

Wisdom from an African Proverb



The orange morning sun was up in the sky while the cold morning breeze hit my face. I was on a motorcycle going to hospital for my dialysis appointment. There were few cars on the road even though it was neither a weekend nor a public holiday. We rode past a soap manufacturing factory and as we approached a bridge everything happened so fast. We saw that a car had plunged into the water down below.

What most people would do in in such a situation would be to find help or try to save the life of the driver. However, all sorts of comments filled the air. “He was drunk.” One man commented. “No, I think he was under the influence of drugs.” Added another.

Still another mumbled...”He was driving recklessly thinking he owned the road.”

Amid the people commenting and speculating, a few people managed to get into the water and were able to save the driver. Luckily, he escaped without any injuries.

“Never judge the boy before listening to the girl.”

When asked what went wrong, the driver of the car explained that as he approached the bridge, a school pupil appeared from nowhere and crossed the road without any warning.

The driver risked his life for the sake of the school pupil.

But even before anyone knew what happened, they started being judgmental.

An African elder once told someone who was going to punish a child who fought with a friend – without listening to both sides of the story, “Never judge the boy before listening to the girl.”

Before we judge anyone, let us first give them a chance to explain who they really are. And before commenting about a given situation, we should understand the details first.