

## Nostalgia and Perspective

Solomon started toddling a while ago. I loved to just sit and watch as he circled the couch with his hand gently using the back for balance. When he came to the corner, he would take three steps to the storage box we use as a coffee table. He would circle the box carefully with his hand on top until he reached the corner. Then, he would take the three additional steps by himself to reach the other corner of the couch. He enjoyed circling the couch and would often do it many times while giggling or babbling.

Solomon was taking these steps around the couch one day when I realized the passing of time. One night your baby goes to bed and wakes up a toddler. One night your toddler goes to bed and wakes up a child. Soon that child grows into a teenager who is then eager for college. And then you stop and wonder when did they grow up? I now have a child (Adah) who is no longer a toddler, and I now have a toddler who is no longer an infant.

It was during this moment that I noticed Maman Cele (my worker) who had walked into the room. I turned to her and sighed audibly. I told her I was sad that Solomon would no longer be a baby. Maman Cele gave me a confused look and said, "Don't be sad." I assumed she did not understand me. I explained I was sad that my baby is growing up. Again, Maman Cele gave me a confused look and said, "Don't be sad, rejoice." I must have given her a look that said I was still confused because she continued, "Be happy your baby is alive. Each day he grows, he is alive."

It was at that moment that I was ashamed. I live in a country where the mortality rate is astronomical – [1 in 7 children die before reaching the age of 5](#), and [WHO estimates put the rate as high as 28%](#). It should be noticed that an official census of the population has not been taken of the country in a long time, thus the mortality percentage estimates are based on the numbers reported which means the mortality rate could be higher or lower based on an unknown total population.



Here before me stood a woman who has lost a child and who loves my children as fiercely as she loves one of her own. She was not sad that Solomon would no longer be a baby, but she was rejoicing that he is alive each and every day. That was a tough lesson for (nostalgic) me, but I was definitely thankful for the new perspective she gave me.

