

GREAT JOURNS



SEE BEYOND YOUR LIMITS

As the twenty first century impactful person

"Trust yourself. Create the kind of self
that you will be happy to live with all your life.
Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny,
inner sparks of possibility into
flames of achievements."

~Foster C. McClellan~

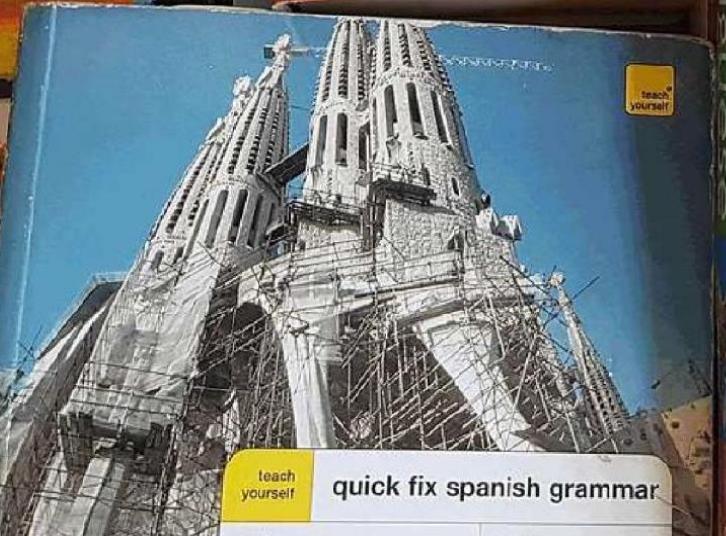
Barnabas Kipkorir Kirui

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the idea
for absolute

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my beloved family: Irene, my wife who gave me total support and encouragement and Macglaren Cheruto Kirui, my beloved daughter.

And to my beloved mom and late dad for the genetic DNA and determination to keep the dream alive. To my creator and sustainer of the universe and my God who gave me the ability to create.

Barnabas Kipkorir Kirui

20th February, 2024.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With the deepest gratitude I wish to thank many special people who came into my life: friends, associates, professionals, colleagues, family and many others. You have contributed to my growth, inspirations and determination by your presence.

I would like to express my sincere love and gratitude to my extended family and in-laws for their love and care for me as their brother, uncle and dad.

My gratitude goes to my wife who is so special to keep the fire burning and the strong belief in the family legacy.

Thanks to Macglaren Cheruto (Cheruu) my beloved daughter and Purity Cherotich (Chero) my niece, for never giving up on me and for their patience when papers were all over the beds, tables and chairs.

And especially to Mr. Albert Tanui, The Deputy Principal Kapkoros Barng'etuny Secondary School and the teacher of English and Literature, who with loyalty, dedication and hard work kept on making the effort to tirelessly complete the editing of the content of this book project.

A big thanks to Sheila Chepchumba, my younger sister and Brian Cheruiyot, my nephew, for dedicating their precious time to proof read this book project.

I would also like to acknowledge four of my friends, Silas Kemei, Nicholas Yegon, Hilary Kiptoo and Geoffry Sawe together with who I have travelled the rough and tough journey of life. Growing up together was fun but I must admit that it has not been an easy journey. Poverty and lack did not give us a chance to see the great gift that God gave to each one of us. Thanks be to God that with time, we have been able to see beyond our limits and now the lyrics is not the same. You are all

precious to me guys and I believe that God is taking us further than where we are today. We may not be where we want to be, but I thank God that we are not where we used to be. You are blessed and not cursed, heads and not the tails, victors and not victims. I love you all.

To my late dad who just passed away when I was about to complete this book project, thank you for always reminding me that with God all things are possible, especially when I was at my lowest moments. More gratitudes for giving God a chance to glorify Himself through you dad. May your Saul rest in perfect peace papa.

And to my creator, God, who programmed me for ultimate success.

FOREWORD

The realization of this inspiration book couldn't have happened at a better time, when success, which is the ultimate objective of human strivings, is increasingly becoming elusive, what with myriad challenges posed by the fear of failures, lack of motivation and self-doubt. The challenges include, *inter alia*: poor interpersonal relationships; negative peer pressure and media influence; drug and substance abuse; moral relativism and dilemmas; and the push for gender and sexual diversity. This book offers the roadmap on how to identify and amicably address the challenges, hence enable the reader especially the Christian to consciously embrace positivity, become engaged, empowered, ethical, prolific and, therefore, holistically successful.

The book is essentially a moral and ethical compass that is biased in favor of Christians. It will, therefore, be a treasured resource for practicing Christians who wish to impact the world in a special way. Importantly, the motivational book, will contribute immensely to attainment of quality and impactful Christianity. This is considered a critical requirement to the church that is keen to execute its core mandate as espoused in the great commission.

The book was written with utmost creativity and fits well in the motivational genre. The real genius of the book, is that, it contains compelling analogies, anecdotes, beautiful graphics, illustrations, mind blowing questions and insightful practical sessions. It is, therefore, very easy to read and apply. Further, the book, balanced and covers themes that are pertinent to holistic development of the twenty first century impactful Christian. In particular, the author has succeeded in maintaining a logical flow and coherent transition of ideas. He has started by encouraging the reader to, "see beyond your limits" and ended with the assurance

that, notwithstanding the level of success, " the love of God is upon us." What a soothing assurance, and way to end a motivational book!

I strongly believe this book will be a game changer in the field of motivation, more so among practicing Christians, teachers and preachers of the Word, the psychologists and counsellors. The book can also form part of reference materials in relevant academic fields.

I end by congratulating Brother Barnabas Kirui for penning such a powerful masterpiece. In particular, I commend him for using anecdotal evidence, which apart from resonating deeply with many in modern society (reader), they also serve as an indicators of a man used by God in a mighty way.

Simply get a copy, read and thank me later.

Lieutenant Colonel (Dr) Emmanuel Psongol Kondoltiony, PhD

Endorsement

"As someone who has risen through the ranks through sheer determination and hard work, I understand the importance of pushing beyond perceived limits. My journey from humble beginnings to becoming a Reverend has been marked by countless challenges, but it's the lessons I've learned along the way that have shaped me into the person I am today. 'See Beyond Your Limits' resonates deeply with my own experiences, and I believe its message can inspire others to do the same."

"This book is more than just a guide – it's a roadmap to success. The authors have woven together practical wisdom, inspiring stories, and actionable advice that will empower readers to shatter self-imposed limits and reach new heights. Whether you're looking to advance in your career, improve your relationships, or simply find more purpose in life, the principles outlined in this book will serve as a powerful catalyst for transformation."

"I wholeheartedly endorse 'See Beyond Your Limits' because I know firsthand the transformative power of perseverance and vision. If you're ready to break free from constraints and unlock your true potential, this book is an essential read. Let its pages guide you toward a brighter future, and may you emerge stronger, wiser, and more resilient than ever before."

Rev. Richard Kipngetich Chesire.

Pastor African Inland Church Kenya (AIC) Outspan Fellowship Church.

Vice Chairman AIC Eldoret East District Church Council (DCC).

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PREFACE

"See Beyond Your Limits" is a transformative journey that empowers readers to develop a positive mindset and embrace the boundless possibilities of personal growth.

Acknowledging that God created us and install inner power in us which is the combination of our basic energy and what we can do with energy to accomplish our goals in life. The more energy we can generate, the more energy we have available to focus on our goals. Of course, it's not just about having energy, but rather it's about using energy we have more effectively. There is only Energy and resistance. Learning to reduce your resistance allow you to make better use of your energy you already have. The majority of our energy at any given time is going to empower what we are afraid of, what we don't like or what we don't want. Learning to take control of our thoughts, feelings and emotions allow us to direct our energy towards what we love and want to create in our lives.

I believe all people have the seed of success within them. All they need to do is cultivate those seeds, water them, feed them, and they will begin to grow. So why do many people fail to grow and reach their potential? I have concluded that one of the main reasons is poor attitude. Many people don't have right attitude towards life. They possess a lot of potential and possibilities, yet never unleash them because they are convinced that they won't be able to learn and grow and blossom into something wonderful.

If you don't realize that you have genuine value and that you are worth investing in, then you will never put in the time and effort needed to grow to your potential. If you are not sure you agree with that, then consider what *Caroline Mys* said, " Your

destiny unfolds when you rise above the challenges of your life and use them as divine opportunities to move forward to unlock your higher potential."

In this empowering book, you will uncover the secrets to unlocking your true potential, breaking through barriers, and unleashing a boundless wellspring of possibilities. Through insightful guidance, stories and inspiring anecdotes, you will learn to harness your inner fire, conquer challenges, and propel yourself towards a life of limitless achievement. Prepare to transcend your boundaries, embrace newfound confidence, and embrace a future brimming with unprecedented opportunities.

The chapters covered in this book include: Beyond the ordinary, Opportunity, Success, check on your attitude and the love of God is upon your life. If you keenly read this book, the above outlined topics shall inspire you to see beyond your limits.

As you proceed to the main chapters of this book, let me remind you of a quote by Orison Sweet Marden that says, " Deep within man dwell those slumbering powers; powers that would astonish him, that he never dreamed of possessing: forces that would revolutionize his life if aroused and put into action."

CHAPTER ONE

BEYOND THE ORDINARY

Keep going, keep moving

life is a journey!

“You can completely recreate yourself.

Nothing is permanent. You’re not stuck.

You can think new thought. You can learn

something new. You can create new habit.

All that matter is that you decide today,

and never look back.”

~Idil Ahmed~

In the book of *Genesis 1:26-30* we see God laying out a very perfect plan for each one of us, so God created and gave us power and dominion over everything on earth, He gave that power and dominion for us to serve Him diligently in wherever He places us and to thrive in life. All of us have that. Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ encourages us in *II Timothy 1:6-7* to ignite our inner gifts and embrace infinite potentials, “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” Through this text it is a clear indicator that God has equipped us with power to propel us to greater heights in life if we put it in use.

So, this life is not straight, it has ups and downs. The people we interact with in life, whether in the family, church, neighborhood or places of work, whether they help us or not, we should not expect much from them. Some may mock, intimidate, harass or abuse us due to our challenges and limitations. No, don't expect much from the people that you need. It is your own responsibility to define your own way to become whom you want to be. Never assume that your people will help you to achieve your goals more than you do yourself. No, it is a very wrong assumption!

Life is like a journey taken through a road with tough courses and potholes. It takes courage, endurance and persistence to navigate through this challenging road.

Reaching a sharp bent doesn't mean it is the end of the road, you have to negotiate that corner boldly to see the continuity ahead. Sometimes you meet challenges on your way.



Stop lamenting, crying and blaming others for circumstances. Setbacks and limitations are inevitable, but your response defines you. Develop resilience by learning from challenges, use the failures to build your success and set your eyes ahead and keep going. More importantly, you need to break free from self-doubt and embrace a growth mindset that propels you towards success and gives you courage to navigate challenges with resilience, turning setbacks into stepping stones on your path to greatness. Remember, if water was to obey every force that it comes against, we could not be having lakes because the water would not reach their destination

that is why we don't have a straight river; all rivers move in a snaky way, they have to dodge certain obstacles and override some on their way to their destination.



If you are on your way in the right direction and the force comes to stop you, behave like a river, there are situations which you have to override and there are some that you have to dodge in order to reach your destiny.

Remember, on this journey, not all people you are travelling with or born with must help you, don't lament, quarrel or demand much from them. Think about this phrase "you cannot give what you do not have." There are people whom you are travelling with who are good-hearted and have desire to give, yet they have very little to offer. Just like you are struggling in life to make ends meet, other people too are struggling, fighting their own lives. Though, challenges differ, as you fight for basic needs including medical bills some are fighting hard on how to sustain or generate more wealth. You can't avoid them and the best thing you can do is making yourself more valuable by acquiring knowledge, learning new skills, or gaining experience. You cannot only improve yourself, but also increase your ability to help them/others.

