

Terms and Conditions

Have you ever seen ads of companies saying "Pay this amount today and you'll get this car with no extra fees"? I've heard them on the radio and seen commercials about those things. Let's say someone believed them and bought the car for a very cheap price. They are happy for a while until they begin to notice they have to keep on paying more money in order to keep the car. They wanted to return the car but in the Terms and Conditions there was a no return fee and they couldn't sue. So the person decided to sell the car but he couldn't, it was stated in the contract.

If there were any terms and conditions of being the oldest sibling I would honestly skip over it, then regret it afterward, like the person in the story I was just talking about. Being the older sibling, the oldest sister to be exact is very confusing. Now you might be thinking "How is being the oldest hard? You have all the power". Incorrect. I got a 50% deduction from my "power". Living in a Liberian household women have a lot of responsibilities. Cooking, cleaning, taking care of kids, etc. I don't mind that. When I began to notice that being the oldest was when my childhood (younger years) were rushed.

I remember I was in the 4th grade at my grandparent's house with my younger siblings as my mom went to work. My grandfather and I never would talk to each other. We would say our Salaams to each other and that'll be it. If you don't know what Salaams are it's a way of greeting other muslims. For example, I would say *As-Salaam-Alaikum* (Peace be up you) and the other person would reply *Wa-Alaikum-Salaam* (And unto you peace). He wasn't good at speaking English and I wasn't good at speaking our native language, Mandingo. We were just two people who knew each other but didn't talk. My siblings would always urge me to play games with them and I would never say no. But anytime I did play games my grandma would come out of nowhere and say "Wow so you're still playing little kid games? You're a woman now! Women don't play little kid games!". My mom would reassure me that my grandma is trying to help me act mature. So I decided

to act more mature, so that way I can take better care of my siblings. That was a choice I made, not my grandmother. I decided to be mature, not her. My family never forced religion on me because they took the culture more seriously. They referred to the culture as if it was the encyclopedia of African households. I would get stressed trying to reach their standards and sometimes wish wasn't the oldest. My little sister who is 9 would do something and be excused because she's just a kid. But they never said that to me. Why is it so different for them? All of the stress and overthinking encouraged me to get closer to my religion, Islam. That's when I made the BIG decision to wear my hijab. I didn't do it to be a woman. I didn't do it because of my family. I did it for me, which gave me more confidence that if I'm able to make choices like this for myself then that means I can overcome anything. I became more open minded and started to take more responsibility as the oldest and cherish it. Moral of the story, you don't always have to read the terms and conditions if you already feel confident with your decision. Your decision will not always be perfect or go smoothly for you but when you begin to embrace it more to the length you want and you'll begin to love it.