

Your driver's wellbeing is not separate from yours

You swallowed your blood pressure medicine at 6:30am. It is going to be a hectic day, and you need your body steady. You skipped breakfast because you are doing intermittent fasting. At your wellness visit earlier this year, the doctor warned you about a sedentary lifestyle, so today you are counting steps.

When you get to work, you take the stairs instead of the lift. You open the window to let in fresh air. You sit on your ergonomically adjusted chair and sip lemon water throughout the day to flush out toxins. You are steadily building the tiny habits that lead to good health, a quiet student of James Clear and his book *Atomic Habits*. You believe that tiny improvements, repeated daily, will change your life.

The day ends early because you have a 7am flight the next day. Your driver drops you home and you give him clear instructions for the 4:30am airport pick up the next morning.

The next day, your driver somehow, almost magically, makes it on time to your home in Kansanga from Nansana. You step into the car, still sleepy, and immediately fasten your seat belt. By the time he joins the Entebbe Express Highway in Munyonyo, you are asleep. Trusting that you will arrive safely at the airport. In that moment, the blood pressure you are managing, the careful habits you are building, the lemon water, the stairs, all of it, rests in the hands of a man who woke up long before you did.

By 4:45am on the Entebbe Express Highway, institutional survival is no longer protected by policy documents; it is quietly outsourced. Your organisation may have arranged travel insurance for you. It may have loaded your card with out-of-station allowance because you are a valued asset. But the moment you step into that car, the preservation of a multi-million-dollar institution rests in the hands of a man who may have slept for only three hours.

And in that same moment, your health stops being individual. It is no longer tied only to the rhythm of habits you are trying to build; it becomes shared. In that moving vehicle, two human nervous systems travel together. One asleep. The other responsible for both lives.

Except the one carrying both lives may already be stretched thin. His allowance may not stretch far enough to secure safe transport to your home at that hour of the morning. He may also be managing blood pressure of his own, navigating school fees, fuel prices, and the quiet weight of a family that depends on him.

Public health has taught us that health is relational. It lives in systems and thrives in environments. That is why we advocate for air quality, water safety, and herd immunity. We understand that what surrounds us shapes what happens inside us.

Driving is no different. If a driver slept for three hours, biological responses kick in: reaction time slows and focus shifts. If he is poorly paid and inadequately supported, exhaustion creeps in and decision-making narrows. The day you choose a driver for yourself or for your children, you automatically become a custodian of his wellbeing too, because it affects yours.

Your organisation may not extend its policy to adequately cover your driver's health but remember that wellness does not end with blood pressure readings, intermittent fasting, seatbelts, lemon water and staircases. It extends to the health systems that carry us and the people who operate them.

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