Commit yourself to the pursuit of personal growth. We are living in a world where almost everything is digitalized. Digital technologies have completely changed the way we live our lives, you should be willing to grow in it to adapt into

changing tides, update your skills for you to remain relevant and productive. Learn always and relearn new ways of living according to the current trends of life. It is important also to unlearn the past habits which are no longer applicable in our lives today. You may find that new and exciting opportunities arise when you accept and embrace change. Adapting to change can take time and patience, but learning tips for handling changes can help you stay positive. Embrace changes with an open heart and connect with a global community that shares your drive for positive transformation. *Wilfred Peterson* once said, “Walk with the dreamers, the believers, the courageous, the cheerful, the planners, the doers, the successful people with heads in the clouds and their feet on the ground.”



"In 2019, I attended a KPSA-organized seminar at Kabarak University, which brought together directors of private schools."

In this journey of life, we need to be people who have courage of conviction to live as one. We need to be a people who believe in love, in faith, in kindness, in caring for our neighbors in a way that together we can find the solutions of the world. We need to understand that no single one of us is an island to itself that every single one of us holds a piece of what is required to build the right world where we can all survive.

Whether you are a business person or you are a career person or you are someone who is working in whatever field, we have one home and we share it. Together we protect it and fight for it. In fighting for the world together we fight for ourselves. In building a better world we build a better home for every single one of us. In building

a better future, we build a future for our children. It is a small world. It's too small for division, it's too small to be divided but we need to have courage and audacity to stand up together to fight for what it is right. Remember, no matter how smart you are, you are not smart enough to survive by yourself, no matter how rich you are, your wealth alone cannot keep you alive and keep you safe, that we all need one another looking out for one another and understanding that this is our home and it's a home we must protect.

Before you become effective and a good team player you must add value to yourself before you can master the art of adding value to others. That is, you have to understand yourself better than anyone else and pursuing self-discovery. By discovering who you are, you give yourself an opportunity to attain your full potential and influence others positively. You cannot unlock another person's potential, including that of your children without successfully doing that to yourself. *Morgen* once said, "Personal mastery is an incremental process," He went on to say, "Rather than making huge, unsustainable changes, it is all about developing your true self and becoming the person you were meant to be. No matter who or where you are, your path to your own personal mastery starts right now!"

Though, as much as we try to raise the standards of our lives, there are some limitations such as beliefs which may cause us to limit our intentions and thereby our actions, which impact our goals. We need to realize that a new perception is needed.

Think back to when you were beginning to figure the world out. The experiences you had through your own trial and errors those which were imposed on you through elders, friends, workmates and those which were considered socially normal have

impacted on how you formed the boundaries of possible outcomes that you could easily fathom.

While many of these beliefs are valuable and needed, what I do like to consider today is, are any of these beliefs limiting you today in your life?

I remember, some of us grew up in a society where children or rather young people cannot speak before their elders in a gathering, unless when they are responding to some questions directed at them. This belief limited most of us from acquiring public speaking skills. I used to admire how some elders speak eloquently with a lot of wisdom and humor in their speeches in some events. I had been dreaming of becoming a good public speaker though, the belief of being young to make a speech held me hostage for long. Whenever I got a chance I could only afford to say my name followed by “I don’t have much to say” even when I felt that I had a lot to share. Every time I thought about it, I felt scared that I wasn’t good enough and that people would judge me by my speech. The fear really kept me paralyzed in moving forward for some time. Thank goodness for the teaching profession which exposed me to realize my full potential, one day I was asked to accompany our students to an event which was attended by various dignitaries. Unexpectedly, I was asked to make some comments after the presentations of our learners, I had to overcome fear for once and after the shortest time of my presentation, there was a lot of cheering, laughter and thunderous clapping from the audience. After the event I got a lot of compliments and recognition for being a good orator. Through this, I was able to embody the impact I really wanted to see, to share knowledge in even more occasions, and realized the impact my fears were holding on this actually happening. I had limited myself by not believing in my worth and the value I offered. I worried about judgment of others over my authenticity. Therefore, I had to learn to trust myself and my ability now, not in a year or ten.

So I finally did it! I got a lot of invitations to preside over some graduation ceremonies for the ECDE Top class to primary one currently pre-primary two to grade one, prayers ceremonies for the KCPE candidate classes and various academic days' events. I have continued with more since then until now I have converted public speaking skills into writing this book. There were a few realizations I found to be interesting in outcome of the experience, which I am using to create new beliefs.

- I am a good speaker.
- People that I expected judgment from actually showed appreciation.
- Being authentically me on rostrum feels amazing and I trust myself even more now.
- Audience and friends have told me how much they value my speeches.
- I have even taken it to new level as I grow with these new experiences and created meditations and even writing some articles.
- I have a greater impact on the world when I give myself and my dreams opportunity.

You need to see beyond your limits. What would be possible for you if you could overcome those thoughts that limit you? I do like you to consider a few new perceptions I work with and how they could help you if adopted in your perceptions.

- You are perfect in every moment of every day, exactly as you are.
- You are worthy of so much more that you currently allow yourself.

- If you ever feel judged, it is about them not you. Furthermore, you really own your own authenticity, and that rocks!
- You will never completely 100% know how something will happen, but you have 100% control over your actions.
- You know what you want and that is enough to get started, you will keep learning as you go.
- Age is only a number, it is about how you feel.
- The more authentic you are, the more you will trust yourself.

Finally, I do like to say, our limitations only create suffering. When we limit our dreams, goals and desires, we limit our full potential. Overcoming the barriers of these limitations will propel you forward and help you live authentically and graciously, as you feel aligned with your truth.

A heartwarming and thought-provoking story has been circulating on social media about a boy from Turkana who was spotted doing his homework under streetlights. Upon closer inspection, it's clear that his determination and resilience are truly inspiring. As an orphan living with his grandmother, he's shown remarkable dedication to his education despite facing significant challenges.

Indeed, under the faint glow of a streetlight, a young soul pours his heart into books, driven by a hunger for knowledge that cannot be satiated. The darkness of his circumstances an orphan living with an elderly grandmother, devoid of even the simplest luxuries could have easily consumed him. Yet, in the stillness of the night, he finds solace in the light that others might discard as ordinary. Every page turned

is a testament to his unyielding spirit, a beacon of hope in a landscape often shrouded in hardship.

While some may find excuses in the comfort of their homes, this boy defies the shadows that surround him. His determination is a powerful reminder that our circumstances do not define us; rather, it's our resolve to rise above them that shapes our destiny. In a world where many voices whisper reasons to give up, he chooses to listen to the quiet strength within him – a strength that propels him forward, undeterred.

His story is not just one of personal triumph but a reflection of the potential that lies within each of us. What might seem like insurmountable obstacles to some is merely a starting point for others. The question lingers: What are we capable of achieving when fueled by passion and purpose? The boy under the streetlight embodies the truth that courage and determination can dismantle even the most formidable barriers.

Let his journey inspire you to confront your own challenges with renewed vigor. In the face of adversity, remember that excuses build regret, while action builds achievement. The light that guides him is not just the streetlamp overhead but the fire of possibility that burns within his heart. May we all find the strength to fan the flames of our own potential, transforming our lives and the lives of those around us.

Beyond the Ordinary

The boy's story is a testament to the extraordinary power of determination and resilience. At a young age, he's defying the odds and pushing beyond the boundaries of what's considered ordinary. His pursuit of education, despite the challenges he

faces, is a beacon of hope that inspires us to rethink our own potential. In a world where circumstances can often dictate outcomes, this young boy is rewriting the script. He's proving that with unwavering commitment and a strong will, even the most seemingly insurmountable obstacles can be overcome.

The phrase "ordinary" takes on a new meaning in the context of his story. What might be ordinary for some – giving up in the face of adversity – is not ordinary for this boy. Instead, he's choosing to go beyond the ordinary, to strive for more, and to create a better life for himself. His journey is a powerful reminder that we all have the capacity to transcend our circumstances and achieve greatness. The title "Beyond the Ordinary" is a fitting tribute to this young boy's remarkable spirit. May his story inspire us to look beyond our own limitations and strive for excellence, just as he has done.

CASE STUDY

The case study below showcases remarkable inspiring leaders who overcame challenging circumstances to achieve greatness. Their stories serve as a testament to the power of human potential and the importance of perseverance, hard work, determination thus fitting to this subject " Beyond The Ordinary "

- Herbert Hoover, 31st President of the United States: Hoover's journey to the presidency began with a difficult childhood. After losing his parents at a young age, he was sent to live with his uncle in Oregon. Despite these challenges, Hoover went on to become a successful mining engineer and humanitarian before being elected president in 1928.

- Alexander Hamilton, Founding Father and Secretary of the Treasury: Hamilton was orphaned as a child after his father's abandonment and his mother's death from illness. Despite these hardships, he pursued his education and eventually became a key figure in shaping America's financial and governmental systems.

- Andrew Jackson, 7th President of the United States: Jackson's life was marked by hardship and loss, including the death of his parents during the Revolutionary War. He was raised by relatives and went on to become a prominent military leader and statesman.

- Simón Bolívar, Liberator of South America: Bolívar's childhood was marked by tragedy, losing his father at a young age and his mother when he was just nine years old. Despite these challenges, he went on to play a pivotal role in the fight for independence in several South American countries.

- Nelson Mandela, President of South Africa: While not an orphan in the classical sense, Mandela's life was significantly impacted by his father's death when he was nine years old. He was raised by a tribal chief and went on to become a key figure in the fight against apartheid, eventually serving as the first black president of South Africa.

- Daniel Arap Moi, 2nd President of Kenya: Moi's life story is a testament to perseverance. Born in 1924, he came from a humble background and walked barefoot to school, including his journey to Kapsabet Boys High School. Moi's determination and resilience helped him rise through the ranks of Kenyan politics, serving as president from 1978 to 2002 and playing a significant role in shaping the country's history.

A Rags-to-Riches Story

- Oscar Sudi, Member of Parliament for Kapseret Constituency: Oscar Sudi's remarkable story is a testament to the power of hard work and determination. Born in 1980 to parents who were squatters in the Moi University area, Sudi grew up in a grass-thatched house. His father was a charcoal dealer, and his mother ran a grocery business, where Sudi would often help out.

Sudi's Early Life and Career: Sudi started working as a parking boy in 1996, earning Sh800 per month, which later increased to Sh1,200 due to his hard work and honesty. He learned to drive at 18 and began driving matatus, saving money to buy fertilizer and seeds for farming. Sudi expanded his business ventures to include pool tables, which generated significant income, and later ventured into the car trade, buying and selling vehicles.

Entry into Politics: Sudi's rise to politics began when he joined forces with prominent figures like Cyrus Jirongo and William Ruto, who later became the Deputy President. In 2013, he was elected as the Member of Parliament for Kapseret Constituency on a United Republican Party (URP) ticket. Sudi has since been re-elected and serves on various committees, including the Departmental Committee on Energy.

Conclusion

These individuals demonstrate that with hard work, determination, resilience, and most importantly seeing beyond the ordinary, it is possible to overcome adversity and achieve greatness. Their stories serve as an inspiration to us all, reminding us that our circumstances do not define us, but rather our determination and perseverance.

CHAPTER TWO

OPPORTUNITY

“When opportunity
presents itself, don’t be
afraid to go after it.”

~ **Eddie Kennison~**

Opportunity is defined as a chance to do something or an occasion when it is easy for you to do something that you want to do or have to do or the possibility of doing something.

