercy. Sorry to keep you waiting. I had to see another couple first. Come in. Sit down.
10. **NIKI/MERCY:** Thank you, Madam Margaret.
11. **MARGARET:** **(CHUCKLES)** Come on, Mercy, I told you last time. Just call me Margaret.
12. **MERCY:** **(CHUCKLES)** Hard to teach an old dog new tricks.
13. **ALL LAUGH**
14. **MARGARET:** Okay, let's get down to business. Niki, Mercy tells me you have some issues you two would like to discuss.
15. **NIKI:** **(UNCOMFORTABLE)** Yeah, well... no, not really.
16. **MARGARET:** How are things at home? Any challenges?
17. **NIKI:** Nothing any normal couple can't handle...
18. **MERCY:** Except we're not a normal couple.
19. **NIKI:** What are you implying?

20. **MERCY:** Come on Niki, all of us in this room know that you and I are not a normal couple. We're in a very particular situation that means we can't do things normal couples do.
21. **NIKI:** You see now, Margaret? This is what I have to deal with. I keep being reminded that I'm HIV positive! And then, when I complain, I somehow end up as the bad guy.
22. **MERCY:** Oh, great! Are we going to make this an argument? You know I --
23. **MARGARET:** Sorry - if I may ask, what are these things that 'normal couples' - to use your words - do, but you can't, Mercy?
24. **MERCY:** **(SIGHS)** A couple of days ago my husband here wakes up in the middle of the night and asks me to have sex with him. Without protection.
25. **MARGARET:** Really?
26. **MERCY:** Yes! Ask him.
27. **MARGARET:** Niki, is this true?
28. **NIKI:** I didn't --

29. **MERCY:** Stop lying, Niki! Why are you lying?
30. **NIKI:** **(SIGHS)** Yes, I did ask her to... but I... I... **(UNABLE TO FINISH)**
31. **MARGARET:** Go on, Niki. Why did you want to have unprotected sex, knowing your condition?
32. **NIKI:** Madam, I... I want a child.
33. **MARGARET:** **(SURPRISED)** Oh!

Musical interlude

SCENE 2: KADU TAKES TO HIS HEELS

34. **ATMO: SLUM RESIDENTIAL AREA, PEOPLE TALKING ETC.**

Flashback Ep. 25, line 2 / Ep. 26, line 2

35. **SAMA:** We're here. Promise you won't freak out, Kadu.
36. **KADU:** Why would I freak out, Sama? Don't worry!
37. **SAMA:** Okay. Let me open the door.
38. **SFX: KEY TURNS IN LOCK**
39. **SFX: DOOR OPENS**
40. **NONI:** **GURGLING NOISE AS SHE CONVULSES**
41. **SAMA:** **(URGENT)** Oh my God - Noni!

42. **SFX: ONE PERSON'S FOOTSTEPS RUNNING INTO ROOM**

43. **KADU:** **(SCARED)** What... what is that? What's happening to her?

44. **SAMA:** Quick! Help me pull the bed away before she hits her head. **(ACTS OUT CARRYING SOMEONE)**
...Kadu, what are you doing? Help me, please - pass me that spoon, I need to put it in her mouth!

45. **KADU:** I... I... have to go. Banda and I have to catch the bus to town to see our sister Mercy... Bye.

46. **SFX: FOOTSTEPS GOING AWAY FAST**

47. **SAMA:** **(STRAINED)** Wait, Kadu - where are you going? You promised me you wouldn't freak out!

48. **SFX: FOOTSTEPS FADE AWAY**

49. **SAMA:** Kadu... **(TO HERSELF)** Oh, great!

Musical interlude

SCENE 3: NIKI CONFESSES TO MARGARET

50. ATMO: QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD, BIRDS CHIRPING

51. NIKI: I know it's unreasonable, but I just... I really want a child!

52. MARGARET: But why, Niki? I thought you'd adopted Linda?

53. MERCY: You ask him, Margaret! We knew what we were getting ourselves into when we decided to get married. And he wanted to adopt Linda! I didn't make him do it.

54. MARGARET: So why do you want another child, Niki? Is Linda not enough for you?

55. NIKI: For the sake of continuity. So that when I... when I die... **(BREAKS DOWN)**.

56. MERCY: Oh, Niki!

57. NIKI: **(SOBS)** So that when I die, my name... my own child can carry on my legacy.

58. MARGARET: I see... But have you thought about the consequences of having unprotected sex with an uninfected person, Niki?

59. **NIKI:** I know... **(EMOTIONAL)** I do know... I just... I'm just too confused right now.

60. **MARGARET:** And Mercy - how do you feel about having a child with Niki?

61. **MERCY:** There's nothing I'd like better. And he knows it! But we know that it's just not possible. I love my husband. I really do! But if both of us get the virus? Then what?

Flashback Ep. 11, line 2 / Ep. 15, line 4

62. **MARGARET:** What if I told you that under certain conditions it is possible to have a child with an infected person and remain uninfected?

