



'We love children but not enough to have them'

It is 2026, and just like in generations before us, the "natural" order of a woman's life has long been framed in a way that at some point she will feel an undeniable pull toward motherhood. It is a concept so deeply ingrained in our minds from the moment we reach childbearing age, often presented not as a choice but as something inevitable. But what happens when a woman decides that is not the life she wants for herself? In a recent tweet, 25-year-old Mary Ashley Ainomugisha got social media abuzz when she tweeted that she had tied her tubes (tubal ligation) because she had no intention of ever bearing children. Conversations around motherhood remain closely tied to ideas of womanhood, legacy, and fulfillment. To step outside of that expectation means one has to be prepared for the scrutiny from disappointed aunts, disbelief from parents, and sometimes, outright dismissal. And yet, the shift is happening. A growing number of women are standing firmly in their choices, redefining what a full and meaningful life can look like on their own terms. After Ashley's tweet, one comment stood out; a man asking her to return at 40 and confirm whether she still stood by her choice. **Gloria Haguma** spoke to four different women who have chosen the child-free path.

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I DO NOT HAVE THE PATIENCE FOR IT

I did not have a dramatic moment where I decided I did not want children. It was simply never there. Even as a teenager, I could imagine a partner, a full life, a future that felt rich and complete, but children were never part of that picture. Not once. In my mid-20s, while in a serious relationship, I became very intentional about not getting pregnant and that is when it really clicked for me. I wanted the relationship, the companionship, the shared life, but not the slightest pull toward motherhood. And if I am honest, it feels more like something internal; you could say it is how I am wired.

I like children. I enjoy their honesty, their unpredictability, and I soften when I hold a baby because there is something instinctive about it. But liking children is not the same as wanting to build your entire life around

raising one. I know myself well enough to admit that I do not have the patience required to raise a child the way I think they deserve to be raised. Parenting is not something you do halfway. It is a lifelong commitment, and if you are not built for it, forcing it does not serve anyone; not you, and certainly not the child. And then there is pregnancy. The whole process feels intense in a way I have never been drawn to.

My family has had years to come to terms with my decision. Now, I assume they have accepted it, at least outwardly. Privately, I suspect there is still a quiet hope that I might change my mind someday. That tends to be the nature of African parents. My friends, on the other hand, have been largely supportive. As for society, I do not spend much time thinking about what it expects of me.

I do not feel the pressure and I think it is because I took the time to sit with my decision privately, to be sure of it before I ever said it out loud. By the time I began to share it, it was not a question or a conversation; it was simply a statement about how I had chosen to live my life.

Of course people have opinions and I am aware of them; I just do not let them shape

my decisions. One of the more common misunderstandings is the idea that if you do not want children, you must not like them. That is not true. I even prefer living in places where I can hear them play in the background. There is something comforting about it.

In relationships, I am very upfront about it when I start dating; usually by the second date, sometimes earlier if the conversation naturally goes there and it has had a significant impact on my dating life. However, there is no point in letting things progress if you are not aligned on something that fundamental.

The reactions are always interesting. Some men are relieved; no timelines, no expectations, no pressure. Others struggle to understand it entirely. There is also a noticeable shift in dynamics. When you are not interested in children, marriage, or financial dependency, it removes certain expectations that people are used to relying on.

People often think that there is some kind of trauma or heartbreak behind the decision. It is as though a woman stepping outside what is considered "normal" needs a backstory to explain it. But sometimes, there is not one.

There is also a strong cultural expectation that ties wo-

manhood to motherhood. Step outside that, and you are seen as lacking in some way, immature, incomplete, even selfish.

For me, a fulfilling life is about having my health, my freedom, and the ability to take care of myself and the people I love. It is about a career I am proud of, the chance to travel, to enjoy good food, to build deep, meaningful relationships. It is also about experiencing joy and connection in all its forms, including intimacy with people I genuinely like and respect.

To any woman considering a similar path, be honest with yourself. Take the time to understand your reasons. Make sure your decision is not coming from fear or unresolved pain. And once you are clear, stand by it.

At the same time, allow yourself the space to change your mind if your feelings evolve. Life is long, and certainty can shift. But if you choose to remain child-free, approach it with intention. Plan your life; financially, emotionally, socially. Independence requires structure. Most importantly, remember that you do not owe anyone children. Not your family, not society, not a partner. It is your life. Just do not turn it into a crusade.