Opportunity is a chance for greater success, advancement or progress. God has provided us with every opportunity that we need to better our lives. God is advising us in *Ephesians 5vs16* “Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” And we should not have time to wait for us to make good use of our every day’s chances to create the life we want. *Mary Shelley* advices, “The beginning is always today.”

When the earth still exists or when you find yourself that you are still alive then you still have an opportunity; use it well. When you wake up alive then appreciate that God still has blessings for you and you can decide to use it to change your life.

Each new day brings a knock of opportunity. Answer with courage, seize the moment, and transform your life in every way – financially, physically, and spiritually. The power to change your story is in your hands.

You need to understand the following aspect about the opportunity as it is outlined from the story of Zacchaeus the tax collector in the book of *Luke 19vs1-10*.

i. Opportunity goes with desire.

God created us with the ability to have desires, and He pronounced it very good (Genesis 1:31). Through desire we accomplish our goals. It makes us to define ways and means of attaining our objectives.

Luke 19:3, “And he (Zaccheaus) sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature”. Desire opens our eyes to see the available opportunities. When you find an opportunity, pursue it and when you pursue it whole-heartedly, you will succeed, and to succeed as someone said, you must choose a definite desire; place all your energy, all your willpower, all your efforts, everything back to that goal. Stand by your desire until it becomes the dominating obsession of your life- and, finally, a fact.

If it was not for the desire that Zaccheaus had, he could not see the need of the sycamore tree in pursuit of his opportunity. It is that desire which propelled him to run ahead and climb up that sycamore tree. Let the desires of our hearts be actualized by taking a bold step of doing what it takes to achieve our goals.

Desire means “a strong yearning.” However, some desires are destructive, and these the Bible usually calls “lusts.” These desires are often shown as cravings for satisfaction of physical appetites (for example, food, alcohol, sex, money, pleasure). Paul tells Timothy, “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteous, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of pure heart” (*II Timothy 2:22*). Though scripture speaks of desire in both a good and evil sense, a faithful child of God

recognizes that he/she can have evil desires, turns away from them when they arise, and pursues after what is good.

Desire is also seen in context with power. Some have a passion to be number one, to compete, to dominate, to assert their will, and to have control. Such an attitude frequently produces envy and contention. Others passionately pursue possessions and the glory associated with owning them.

Do not be deceived into assuming that these worldly desires are all somehow animalistic and base. They also include the more refined passions of pride (such as for academic acclaim), social status, and inordinate ambition. As *Colossians 3:5* instructs, a desire taken beyond what is lawful is simply idolatry through which we gratify our carnality.

We encourage us to have self-control with the foundation of strong godly life, growth and producing fruit. If a person cannot govern himself, if he cannot master his passions, he will certainly not have good relationship with his fellow beings or God. His life will likely be marked by major excesses full of evil and setbacks.

The Biblical writers use this word in various ways: to behave in an orderly manner, to be sober, serious, sane, sound-minded, discreet, self-disciplined, prudent, and moderate. In the context of a person controlling himself, Paul writes, “For I say, though the grace gives to me , to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith” (*Romans 12:3*, see *Titus 2:6, I Peter 4:7*)

A person who has self-mastery (self-government or self-control) is even-handed, and his passions are under control. He makes proper use of his drive, desire and opportunity, and his manner of life is not one of extremes. A person reflecting this

quality will be making steady progress in growing into a perfectly balanced character of Jesus Christ in all corners of life.

ii. Opportunity goes with time.

Luke 19:4 "So he ran ahead and climbed into a sycamore tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way." Have a plan of what you want to do. It is not only having the plan but also plan ahead of the event. Planning will enable you to have all the requirements in place and in time. Failing to plan in time is planning to fail in due time. Remember there is time to plan and time to execute the plan. Procrastination of events is disregarding the opportunity given and it is best known among the lazy. We need to live to do it today because we don't know what tomorrow holds for us.

Time is valuable. *Psychiatrist and author M. Scott Peck* said, "Until you value yourself, you won't value your time. Until you value time, you will not do anything with it." Zacchaeus valued himself no matter how people perceived him as a sinner (*Luke 19:7*) He saw it worth to meet Jesus Christ. He never hesitated. He ran ahead without wasting time to take up the opportunity. Indeed, he met Jesus at the right time and salvation came to his house on that day.

Opportunity comes at its best time. You won't miss your opportunities when you learn to equate money and other resources with time. *Charles Spezzano* says that people don't pay for things with money; they pay for them with time. If you say to yourself, in five years, I'll have put enough away to buy that vacation house, then what you are really saying is that the house will cost you five years.

Instead of thinking about what you do and what you buy in terms of money, think about them in terms of time. Think about it. What is worth spending your life on? If

what you want to put your money on is not worth your time, then don't take that opportunity because it will amount to waste of resources.

Isaiah 55:6 “Seek the Lord while he may be found, call on him while he is near.” It is from this verse that we get to know that if we fail to take the opportunity now, the opportunity may fail to reappear next time.

iii. Opportunity goes with positioning.

Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore-fig tree in order to see Jesus on the exact route Jesus was taking. It is morally right to take an opportunity or to do something at the right place. For instance, in the game of volley ball, a backcourt player is not allowed to make an attack or spike at the front court position.

Appropriate positioning enables you to hit on the target as it makes you to stand out thus attracting attention of your target group. Zacchaeus was positioning himself strategically targeting to see Jesus and by chance, Jesus saw him and it was indeed a great opportunity for Zacchaeus to meet Jesus Christ where his life really changed by the grace of God. He began a new life worth of glory.

If you want to achieve the desires of your heart, you need to position yourself at the right place. David in *Psalms 110:1* says, The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”

iv. Opportunity goes with honesty.

Zacchaeus was honest to Jesus, to himself and to the people. He wanted to host Jesus when blameless, and in that regard he validated his opportunity of meeting Jesus. *Luke 19:8* Zacchaeus stood up and said to the lord, “Look Lord! Here and now

I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

Zacchaeus displayed self-honesty of the highest degree. He looked at himself realistically and decided to face reality, no matter how much it may hurt. By giving half of his possessions to the poor and repaying four times as much to whomever he may have cheated is possibly a clear indication that he was admitting that he may have not acquired his wealth legally. Not only does Zacchaeus see the error of his ways, but he also has a total change of heart. He no longer wanted to live a dishonest life, but an honest one.

Hosting Jesus was a great opportunity that the man needed so as to live an honest life. Zacchaeus had to admit where he had been wrong so as to make things right for him to receive salvation and to host Jesus Christ. Who knows, maybe Jesus would have changed his mind for a better host when people murmured about how sinful Zacchaeus was, and if Zacchaeus couldn't have spoken out his heart honestly. Though, just like Zacchaeus, Jesus must visit our houses today. He has no conditions for us before he comes to visit. We don't have to make all things right with all our dealings before letting him in. He already knows who we are and what shape our house is in. He wants to be there anyway. His presence alone and his love for us will lead us to do things honestly right we never thought we could do.

How many have missed their opportunities for deliberately giving out false information and details during interviews even if they have high academic qualification? I guess, they are many. Let us purpose to be honest for us to tap our opportunities.

CHAPTER THREE

SUCCESS

“Self-belief and hard work

will always earn

you success.”

~Virat Kohli~

Success is often defined as the ability to reach your goals in life, whatever those goals may be. In some ways, a better word can be attainment, accomplishment, or progress. Success is basically driven by a mindset of an individual, and everyone has his/her own perception of success. The only person who can define your own success is yourself. Do you know the meaning of success for your personal life?

-is it having a lot of money?

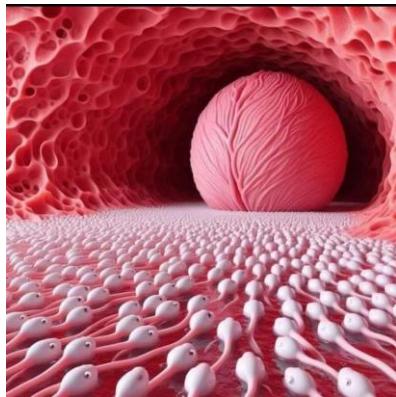
-is it having a lot of tangibles and degrees?

-is it having your children attaining high standards and recognition?

True success in life cannot be measured with the above factors. Instead it is being able to live a better and more advanced life because of what you have created. The society has often made us to believe that being successful is to have a lot of tangibles and wealth, being recognized with high grades and degrees or collecting more trophies in a contest. But the meaning of success is to live a happy life and to make this world a better place for everyone. Success is all about self-satisfaction.

First of all, you need to understand that God created you in His own image and likeness, so the seed of success was donated to you by God Himself. God is successful as evidenced through his own perfect creation. So, you are the product of success. For God was successful, so you are legible too.

You were conceived out of success. Let me bring you the idea of conception in human beings.



It can take up to five days for the sperm and ovum to join to form a fertilized egg. It is only one sperm cell that fertilizes the egg yet millions of sperms are released at a time in one ejaculation just to compete for a chance available. Just like in a marathon race, one will be crowned as a winner against many other hopeful competitors, even so to the sperm cells, they struggle to swim through a very challenging course to reach the ovum. Some will fail at the start of the race, some will drop out on the race at the midst, some will arrive late and few thousands out of millions will reach the ovum but only one manages to penetrate into the egg for the fertilization to take place. Imagine, out of this process you were formed. If it was in an athlete's track competition, that one sperm cell could be cheered and applauded thunderously for winning in a stiff competitive race.

When I imagine how I was conceived out of a very competitive process, I get encouraged and yearn to work hard to be a man of substance who strives for the best.

Just imagine, if all the 300 million sperm cells could successfully fertilize the ovum and all of you were born;

- i.** Could we miss to have a president from you?
- ii.** Could we miss to have a Nobel peace prize winner from you?
- iii.** Could we miss to have a prominent business person from you?
- v.** Could we miss to have a successful academician from you?

Remember, God's favor is upon your life since your conception. You were chosen by God from the beginning for a purpose. My dear friend, you must embrace the virtue of hardwork and self-awareness and be the best you can be. We are reminded in the book of *Deuteronomy 28:13* that, the Lord will make you the head, not the tail and you shall only go up and not down if you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that he gave you and carefully follow them. You will always be at the top, never at the bottom. *Eleanor Roosevelt* is telling us that, in the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility. Therefore, it is your personal duty to divine your destiny of success and you have to work for it. Do not blame anyone for not becoming whom you wanted to be.

Let the desire to succeed and become significant in life sprout from your heart. Let your inner desire harbor within you. Focus on personal growth, explore your interests, and be open to new experiences. It is a time to learn about yourself, set goals, and embrace opportunities that come your way.

There are some basic factors you need to consider that can improve your chances of being successful in life;

i. Self-acceptance and self-appreciation.

Appreciate that you are wonderfully and uniquely made by God. You are not just an ordinary man. You are a man on a mission ordained by God and equipped with power and dominion over God's creation. Do not look down upon yourself. See yourself as a successful person who believes in yourself and your ability to succeed. Develop a positive self-image, self-belief and confidence, knowing you have the power to achieve your goals and be successful.

Do not accept to fit into someone's shoes, hey! You have to look for your own shoes, you have your own size, taste and preference. Do your best, don't limit yourself to someone's ability. You can do pretty well than anyone else has ever done. Regardless of limitations, you can sail through the odds if you can see and appreciate the values in you. Your limitations are not your portion in Jesus name and do not accept them to pin you down permanently.

Are you physically challenged? See beyond your disabilities. You can do something to make your life better. We have seen people living with disabilities living far much better lives than persons living without disabilities. According to my views disability is the inability to realize your ability. So, work hard and think big to identify something that you are able to do to make yourself successful.

