

Rufai Ajala

Senior Risk Manager – Softbank Investment Advisors (The Vision Fund)

INDUSTRY: **FINANCIAL SERVICES**



What is the best part of your job?

In this, my second career in Finance/Private equity, every day is a school day, I love the constant learning about investing and overcoming all manners of challenges; working with some of the brightest, most dynamic folks. Believe it or not there was a time in my life when I didn't know what an Instant Saver Account (ISA) was!

Biggest learning moment of your career?

Mostly learnt throughout my 20+ years as a Naval Officer, but also more recently, that if you have good leadership most if not all things fall into place.

What does Black history month mean to you?

Pride, connecting with heritage, remaining grounded and acknowledging all manner of people throughout history who have helped to open doors and make it easier for those behind, often at great personal sacrifice.

What advice would you give to your 16year-old Self?

Don't grow up too fast... enjoy being 16!

Why is being a positive role model important to you?

Having grown up on a South London estate, I want to give the next generation the confidence to successfully navigate life's challenges, whether just to survive life on the streets, or to get that top job and breaking the glass ceiling, sometimes on an uneven playing field.

What is your top tip to success?

Success is different for everyone, it isn't always material wealth or the usual comforts, and it's a journey; whatever it is, always keep a vision front of mind and do something every day no matter how small, towards that goal.

What is your greatest achievement?

Outside of being a father; I asked one of my teachers after my A-levels if I should apply to Cambridge... he wasn't particularly encouraging, so I applied, and I was accepted to study Natural Sciences at Trinity! As it turned out, I joined the Navy instead!

What are you listening to?

Art Pepper, Nas and Kano



Favourite food to boost your mood?

Yan and Fried Fish stew yum!

Biggest change since lockdown?

Learning to play the drums

Ideal Mentor?

Colin Powell



Role Model growing up?

My parents – tough love!