63. **NIKI:** **(SURPRISED)** It is?

64. **MERCY:** Really? Someone told me that, but I didn't believe them.

65. **MARGARET:** Well, it is. Listen - if you want, I could set up a meeting with a doctor friend of mine, and you could discuss your options with her. But in the meantime, please continue to use condoms whenever you have sex, okay?

66. NIKI: Okay.

67. MERCY: **(SIGHS)**

KW BEGIN

68. MARGARET: And like I told you before - *do* things together! Exercise together, go shopping together, talk to each other. That will strengthen the bond between you. You'll find that talking is actually a really good way to relieve stress.

KW END

69. NIKI: We have to go now. Thank you for seeing us. I feel better now.

70. MARGARET: Oh, one other thing. There's a support group for people affected by HIV that I would recommend you both join. It's called the Living Positive Support Group, and it's been very helpful to a lot of couples I know. They meet twice a week in this very building. I can give them a call if you want.

71. MERCY: Oh, please do. If it might help us deal with the situation, it's exactly what we need.

Musical interlude

SCENE 4: ANITA SAVES THE DAY

72. **ATMO: SLUM ATMO, ACTIVITY IN THE BACKGROUND, PEOPLE TALKING ETC**
73. **NONI: GURGLES**
74. **SAMA:** Come on, my sister - Noni, please don't do this.
Please stop. You're scaring me.
75. **NONI: CONTINUES TO CONVULSE**
76. **SAMA: (ALMOST CRYING)** Please, Noni, please calm down! This fit has gone on too long...
77. **NONI: GURGLING SOUNDS**
78. **SAMA:** Noni, please! **(CALLS)** Somebody, help! Help me!
79. **SFX: KNOCK ON DOOR**
80. **ANITA: (THROUGH DOOR)** Hello! What's happening in there? Do you need help?
81. **SAMA: (ALMOST CRYING)** Yes, please help me! My sister's having a fit and it won't stop.
82. **ANITA: (THROUGH DOOR)** Can you open the door?
83. **SAMA:** Just push it! It's open.
84. **SFX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN**
85. **SFX: URGENT FOOTSTEPS COMING IN**

Flashback Ep. 11, line 4

86. **ANITA:** Oh no - quick, get that spoon out of her mouth! Did you put it there?
87. **SAMA:** Yes. Dad says it stops her from swallowing her tongue.
88. **ANITA:** No. That's not true. Take it out.
89. **SFX: SPOON ON TEETH NOISE AS IT IS REMOVED FROM MOUTH**
90. **ANITA:** Pass me that pillow to rest her head on.
91. **SFX: PILLOW PASSED**
92. **NONI: CONVULSIONS REDUCE AND STOP**
93. **SAMA: (CRIES) Oh, thank you! The fit has stopped!**
94. **ANITA: (SIGHS IN RELIEF) By the way, I'm Anita. What's your name? Where are your parents?**
95. **SAMA:** I'm Sama. My parents went to town to look for work, and my brothers come home late from school.
96. **ANITA:** And why is the girl chained to the bed?
97. **SAMA:** Dad says my sister was bewitched...
98. **ANITA: (CUTS IN) No, darling, she suffers from an illness called epilepsy.**

- 99. SAMA:** So she's not bewitched, then? Maybe... Does that mean she can get some help from a doctor?
- 100. ANITA:** Yes - you can get medicine to treat it, and there are other kinds of therapy that would help her, too. But of course she needs to see a doctor first.
- 101. SAMA:** My dad says he chains her to the bed for her own safety while we're away.
- 102. ANITA:** But that's wrong. See how the chains hurt her legs, especially when she's convulsing?
- 103. SAMA:** I've told him many times, but he won't listen.
- 104. ANITA:** Next time this happens, please don't put anything in her mouth, okay?
- 105. SAMA:** Okay.

KW BEGIN

106. ANITA: It's very dangerous to put something in someone's mouth when they're having a fit. This can choke her. All you need to do is remove anything dangerous from around her and rest her head on something soft. You did well to push the bed away.

107. SAMA: Does that help stop the seizures?

108. ANITA: No, but it means she's less likely to hurt herself. Once you've done that, all you can do is wait for it to pass.

KW END What's her name?

109. SAMA: Noni.

110. ANITA: Does she go to school?

111. SAMA: No.

112. ANITA: What time do your parents get home? I'd like to talk to them.

113. SAMA: I don't know. But you can wait here if you want.
Thank you so much, Anita!

OUTRO:

Phew - what a piece of luck that Anita was around! Sounds like there might actually be a solution to Noni's problems... What will Noni's father Paulo say when Anita talks to him? There are dark clouds looming - and not just because it's been raining so much lately. Someone's about to find out about Niki's well-kept secret... Join us next time to hear what's going on! In the meantime, don't forget to visit our website dw.de/lbe or look us up on Facebook. Bye bye!