Remember, start right from where you are, and do not force yourself to be like someone else. Walk your own journey and you will make it in life. Believe in yourself for a million miles start with a single step.

ii. Being on the right mindset.

Psychologist *Carol Dreck* in his research outlined that there are two basic mindsets that influence how people think about themselves and their abilities.

These are;

a. The fixed mindset.

b. The growth mindset.

a. The *fixed mindset* person is rigid and suggests the following to him/herself;

- Failure is the limit of my ability
- I'm either good at it or I'm not.
- My abilities are unchanging.
- I don't like to be challenged.
- I can either do it, or I can't.
- My potential is predetermined.
- When I'm frustrated, I give up.
- Feedback and criticism are personal.
- I stick to what I know.

It is quite dangerous to have a fixed mind because;

- It hinders growth to success.
- It decreases self-knowledge and self-awareness.
- It cuts off opportunities.
- It encourages mediocrity.

- It attracts mediocre relationships that will hardly bring long term satisfaction.
- It leads to stagnation

b. The growth mindset person is flexible, able to learn, unlearn and relearn, and suggests the following to him/herself;

- Failure is an opportunity to grow.
- I can learn to do anything I want.
- Challenges help me to grow.
- My efforts and attitudes determine my abilities.
- Feedback is constructive.
- I am inspired by the success of others.
- I like to try new things.

Advantages of growth mindset.

- Improves self-esteem –believing in yourself.
- Opens ways for new opportunities.
- Improve learning power.
- Increases confidence.
- Better time management.

It is important for an individual to cultivate positive thinking and growth mindset to live a fulfilling life. The way we view situations, events and our circumstances shapes how successfully we are able to navigate the challenges that life throws at us. Let us embrace the growth mindset for us to realize success.

iii. Shaping your character.

You need to take charge of developing and shaping your own character. Your values and goals, your inner life and your outer life should be in complete alignment with your quest to succeed.

Let your character work for you to achieve your goal rather than your reputation. Your reputation can be shortchanged by yourself or others at the time of your misfortunes but your character will remain undiversified and supports your reputation.

Successful people work on their character. Continuous development of your character is very important. It propels you to your destiny and sustains your success.

iv. Set achievable goals.

A goal means a plan intended to be achieved, attained, or targeted. Your goal should be SMART.

S -Specific.

M -Measurable.

A -Attainable.

R -Realistic.

T -Time bound.

Be as specific as possible; state exactly what you want to achieve at a specified time.

Be precise; set accurate goals, putting in dates, time and the amount so that you can measure your achievement. If you do this you will know exactly when you have to achieve the goal, and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it.

Set priorities; when you have several goals, arrange your goals in order of urgency and priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by having too many goals and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones.

Be realistic; it is important to set goals that you can achieve, consider your desires, ambitions, abilities and skills you need to develop to achieve a particular level of performance.

Break your goals into smaller units even if you select a specific goal that can often seem difficult to achieve. Try breaking it into smaller units that allow you to focus on moving forward without becoming overwhelmed.

v. Embrace upward mobility.

Desire to achieve more and more of your success; do not stagnate, always aim higher.

You must continually build on your success. Your best dress today could be your worst dress tomorrow. Keep on improving and rebranding yourself with more higher and better standards.

To remain outstanding, you need to insist on upward mobility; do not stagnate. It is not yet break time until you satisfy your achievement. Keep moving, keep keeping on.

Set yourself as a competitive brand rather than a comparative brand. Failure begins when you start to compare yourself with the standards or performance levels of others. Your ego may mislead you to think that you are the best, yet unknowingly you are the best of the worst. Let your brand or action position you at the top of others competitively, constantly and regularly. Do more practice, testing and evaluation.

vi. Be focused and keep trying.

Even when things seem impossible or setbacks keep holding you down, focus on ways that you can develop your skills and keep soldiering on. One of the key habits of successful people is always looking at setbacks or failures as learning opportunities.

Never quit, never surrender and keep trying until you succeed. *It seems impossible until it is done* – Nelson Mandela.

vii. Cultivate strong social support.

Doing things alone can be difficult but having a strong social support system can make things easier. Different types of social support can be important for success as stated below;

a. Emotional support can provide the comfort, security and empathy you need as you face challenges.

b. Esteem support can boost your confidence and encourages you to keep going. You feel cheered up and appreciated as you move toward attaining your objective.

c. Informational support can provide mentorship, advice, and other necessary information that can help you to reach your goals.

d. Tangible support can help you in active and practical ways. This might involve someone helping you perform a task or taking care of the task for you. It enables you feel free to ask for manual or financial support and assistance whenever you need.

Family members, friends, co-workers, classmates and any other well-wishers can cheer you on when things get tough and even offer advice and assistance that can help you improve your chances for success.

viii. Time management.

Time management is the process of planning and exercising conscious control of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity.

Have a schedule/timetable and a program for the events/activities/tasks that you are engaged in. Do the right thing at the right time. Avoid piling up the tasks to be done. This may lead to burnout that can seriously impede success and lead to exhaustion, reduce performance and reduce motivation, makes it harder to stick to your goals and can make you feel apathetic and uninterested in your objectives.

ix. Reward progress.

At whichever point/level driving towards your goal/target and you feel that you have done something worth appreciation then cheer up and appreciate yourself. Treat yourself well, say “Well done me!” This will motivate you to keep going toward the success of your ultimate goal.

Even if you have not attained your intended target but at least you have done something better than done before, then reward your progress. This makes you avoid disappointment and stay motivated.

There are three factors to consider when rewarding the progress. These are stated below;

- a. Timing.**
- b. Appropriateness.**
- c. Meaningfulness**

Timing

Check on the suitable time to reward your progress. It can be monthly, weekly, daily, or at a specific milestone. Evaluate your work and determine when it is appropriate to make a reward. If you reward yourself when you feel you need it, you risk not working through challenges and stalling your progress.

Appropriateness

Let your reward be realistic and worth the task, i.e the reward to be commensurate with achievement. You do not need to reward yourself with a reward equivalent with that for achieving the full goal.

Meaningfulness

Perhaps the most important aspect of reward-setting is finding rewards that are meaningful to you. If you reward your progress with something that you don't want or care about, then it is not going to have the desired effect. It won't make you feel good and say "Say! I'm going to keep going!" Reward-setting is as personal as goal-setting. It can take time but it's worth it.

Some possible ways of rewarding your progress.

- Having a nature walk.
- Having a special meal.
- Take an extended break.
- Create a certificate.
- Look in the mirror and say, 'well done.'
- Buy a luxurious item.

NB:

- Your ultimate desire should not be stopped by anyone, system or situations. Your desire should be expressed by your inner conviction.
- Actions pronounce themselves magnificently than words. It is needless or pointless to brag to be a lion yet your actions suggest that you are jackal. No action, no progress no success.
- For a king to be treated as a king he has to portray kingship in himself. Kingship is determined by hard-work, leadership and service to humanity. Action is inevitable.
- Brand yourself as the best. Self-love inspires others to love you. Personal expression creates self-esteem. It is your duty to brand yourself through working hard. You are worthless before others when you have no values. Successful persons have virtues and values.
- Do not be held back in the past limitation experienced by your family or clan. Break through the limitations and embrace your potentials. Set a new standard and bring a new dawn to yourself, family and the whole community.

Thank you.

I wish you success.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHECK ON YOUR ATTITUDE.

Many are the dreams and goals that most of us have in mind but never come true. At the beginning of the year, we lay down new resolutions of which in most cases we fail to attain. Goals are not just achieved, they are worked for. Someone said that for your dream to come true you must begin by waking up and executing your dream. Go after your dreams, your dream does not come for you. A lot of sacrifice is required for good results to be realized.

For a business person to record good profit he has to sleep late and wake up early. For a good season to produce a bumper harvest, a farmer has to work hard, sacrifice his/ her time and resources in the farm. For a student, attaining better grades will call for a lot of revision, seeking assistance from fellow students and teachers or even doing extra work. Waking up early is inevitable. Concentration in class is vital for you to understand what the teacher is teaching.

I have observed that whether at home, in the work place, in interpersonal relationships, in leadership, in church, or in business, when the right attitude reigns, dreams and goals are achieved.

Attitude means a complex mental state involving beliefs, feelings, values and dispositions to act in certain ways. Thus;

- Your attitude determines how you interact with other people.
- Your attitude determines your latitude.
- Your attitude determines your desires.

- Your attitude determines your decision making.

Therefore, attitude is a complete virtue that every living human should take very seriously. How this virtue is handled matters a lot for our success or failure. A well developed and nurtured attitude earns you a 100% outcome as it is illustrated and demonstrated below.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

HARDWORK

H	+A	+R	+D	+W	+O	+R	+K	=HARDWORK
8	+1	+18	+4	+23	+15	+18	+11	=98%

ATTITUDE

A	+T	+T	+I	+T	+U	+D	+E	=ATTITUDE
1	+20	+20	+9	+20	+21	+4	+5	=100%

As demonstrated above, hardwork alone does not earn you much as expected but with a positive attitude it earns you your desired outcome. The word of God in the *Proverbs 23:7*, teaches that *as a man thinks in his heart, so he is*. Therefore, your thinking or rather your attitude influences your actions.

Pastor Joel Osteen says that, " Choosing to be positive and having a grateful attitude is going to determine how you are going to live your life." The main factor that differentiates between human beings and other animals is that a human being is a THINKING BEING who can think and choose what kind of attitude should drive their lives.

It is quite imperative that as a human being you have to check on your attitude. I learnt that ATTITUDE is the acronym for;

A -Appreciate.

T -Tactful.

T -Teamwork.

I -Involve.

T -Target.

U -Unleash.

D -Decide.

E -Excellency.

1. APPRECIATE

*“The aim of life is appreciation;
there is no sense in not appreciating things;
and there is no sense in having more of them
If you have less appreciation of them.”*

~Gilbert K. Chesterton~

Build your self-esteem and personal growth and development. You make a positive progress in life when you learn to appreciate yourself. Self-appreciation is a recipe for positive attitude towards life. You begin living a purposeful life once you develop a positive attitude toward yourself. A negative attitude will never allow you to make any progress towards achieving your goals.

Take a mirror, look at yourself, and take time in observing and analyzing how great God created you. Talk to yourself like someone you love. Encourage yourself that you are good and strong worth to live a life to cherish. Promise yourself that you will work hard to achieve the best in your life. It is your duty to love and appreciate yourself. Work extra hard and live your passion. Do not wait for someone to push you towards your vision. He may not have your vision because you are your own vision bearer.

Note that, not everyone will appreciate your vision, so stick to it. Let your decisions propel your dreams to come true. We shall live to see our dreams come true if we have a positive attitude towards our lives and having the courage to pursue them.

Paulo Coelho once said, “You are what you believe yourself to be.” If you believe that you are poor and having nothing to contribute to yourself and to the community then you are becoming a disgrace to yourself, family, friends and community as a whole. Blame nobody because you will have no one of substance to be associated with hence you will lead a life devoid of morals and values.

I know many of us have gone through many challenges that caused us to have negative attitude towards life. For instance, being born in a humble background characterized by a single meal a day or none, sleeping on the floor with or no blankets to cover ourselves in an old single roomed grass thatched house with holes everywhere which whenever it rains at night would mean a sleepless night because the house would flood tasking all of us to drain away the water from the house at night instead of sleeping. Furthermore, going to school bare-footed in patched school uniform without a sweater in a chilly cold morning. This kind of life may have made you to see nothing worth in life but remember the story of Gideon in the bible in the book of *Judges 6:15-17 NIV*, "My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together." Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me." You may have disregarded and dismissed yourself just as Gideon did, but you need to appreciate that there is the seed of success that God placed inside you that you need to nurture and it will blossom in you and you will be successful. The little resources and knowledge you have can make you great if well put into use; don't dismiss.

Let us learn something to encourage us in the story of Moses in the book of *Exodus 14:15-16*, "Then the Lord said to Moses, "why are you crying to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground." It is quite

encouraging that Moses used just a mere rod to construct a road across the Red Sea. When Israelites were complaining and talking negatively, Moses remained positive and passionate and that is why he managed to accomplish his mission successfully.

What do you have at hand? If you want to make it in life, always appreciate the little you have and appreciate the humble beginnings. Avoid unhealthy competition and you will live a stress-free life.

2. TACTFUL

It is the state of being considerate to others in keeping up and adhering to your principles. Your actions or words can either encourage or demoralize others. Those who spread hate and injustice to others will unfortunately lead a life full of blame.

Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret will be put to silence and whoever has haughty eyes and proud heart will not be endured. No one who practices falsehood will have anyone to trust. All his/her friends shall flee because no one wishes to be associated with a dishonest person, Remember, no one who speaks falsely will stand to be heard.

Let your action not lead you into distress and psychological suffering. No matter how wealthy you are or knowledgeable you are, your recklessness can lead you to perceive life in a negative perspective.

We may have experienced some or rather one of the state officers being asked to resign or step aside for allegations made against him or her for sentiments made by the officer in public. In one of the incidences, one of the state officers made some accusations against one of the renowned media houses which was perceived as attacking the freedom of media. One of the media houses reported, “The verbal attack using foul and crude language against NMG is shocking, primitive and

inexcusable in the eyes of level-headed Kenyans who expected cabinet secretaries to conduct themselves with decorum befitting their high offices.”

Harsh terms were used against the officer such as; malicious, rogue, reckless and a loose-tongued. This may cause distress leading to poor performance and negative attitude towards leadership.

The officer may have lacked tactful skills in presenting his accusations if at all what he was saying was true. *Ephesians 4:15(NIV)* reminds us that, " Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up..." and "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Our speeches or actions should arouse others to do well, to see life in the positive perspective and lead a responsive life as optimistic people. Whenever we get a chance to address an audience, let us choose to apply our tactful skills to stir listeners to entertain the right thoughts hence seeing the right side of life everyday, some may see you as a role model thus they believe in what you say, therefore, choose your words correctly. Using inappropriate words can cause agony to ourselves, classmates, workmates or even to our clients.

It was quite sad to learn that my fellow teacher had been suffering in silence for long for uttering demoralizing and antagonizing words to a pupil who was hailing from a very humble background faced with immense challenges in pursuit of education. The pupil needed love and care from the school rather than hate because she had had enough from the abusive home environment.

We were interested to know more about the pupil because the teacher had just transferred from her former school where the incident took place to our school. So, she narrated that while she was on duty one fine morning, a class six (STD.6) girl

entered the school compound through the gate though late in tattered clothes with unkempt hair. She was provoked to punished her.

When the pupil reached where she was, and without being given time to excuse herself for an explanation, the teacher interrogated her arrogantly with tormenting questions. The questions were;

- Why are you putting on a tattered clothe?
- Do you want me to mend it for you?
- Am I your mother?

Lyn, the girl, without getting a chance to respond to any of the questions, broke into tears crying furiously. The adamant teacher went ahead to inflict corporal punishment. After receiving some strokes of the rod, she bitterly told the teacher, "I wish my mother was alive." Instead of going to class, she rushed through the gate crying and that was her last time to be seen in school. The teacher was puzzled.

The teacher was only two weeks old in that school. She knew little about the girl, little did she know that Lyn was hailing from a family living in abject poverty. Her mother had passed away some year ago and her father was a known bibulous chronic drunkard putting on a filthy patched jacket hard to distinguish its original color. Lyn, being the eldest, took on the responsibility of caring for her siblings, a daunting task for someone so young.

On learning more about Lyn, the teacher felt embarrassed and disturbed. With time, she developed a questionable behavior. She became withdrawn, distancing herself from other teachers and avoiding the staffroom. In most cases she could fail to attend to her duties as required and finally she became a chronic absentee making

it difficult for the Head of Institution to put up with her, thus, he requested for her to be transferred. No one had realized that the teacher's guilt over her actions had turned inward, leading to harsh self-judgement and ultimately, depression. This experience taught me that a lack of tactful communication can foster a negative attitude towards life.

Let us guard our tongues because no number of apologies can reverse spoken words, for once spoken they remain spoken. Even if apologies are made, still someone may say, "he said so, though he apologized."

Mothers, measure your words. The way you talk to your children can have a profound impact on their ability to pursue their dreams. If you are constantly telling them that they are not good enough unlike your neighbors' children or that they will never make it or calling them names such as; dogs, stupid etc., they are likely to lose motivation and give up on their aspirations and develop a negative attitude towards life. If need be, punish your children with love. Let them understand that what they did was wrong and not themselves. The punishment should not drive them to perceive themselves as wrong children.

Students/pupils, learn to solve petty disputes among yourselves. You are not warranted to forward every mistake to your class teacher. Try to resolve the simple ones. Do not be happy seeing your colleagues being punished. Make peace among yourselves and let each one of you lead an easy life in school. In most cases, those good reporters best known in my community as "Chepstaki" are isolated by others in class. They have no one to associate with as a friend thus making their lives unbearable in school. Some drop out of school or seek for transfer.

Teachers, teaching is not easy. It needs dedication and passion. It is very normal to feel overwhelmed, frustrated, or upset. But how we handle our emotions, students

and our colleagues can greatly impact on our teaching and relationships. It is quite necessary to employ tactful skills to shift any negative thoughts into positives ones. These three tactics can help you to be at ease in your working stations.

- Surround yourself with positive people, both in and outside the school.
- Find creative and socially acceptable ways that help you relieve stress and feel reenergized.
- Always have a positive mindset by learning to turn your negative thoughts into positive ones. Positive thoughts boost your moods, enhance your thinking and help your other members of school (colleagues, students and support staff) have more positive and peaceful working environment.

3. TEAMWORK.

“Unity is strength...when there is teamwork and collaboration,

wonderful things can

be achieved.”

~Mattie Stepanek~

Teamwork is the collaborative effort of a group aiming to achieve a common objective, goal or to accomplish a task in the most effective and efficient way. Life becomes easier when individuals interdepend on each other and succeed as a team. Members develop bonding that can translate into trust and friendship.



A strong and prosperous family is a united family which embraces teamwork as a pillar of their success. A story is told of a widow who lived with two sons and a daughter living in the most unfriendly and unfavorable kind of environment best described as abject poverty which would possibly make anyone feel worthless and useless.

She was sheltered in a mud grass-thatched house. She lived on the benevolence of philanthropy, and poverty had taken over the best side of her life. The old mud house with a grass-thatched roof had been her home for nearly 50 years then, the structure could not hold any more. One day, the side which served as their bedroom collapsed near the children who were sleeping and nearly killed her son who was sleeping in the room just close to where the wall collapsed. She was so scared when they had to go to sleep because the existing structure had developed several cracks suggesting that it would collapse anytime.

One night, she heard a horrible cracking noise. To her surprise, she saw some parts cracking. She had to awake her children to safety in the remaining piece of the structure which served as a place of refuge for them which hanged by threads. They were exposed to snakes and other dangerous elements. They did not have a safer place to lay their heads, and in any case, that building shouldn't have been a sleeping place for that family even for another night but they had nowhere to go.

The state of poverty she was in was indeed poverty in the worst form that had never been seen. It was rare occasion for the family to have three meals in one day. She had developed wrinkles and painful bruises in her hands just working hard as casual labourer in the village to enable her family to at least have a meal. Every time she went out in the village looking for something to bring home, her

children were eagerly waiting and praying that she doesn't come home empty handed as that would mean going to bed hungry.

Whenever they missed food, they could light a bonfire outside their house just to keep their night warm. The mother could take the opportunity to inspire her children to be optimistic in life for she hoped for a home to live, laugh and love, embracing each other as a family, sacrificing for their lives, getting silvered smiles forever; yes, a home to admire. Though they had been held captive by the chains of poverty, her children had to believe in her for a better future.

As they grew up, her children had developed teamwork and love, indeed oneness is true love. Her sons used to get out to look for food with her as her daughter took care of their homestead. One day as they arrived home from their usual routine of hustle, sons from hunting and she from splitting firewood for a neighbor, they found the daughter in a horrible state bleeding seriously. Oh, the poor girl had been raped and she could not get justice due to their deplorable state. Indeed, it is difficult for the poor to get justice in a wicked society. It is only until we come together to form a strong teamwork and unite our voices and advocate for social justice and equitable distribution of resources that we shall succeed.

The stories of those who have overcome social injustice are a testament to the power of empowerment. Their resilience, determination, and the opportunities provided through advocacy efforts have changed lives. Together, we can amplify their voices and inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

Back to our story - Her sons had reached marriageable age, but the harsh realities of poverty stood in their way, making it impossible for them to afford

the dowry and leaving them feeling disheartened and marginalized by the very women they sought to love, and by the community around them.

They were living at the time when raiding of livestock was an acceptable socio-cultural and economic activity in their community. Warriors were tasked to invade their neighboring communities to rob their dear animals especially cows. The two sons of the poor woman were not allowed to be part of the village warriors because they were despised and ignored in their village. Their contribution and support could not be valued.

It is for a fact that the poor have nothing to say before the rich, even if they have a valid point to make it is regarded as noise in the ears of the boastful rich people. Let us counter this vice. Let us get up and allow ourselves to sweat in generating our own wealth. Have a humble beginning and you will reap the work of your hands. People have risen from nowhere and they are now somewhere better in life. It is said that if you want to go faster go alone and if you want to go far go with others. Therefore, join a team of people who can boost your achievements in life. Together we succeed as suggested by the *school motto of Kimugul Primary School* which is my former school.

We are told in the story that, one day, the old woman called her sons for a meeting to plan on how to acquire wealth and live as other members of the community. She tabled her plan which was full of wisdom. She asked them to prepare for raiding. The sons were amused and scared in equal measure because they did not have raiding skills. They had not participated in the past.

The mother asked them to remain calm, hopeful and strong for she was going to be with them. She had already conducted a spy and she knew all the routes to and from the community to be raided. The sons had nothing to object. They had

to believe in their mother as they had learnt to do so for long. Truly that was the only way for them to break free from the grip of poverty and to acquire cattle for the payment of dowry.

They had one week to prepare for the task. Their plan leaked to the village mates. They were mocked and laughed at for it had not happened before and not culturally possible and correct for a woman to lead a gang of raiders. They were seen as desperate people trying to do the impossible.

The woman urged her sons to remain focused and that they should not be distracted for she believed that they were going to emerge victors against all the odds. She told them, "Magic starts to happen once you start believing in yourself." Surely, many of us tend to give up when things get too hard. We allow disappointments to cripple our esteem and kill the passion to pursue our dreams. We are afraid to start all over again as we think it's always too late. However, we need to understand that the moment we start believing in ourselves, we start creating confidence, and with confidence we can do anything in life.

When the day came, the family woke up early at dawn, held their hands together as a sign of their unity and teamwork. They said a prayer stretching their hands upward for mercy, peace and tranquility and asking God to grant guidance for good direction as they proceeded to their mission. Everyone was armed and equipped for the mission.

They travelled for a long distance. On reaching a certain viewpoint it was already 3pm. They saw a large herd of cattle grazing in a valley next to a forest. The mother instructed her sons appropriately and adequately. She showed them all the escape routes as they parted ways. The mother was to be on the one end of the grazing field as the sons on the opposite end adjacent to the grazing cows.

The sons were to wait for the signal from their mother by beating the drum to invade and take only a section of the herd.

The woman had dressed in disguise as a mad woman carrying her luggage in a dirty sack. She hanged some empty gourds on her body. She began her mission as she sang a song attracting all the herdsmen to where she was. They were amused to see an old woman artistically manipulating her body perfectly dancing in style. Her charming voice was melodically correct and rhyming with her dancing style. Without notice, everyone joined her performance. Her empty gourds and tattered clothes appeared to be fine costumes for her excellent performance.



On realizing that everyone had been moved by her art and all their attention was focused on her, she took her drum and beat it signaling her sons to execute the mission. Without much ado, the gentlemen moved with speed cut a section of the cows and vanished into the forest on their way home. The herdsmen kept on being entertained. On realizing that it was getting late and was already getting dark, they rushed to take the cattle to their confinement and oh! It was unfortunate for them to notice that some were missing and they could not trace them. The woman maneuvered her way back home and no one could associate her with the missing cows.

The following morning, the whole village awoke to a great joy accompanied by ululations for victory. From humble beginnings, the family rose to prosperity with the acquisition of seventeen cows, igniting a sense of pride and joy that

resonated deeply within them. As their fortune grew, so did their reputation, earning them a newfound respect and admiration in the community, where their names became synonymous with success and determination.

Within no time, their cows had multiplied and poverty was no longer their threat. The woman began to be identified by her honorable name unlike the past. She became well known for her tasty sour milk locally known as "mursik". She could serve the whole village in any given occasion and festival and no one could miss to praise her. Her sons became honorable men who got married to lovely and adorable ladies from the respectable families. Their homestead had a new modern admirable outlook.



We learn that when we come together, we do more. We get to learn from each other and teamwork brings desirable outcomes thus members develop positive attitudes towards life.

In a workplace, a failed team has the following consequences;

- Forming of factions.
- Battle lines are drawn.
- Communication stops.
- Efficiency drops off sharply.

- Collaboration or innovation is next to impossible.
- Life becomes difficult leading to negative attitude towards work characterized by absenteeism and poor performance. *Dr. Cindy Trimm* emphasises that, “When the right people come into your life, right things happen. When wrong people leave your life, wrong things stop happening.” Indeed, life is good and easy with positive attitude when we are in the right relationship. Our association defines our destination.

Let us get to know our friends and our teams right. A good team is governed by good moral values. Everything in life rises and falls in relationship to teamwork. It has been said that no man is an island and yes, it is true. We all need other people in our lives. No matter how self-sufficient one feels like they are, the truth is that you need people at some point in your life.

In the current society we may have seen the emergence of militia groups of young energetic youths directing their energies to negative dos against their communities. We need to avoid negative friends and groups that may ruin our lives. One man once said that, “You can never soar like an eagle if you hang out with buzzards and chickens all the time.” In his explanation he states that, “Eagles fly alone and at high altitudes, they don’t fly with sparrows, ravens and other small birds.” So, stay away from narrow-minded people, those that bring you down. “Eagles fly with eagles. Keep good company.” It is better to be in a group of lions as a mere member than to be in a forefront leading fox. To be in the midst of the great minds, the great people, is a great opportunity. You will be challenged to learn, relearn and implement their great ideas of prosperity. Embrace teamwork and may your teamwork capacitate you with positive attitudes towards life.

4. INVOLVE

“Getting along well with people is still the world's most needed skill.

With it...there is no limit to what person can do.

We need people, we need the cooperation of others.

There is very little we can do alone.”

~Earl Nightingale~

You can achieve your goal when you involve God and other right stakeholders to guide, advice, encourage, direct and to lead you. Do not leave involving others until you achieve what you intend to achieve.



I have observed that whether at home, in place of work, in school, in interpersonal relationships, in leadership, in church, or in business, when trust and involvement of others and God reigns, creativity and spontaneity of excellency is enhanced and fear is cast out.

Attitude matures rapidly when you have someone who cheers and compliments your work. You develop an attitude of doing more and more in life, and it stirs up your potential effectively.

Involving God and other people in our doings gives us power to push for accomplishment of a purpose. *Hebrews 10:24-25*, “And let us consider how we may

spur one another on towards love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

In the Bible Jacob once upon a fraud, willingly allowed God to intervene in his affairs when he realized he could no longer move on with himself. He had been chased around the nations, living with the consequences of the guilt and God changed his name to Israel. Yes, what can we say then, of the encounter of the ship in the middle of the storm, according to the account in the Book of *John* 6:2. Immediately, the occupants willingly allowed the involvement of the Lord into their ship and the storm ceased and they sailed safely.

When you trust, recognize and involve God in your service, you will receive unlimited and unspeakable reward and testimony. You will be considered first among equals and He will help you to climb the ladder of success.

Involving a strong support system can make a big difference in your ability to achieve your dreams. Surrounding yourself with people who encourage and believe in you can give you confidence and motivation to keep working towards your goals even when things get tough. Unfortunately, some have allowed egocentric behavior to distance them from others. They are doing everything out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. They lack humility and they don't value others above themselves.

It is quite dangerous to be so much self-involved. You may stumble and fall, and no one will be there to help you get back on your feet. People are watching. When you fail to achieve your target, they are active to laugh and criticize negatively for you had ignored their input. This affects your spiritual, emotional, mental and even physical expressions which leads to frustration or despair and shrinking of attitude.

When deciding on something that has an impact on the lives of other people, please, you are advised to involve those people. Their opinions and contributions are very important and essential for the success of your decision. The “it has been decided” mentality is deemed as dictatorship and any approach that neglects public participation is bound to fail. We Kenyans are fortunate to have 2010 construction, which promotes citizen involvement at the formulation stage, ensuring that the people's voices are heard before implementation.

Here is a short story of Purie who was a strong candidate for an Herbalist Research Project sponsored by The Institute of Research and Immunology in Washington DC. for her research after graduating from Moi University School of Medicine in Kenya.

It was her time to return to Kenya after her accomplishment. Everyone in the village was excited and waiting eagerly for her arrival. Relatives and friends gathered at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) to accord her heroic reception.

At 6:00pm The Kenya Airways, the Pride of Africa carrying Purie and other passengers touched down and shortly, Purie, a very lovely young lady who had medium round brown piercing eyes, curly black thick coarse hair and a medium brownish complexion came out. Cheers and ululation thundered across the atmosphere of the airport. Everyone was happy to meet her. Purie broke into tears of joy.

After a short time of chit-chat and laughter their convoy headed to Hilton Hotel for the celebration. The conference room which had been booked in their favour was colorfully decorated. On the front wall was a huge picture of an ocean front with people laughing and playing and having fun. Beautiful seagulls were in the

background. The tables were decorated with black and white and brown earth colours. It was the most interesting China set where most villagers had never seen.

A nice meal of fried chicken, “nyama choma”, Greek salad, macaroni pie, butter milk biscuit, potato salad, sweat curried peas and carrots, rice and a pitcher of iced tea with fresh lemons was served. Indeed the meal was aromatic, savoury and mouthwatering. Oh my...the food smelled good. The guests enjoyed the meal in a very conducive environment. The lights were dim but romantic. Freddy Jackson’s music could be heard in the background singing a lovely melody, setting the atmosphere into romantic mood. At one corner Purie’s parents and some elders were in a round table discussion. Little did Purie know that they were discussing her dowry without her consent and her traditional wedding was to be conducted according to Kalenjin’s customs that night.

Purie was called to join the elders in their round table conversation. She was ushered to have a seat having in her mind that maybe they wanted to appreciate her for her exemplary performance in her studies and research. She was perplexed to be introduced to her high school classmate and his intentions. “What do you mean?” Purie inquired with a puzzled look on her face. Her father answered her that they had decided to marry her off to a young man in their midst. Johnnie and his parents had agreed to pay a dowry of four cows and a sheep in coherence to the Nandi sub tribe of kalenjin’s customary laws and practices.

Johnnie was a young man who did not make to university. Probably his mind had been preoccupied at his tender age by the wealth of his parents. He had little time to concentrate on his studies. He was of medium height and his skin was a dark complexion. He was slim and had a very nice physic. His eye brows were deep and

his face had a square-oval shape. He was from an upper-upper class of wealth in their village.

On that occasion, Johnnie had on a brown and orange African safari shirt with dark brown khaki trouser. The shirt had embroidery on the collar and sleeves. He also wore a dark brown necklace made of porcelain around his neck. In spite of his good looks and all, Purie didn't consider him for her type of man. To her, though very handsome, she thought him to be a bit odd. He seemed arrogant, proud and snobbish classified as the high-strung type. In fact, he really didn't know what he wanted in life. He was not the type of man Purie wanted for life.

According to her experience, exposure and intellect, she was not ready to be imposed on a marriage not of her choice. Therefore, she turned down their wishes in totality and finality. She stood and picked her purse from the floor and walked off their meeting disappointedly. She left conference room unceremoniously.

There was total confusion in the room as she was leaving. Everyone was left with their mouths widely open in disbelief on what was happening. They found it strange to see a young lady walking off the meeting of her elders. It was normal for most marriages were arranged and there was usually no such thing as courtship. Couples were allowed to show affection only after their parents had arranged their wedding, and only at that time could intimacy between the two be allowed and it was closely monitored and watched by both families. Young learned Kalenjin people are beginning to change the likes of Purie who have their own desires, tastes and preferences in marriage.

Purie's parents and the organizers of the banquet were shocked, embarrassed and disappointed counting loses wishing to have involved her earlier before the whole process began. It was quite unfortunate that their plan was thrown into oblivion and

their objective was never met even in another day. Their act had broken their hearts, wounded their souls and bruised their egos. They felt lonely, depressed, sad and empty. They felt not important any more. Their attitude was greatly affected.

From this story we learn a good lesson of how important it is to involve relevant stakeholders for the success of any plan.

For our homes to prosper, we need to learn to involve our children in decision making. Thus, encouraging them to have the sense of ownership.

To arrest unrest in our schools, we need to involve students in electing their student councils and formulating school rules and regulations and when there is need for some changes, do not ambush them with stern changes.

A 21st century teacher inspires learners and facilitates learning by guiding and availing a rich environment for learning to take place. A good teacher tries to involve learners in activities where they interact with each other.

Enhanced involvement is crucial because it encourages valuable ideas and possible solutions that make systems or processes run smoothly.

5. TARGET

*“If you set goals and go after them
with all the determination you can muster,
your gifts will take you places that will amaze you.”*

~Les Brown~

The future is always demanding. It is a long journey coded with changes that need appropriate solutions. Some challenges are riddles that baffle our minds. Thank goodness, a puzzle is a particularly baffling problem that is said to have a correct solution. It requires thoughtful consideration to unravel the mysteries and challenges that lie ahead.

Everything is demanding and compelling for us to realize our dreams in life, but we need to admit that without a compelling future and effective strategies, we can all lose sight of our targeted goals and resolutions. As we stay put on target, uncertainty, fear, and chaos may appear setting full throttle that threaten us to lose steam or quit altogether, and as you know, there is no shortage of any of these challenges in the world on course of our endeavors. Still, we need to be able to stay centered in the storm and find ways to thrive.

To accomplish our goals and visions, we need more than just a target. We need to become the person that can hit that target. As much as we believe that God has good plans for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us a future and a hope (*Jeremiah 29:11*) we need to work extra hard to achieve our target as we are challenged in the Book of *James 2:17* that if faith is not accompanied by action is dead.

It is for a fact that God created and bestowed wisdom and knowledge alongside with power and dominion over other creation on us, and His desire is that we put both of them into good use to better our lives and to improve our environment. We need to use that power of knowledge to lay down strategies on our course of action to attain our target, but remember, in our pursuit of success be informed by the fact that we are sojourners on earth. For this reason, we need to seek first the kingdom of heaven and all these things shall be added unto us (*Matthew 6:23*).

We need to know that there is a God given nature in us, that if we learn to set targets with regard to nature or rather the potential, many of us would be very far. I encourage us to start by setting small attainable targets and work towards attaining them. Upon attaining them we get motivated to set higher attainable targets for ourselves. As we do this individually remember to check on your attitude so that you do not get off the track.

Here is a testimony on how I successfully hit on my target in developing a young school progressively to a Centre of Excellence. I do remember vividly, it was after the KCPE prayers and graduation ceremony of ECDE Top class when one of the guests approached me and appreciated me for a wonderful job well done for I was the MC. I had run the program perfectly and artistically correct. The audience was aroused full of laughter and thunderous claps.

The guest kept recommending on how artistic and creative I was as I was heading him with other guests to the Board room for their lunch. At last, we exchanged our contacts. That ceremony was marking the end of the academic year for ECDE classes to STD7 as STD8 was heading for their KCPE. During the holiday immediately after KCPE, I received a call from a "new number". He introduced himself and how he got my contacts from the gentleman who was our guest in the previous occasion.

As we were conversing over the phone, he told me that he was pleased on the details he was given about me and he felt that I was the right person to head his school. He gave me an appointment during that holiday to visit his school for more discussion.

On reaching the school, I was discouraged by the school structures made of iron sheets from the roofs to the walls. That first impression was not attractive and appealing. The director was eagerly waiting for me and he may have realized that I was demoralized by the outlook of school. He encouraged me by his great vision, and his talk was more of inspiration and motivation than an interview. I felt encouraged and spirited to work with such a big-minded person. I realized that truly he was looking for a determined and committed person capable of implementing his great ideas.

When he asked me if I was willing to take the offer, I took a deep breath and I set my mind right and made a quick decision to accept his offer. However, myriads and myriads of questions were crisscrossing my mind. I knew I had taken a challenge that needed a solution. These questions persisted in my mind "will I make it?", "will I meet the expectations of this director?" I had to take the courage and told myself that "yes, I can."

When I broke the news to my family, friends and colleagues they were shocked by the decision I had made. They were not expecting me to leave working in the school of our area MP to a young school in a remote area far away from home. I was seen as a jitter and unrealistic. I went through a lot of tribulations. I was mocked, criticized, discouraged and rejected by some of my friends who saw it prestigious to teach in the MP's school. As days went by and schools were about to open for the new academic year, I developed a thick skin. When I went through the fire of

rejection I did not burn, I was refined. I made my mind to get out of the comfort zone and define my own destiny in my career and profession.

I knew that many people cannot achieve more in life because they are not ready or rather courageous to leave their comfort zone and they pay more attention to distractors than their targets. I picked their criticism and used it as a recipe for my hardwork. I chose to remain focused on my target. I didn't want anyone to break my heart, to wound my soul and to bruise my ego. I knew what I wanted in life and I would not allow myself to be thrown onto the verge of quitting.

I moved from a school in a good set-up environment with good amenities to a school which was some kilometres off the tarmac road. I left a school getting a mean of **360s** out of **500** to a school where the leading student scored below **300** which was not good for a private school. I left a boarding school with a population of **400** for a day/boarding school i.e. only **class 6-8** were boarding with only **97** pupils from ECDE to class8. I knew I had a lot to do to convince my family, friends and the community that I had made the right decision.

I realized that a school is results and the school is numbers. Within me, I came to the realization that the success of a school is not judged by the infrastructure, the size of the compound or excellence in sport, but it's judged by the academic results. I knew that these results would draw numbers. Everyone would want join us as long as we constantly improved. Everyone would wish to join a school that does well year in year out. Working on the results and population remained to be my main objectives.

I thank the director of the school for believing in my ability despite of the criticism from the sponsor and the Board. The sponsor argued that I was not a believer of their church doctrines. The Board did not want me because I was not a

member of their community. Some of them thought I was unskilled and uninformed. Others said I was overconfident and incompetent. Many said I was optimistic and underqualified and even more thought I was unrealistic and underage.

I was being judged by my outlook, but I knew, it is not about the container, it is about the content. I believed that I was a man of substance and I had all that it could take to prove them wrong and to hit my target despite being my first time to head an institution.

I set my mind right. I learnt the mechanics of the school and made quick decisions. I knew that the academic success is based on the state of mind not the size of the school. I had a mental transformation and a mindset shift. I talked to myself that I was the one in charge. Yes the board was against me but I was the one in control. I knew that the best revenge was massive success. I realized that the school was not based on any foundation, principles or values. That first thing was to instill the foundation of self-belief into everybody in the school compound, from the gate to the kitchen, and from the classroom to the staffroom. I did not want it to look like I was changing things because most of them would not accept. I sought to give information then this information would make them make the change I wanted. I knew that going to a new station and starting to dictate things without a plan would cause chaos and revolt.

I made my team, for even Jesus took only three disciples aside for prayers when he was about to be crucified. I knew that for me to achieve my target that year, I had to know who was for me and who was against me. I knew that progress would not be achieved if we had any form of negative energy within us. I had to ensure that the team assisted me to influence others to the right track. The team indeed proved to be the winning team. They became key players who made things to happen, acted as

catalysts, people who were passionate, talented, creative, responsible and had initiative. They committed themselves to support me come up with school ideals, culture and ethos. Over a short time, all teachers sailed on my boat.

I had to establish and empower the departments. I wanted the school to grow thus the head of departments had to be empowered not giving just tittles. When the Head of Institution takes all the powers, the heads of departments become powerless. When the heads of departments are powerless, they cannot make good decisions on behalf of their departments because they say, “it is the head teacher to decide, not me.” They end up limiting their performance.

I empowered each and every department and as long as their decisions were based on the achievement of our target, I would fully support. I was so much concerned with boarding, sanitation and academic departments. These are departments that attract the attention of the parents mostly. Within two weeks, the parents had started feeling my presence in the school.

Another important aspect was to reduce the distance between the pupils and me. I did not want to have a Headteacher-pupils relationship. I wanted to have a father figure, a role model and mentor. For me to accomplish this, I was to be so close to the pupils. I would have talks with candidates together with the class teacher. I would play and have fun with them during break times and games. The school being in Uasin Gishu plateau, most day scholars were riding on their bicycles to school and I was from Nandi Hills escarpment where it is rare to see a bicycle. I didn’t know how to ride on the bicycle. They were having pleasure and real fun in teaching me how to ride. I took it to challenge them that it is possible to learn something new and get it right so as to the academic work so long as you have interest. I did it so well that

there was respect from them but also no fear. I knew that if pupils would fear me that would be recipe for academic failure.

There were some crucial things which I learnt that they needed immediate intervention for the system to run smoothly. The school had not been registered by the ministry of Education (MOE) and also it was not registered as KCPE center. I realized that the curriculum support officer (CSO) had written a warning letter to the school. The school was to be closed if it was not going to be registered. The school director was in a panic mood. We had to hasten the registration process, and we visited the County Director of Education (CDE) for advice on registration procedures. We realized that the County Education Board was to hold a Board meeting in two weeks' time before the end of January, 2015 to plan and lay down strategies for the year's events and activities. The CDE advised us to present our school registration file before then for the board to determine our fate of the registration during that meeting.

It was a tedious task for us. We had to burn the midnight oil preparing the registration file. We also had to request for the Quality Assurance and Standards Officer of Education, NEMA, and the Public Health Officer to visit our school for inspection and recommendation. I had to ensure that the school compound was clean. The flowerbeds were prepared round the classrooms, the assembly ground and the dormitories. After a week, the school was ready for inspection. After inspection, all the inspecting authorities were satisfied that we had met the minimum registration requirements and they recommended our school for registration. Without wasting much time we presented the registration file to the CDE, two days after the county education board meeting. I was overwhelmed by the happiness for we had overcome the first challenge.

Having the school registration certificate, I was convinced that our school was going to be a KCPE center. I presented the certificate to county examination department officer. After a lengthy discussion, he agreed to assist us to get the school KNEC Centre code before the registration of 2015 KCPE candidates began. Indeed the officer kept his words. After a week, we had our Centre code. Truly when you have a vision, things shall work in your favour, Indeed, no follower wishes to be dominated by a leader who lacks self-confidence and courage. It is due to these attributes which inspired our officers to accord us the necessary assistance.

The KCPE registration process began. We were to register the candidates using our KNEC code unlike the previous year 2014 where the candidates were registered in the neighboring school because our school had not been registered by the MOE. Moreover, the candidates were 11 below the minimum of 15 for a school to qualify to be a KCPE Centre. We began registering candidates though they were only 9 candidates (2 boys and 7 girls) meaning that we were to be hosted in the neighboring school. This was against my wish. My desire was to have our candidates sitting for the KCPE in our school. I had to look for 6 more candidates from various schools to make a total of 15 candidates for our school to be KCPE Centre. With the blessings of the director, the school offered the sponsorship for 6 candidates. The opportunity was to be taken by teachers as a way of motivating them. To avoid conflict of interest, we allowed them to consider those learners with low marks, those who would be easily released from their schools.

When God designs a path that you should go through in order to be fully equipped to carry out the mission He gives you. Indeed, in a span of one week, we got the 6 candidates making us to attain the minimum number of candidates for the school to qualify as a KCPE Centre and I knew that a tough journey to excellence had begun, a journey and a mission that needed determination, courage and

dedication. Some could see as a mistake having a candidate class that year but for me I was not afraid of making that mistake. I considered it as a stepping stone to success and teaching us valuable lessons along the way.

Having a weak candidate class with a **mean** of **247.93** out of **500** in the first evaluation test meant that we needed proper strategies and destroying all the viruses within the system such as;

- People with fortress mentality.
- Status quo syndrome, comfort zone feeling.
- The disease called son-of-the-soil (SOS) and daughter-of-the-soil (DOS) syndrome.
- Poor children/candidates' mentality.

The above vices were to be destroyed. Everyone in the school had to be streamlined, motivated and geared towards our target. After keen observation and assessment, I realized that there was problem in learning perhaps caused by teaching methodologies across all the classes, there was no fun in learning and learners were kicking chairs and shouting whenever the bell for breaks went.

The teachers being the main facilitators for learning had to be equipped, capacitated and motivated to trigger learning in classes. I wanted to see fun in learning - learning was to take place in classes. Within a short time, our school turned to be an action school. Everyone in the school let his/her hand on because we had to understand that performance would never be changed by the number of words we kept on uttering but by changing the ways of doing things in action.



***Handing my written submission to the PRESIDENTIAL
WORKING PARTY ON EDUCATION (CBC) REFORMS
TASKFORCE ON BEHALF OF ADC Schools of Vihiga County at
Moi Girls National School - Vokoli. On 11/11/2022***

For everyone to be on board including parents, I had to introduce academic clinic days -one academic clinic day once a term where subject-teachers, class teachers, parents and the learners had informative conversation and discussion. External speakers were invited to take parents through the roles of parents in education. This made teachers to receive maximum support from the parents and guardians. All the programs of the school ran smoothly due to that unwavering support from the parents.

One man once said that, “*You can never soar like an eagle if you hang out with buzzards and chickens all the time.*” Having this in mind, I had to register our school with the Kenya Private Schools Association (KPSA) where we could have an opportunity to associate, interact, mingle and have healthy competition with giant private schools within our region and beyond. This enabled our school to participate actively in seminars and symposia for the directors/managers, Heads of Institutions (HOIs) and teachers for the capacity building. Our learners were sitting for the KPSA examinations. Indeed, KPSA became one of our great pillars on our quest for progress and success.

Having our school fully registered with a candidate class for the first time meant we had a lot do. Every pupil had to keep their class target in mind, even class ones. I would randomly ask any pupil to tell me their class target whenever I met them. This made the pupils and candidates to work towards achieving the targets by all

means. They never forgot what they were after. Having a target of 301 mean score for KCPE 2015 could not make the candidates to relent but to work extra hard.

Sometimes it is not about classroom, but rather the staffroom. Being a head was not an easy thing as people used to think. I had to make personal sacrifices for the betterment of the school. Stakes were too high, times were too serious. I did not entertain mediocrity from anyone. I ensured the staffroom was busier than the classroom in preparing for concrete content to be delivered in classes.

That school was young and as I had noted earlier, we were to do KCPE for the first time using our KNEC code. I knew that if we could hit our target, teachers would be praised but if we would perform below average as it was in their first evaluation test with a mean of **247.02 /500** then I would be blamed. I did not entertain any form of jokes with teachers. I made them see that performance is not all about intelligence quotient (IQ) but emotional quotient (EQ). Teachers were to take care of the emotions and attitudes of the learners as I took care of theirs too for the good performance to be realized. Therefore, teachers had to stop being politicians in school but be athletes who competed in a race or be like hardworking farmers who got the harvest.

Every learner/candidate was our asset that we could manipulate to produce results as long as we took care of their EQ and everyone was capable of doing well. Politicizing the performance of the learners and castigating them was uncalled for. I would not allow anyone to abdicate his/her duties of helping learners to realize their absolute best in their performance. There was no substitute. Everyone in the school was doing something to help in the achievement of our goal.

I realized that there is no big secret to success than installing content to learners and making a school an action school as I had stated earlier. The syllabus coverage

was the key therefore, by 31st July, we should have cleared the syllabus across all the classes, as other classes embarked on serious revision. Class 7 proceeded to class8 work and by the end of October half of STD8 work should have been finished. Before the following year on March, the class8 syllabus should have been finished. After that we began teaching class8 topically from class 4 work. We dwelt more on topical revision.

I could not see a miracle so I created one. We followed our system. Before the candidates sat for their KCPE, we had gone through the work of class4 to class8 adequately. We had developed a working timetable for the preps. Our school was a boarding school where candidates used to wake up at 5:00am and slept at 9:30pm. During their preps we made their timetable in such a way that they would study one topic in each subject every day. In the morning, they would spend time from 5:30am to 6:45am and 7:15am to 8:00am answering questions from their subject teachers on the topics they had studied in the yesterevening preps, this sharpened their brains to master content right from class4. Commercial examinations such as JESMA Series, Solution, KNAT, Targeter etc. were done on Saturday evenings and the whole of Sunday. The results were expected to be released on Monday morning assembly and the revision of those papers was to be done to completion on Monday.

When the 2015 KCPE results were released, we had created a miracle. We had hit our target with a mean of **305.71** ranked position **4** in the zone out of **26** schools with mathematics being position 2 with a mean of **70.19**. We had 2 candidates in the top ten candidates. Indeed it was a good moment for us. We were overwhelmed by joy. I could not believe it. I got congratulatory messages from every person. Everyone was amused and excited by the sterling performance from a school without any status. What captured my attention the most was the amazing results from the

six candidates whom we had sponsored as to fill our number - their results were as follows;

ENTRY	ENTRY BEHAVIOR	KCPE RESULTS	DEVIATION
1 st	268	311	+43
2 nd	260	314	+54
3 rd	257	309	+52
4 th	249	326	+77
5 th	241	302	+61
6 th	233	292	+59

If they could be merited in their former schools they could be among the tops unlike before when they were at the bottom. This made me to realize that consistent encouragement to learners irrespective of their limitation, coupled with a revelation of what they are capable of if they do their best has led me to believe that if accorded psychological security and motivated appropriately, most learners commit themselves to realizing their full potential. Therefore, if the two aspects are properly executed, most learners' output would be tremendous.



Analyzing the Results

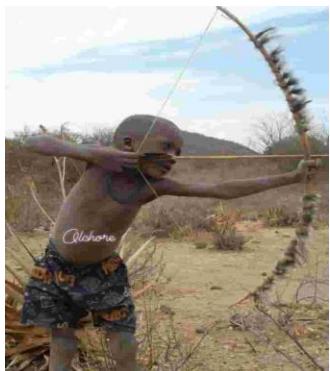
After analyzing those results, I knew that if I just relaxed, someone else would overtake me the following year. Some people were saying we were lucky. Others said we would never achieve that performance again, but I kept my faith. I was determined to draw my curve. We repeated our culture and system of topical preps, topical morning exams, and covering syllabus early. We even became more ambitious. We were now targeting a mean of **347.71**. Everyone came on my side: the sponsor, the board, the parent, the community -everyone came to support my dream of making the school great.

In January, 2016 at the beginning of a new academic year, we got numbers of pupils yearning to join our school across all the classes of which we received them for we were yearning for numbers. The school population rose from **97** pupils to **193** that year. The school director was more pleased and encouraged to pull more resources to develop our infrastructure.

The academic year came to an end. KCPE 2016 results were released and by the grace of God we had improved from **305.71** to a mean of **327.69**. We took **3** candidates to national secondary schools out of **18**. For the first time, we were the most improved school in the zone and ranked position **3 overall**. We became the center of excellence. Many admired to see their children join our school. We had to build two dormitories to cater for the growing population. Within a span of two years, the school without status and population of **97** was three times bigger with a population of **247** pupils. I knew what worked for me. I kept on repeating the academic system and cultures I had previously used. On my third year, we were targeting **350.69** but we got **348.31** out of **500**. This is the time when our school got to the level of top performing schools in the sub county. Our names had gained value. I was co-opted into KEPSHA executive committee representing private schools in our zone.

Our school gained status due to the systems, foundation and culture I integrated into the school. I was trying to win the battles that no one could imagine can be won. I was determined not just to go where there was a path but to go where no path was and leave a trail. I was determined to break the chains of stagnation and setbacks in school. It is by the grace of God and the hard work and determination which enabled me to achieve my target.

I am challenging you to love your work, yes, you can do it, remain focused on your target; keep going, and keep moving. Start with the rejection. Start with your humble beginning. Start and never stop. Do not take long to start moving towards your target, do not hesitate. The hunter's proverb states that, “Pulling the bow string for long misses the target.” It literary means that **postponing your plans often will lead to failure.**



Keep keeping on, you are not a looser, you are a conqueror, an overcomer and a warrior. Turn your fortunes. Your struggles are shaping you for greatness. Do not wait for the light at the end of the tunnel, be the light at the end of tunnel.

When you experience some challenges, limitations, and threats, please don't wallow in despair and hopelessness because assuredly the storm will calm and you will enjoy brimmed opulence and ambiance. You just need to keep moving and keeping on moving. Focus on your target and go for it. Keep in mind that if you are going through “hard times” remember even if everyone else even the strongest stops or

gives up, you keep going. All people who surrender remain stuck in the storm. When you don't give up, your storm shall be behind you and definitely you will attain your target.

For you to achieve your target in your performance, you need to take care of your Emotional Quotient (EQ) i.e. your feelings, flexibility, empathy, self-control, self-awareness, self-actualization, passion, humor and attitude. Remember your attitude determines your altitude. Your altitude is where your target is, go for it. If your target is to live a better life, then *Pastor Joel Osteen* is reminding you that, "Choosing to be positive and having a grateful attitude is going to determine how you are going to live your life."

Let us all aspire to have a positive attitude that energizes us to break through our limitations which have hindered us from living our lives to the fullest.

6. UNLEASH.

Unleash your potential

"The Tragedy of life is not death,

but what we let die inside us

while we live"

~ Norman Cousins~

The English dictionary defines the word unleash as the ability to release something or turn loose or free something from restraint.

God created man in His own image and likeness and gave him authority over all creatures. One of the core reasons why God created humanity was to take care of

and improve the environment/creations. This makes me to believe that God gave human beings managerial position on earth for us to manage His creation well. He has created in every person a natural ability to do something well.

For there are many roles in taking care of God's creation, He has created many abilities in His people (*Matthew 5:15*), God has endowed us with enough potential to meet our own needs and to take care of the environment. For us to meet our desires and obligations, we need to unleash our potential.

A human being is like a smartphone, where the manufacturer installs various applications and allocates a certain capacity to hold more apps. It is up to the buyer or owner of the smartphone to download, install, and activate many useful apps. The usefulness and value of a smartphone are enhanced when important apps are installed. It is absurd, or rather unfortunate, to see someone with a smartphone going from one cybercafé to another in search of a service that they could have accessed with their own phone. Surely, this is a waste of resources and time.

Think on how important the ATM card is during the wee hours when the Bank is closed. You may have a good amount of money in your bank account but without an activated ATM card you may miss the opportunity to enjoy the privilege of withdrawing your money from anywhere with ATM machine

Just as it is illustrated above for us to be useful and important in life, we have to unleash our potential. It is unfortunate to see many people lamenting and continually pitying themselves for lacking the means of survival while God has endowed them with the potential to meet their own needs as well as those of their neighbors.

God created us perfectly for a purpose. He wants us to fulfill His will on earth. The way manufacturers of the electronics provide the manual to be referred to when

the users fail to understand how to operate, is the same way we need to seek to understand our potential by asking for God's intervention. Being our creator, He understands us very well and the purpose He created us for. (*Jeremiah 33:3*) God is encouraging us to call Him, and He will answer us, and show us great and mighty things, we do not know. Indeed, we are capable of doing great things as long as we dedicate ourselves with great commitment.

It is quite disturbing to see a student scoring E in mathematics while scoring **B+** in physics yet the two subjects are related in their scopes that need the same energy and strength. This means that the student has the potential in mathematics, but it is only that this student may not have unleashed his potential in mathematics. He/she may be suffering from an attitudinal problem and laziness. There is no justification as to why someone can fail in mathematics and perform pretty well in physics, surely! How? If not attitudinal problem and laziness!

Equally, you may have two neighbors where one is suffering from hunger while the other is having plenty of harvest from his/her farm. Sharing the same boundary means settling on the same soil, same rainfall and same seasons. This tells me that the two have the potential of being good farmers. The only difference is how they exercise their potential in their farms. It is disheartening to find one of them struggling to get some few coins to buy food from his/her neighbor yet he/she is in a good position to produce his/her own food crops. You cannot expect the one spending much of his/her time and resources in the garden/farm to have the same production with the one wandering in the village gossiping and politicking. *Proverbs 13:11* reminds us that, “wealth..., but he who gathers by labor will increase.” and *Proverbs 13:7* says, “there is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing; and one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches.”

No one is born poor. True wealth isn't about circumstances; (even if you were born into a disadvantaged background) it's about the richness of mind and body. Blessed with good health and potential, you have the power to rise above any challenges. Believe in yourself and affirm, "yes, I can." And, with that, then you are rich. You can be the ceiling breaker in your family. You can be the one to change the bad situation, from shame to fame. You can be the first one in your family to excel to university even if no one has gone beyond primary education.

Therefore, every member of the society needs to work hard in any assignment around them and do it with dedication in order to post the best performance that depicts great potential. Great potential is realized by doing whatever we do with commitment. By doing such assignments carelessly, the results will be dismal or so usual that no one can recognize the great potential in us. The outstanding performance will soundly expose our potential of becoming something when we devote time and effort in what we do. We choose or elect leaders not because they have led before but because they have shown potential of leadership in what they have done before.

My brethren, let us utilize every bit of our potential endowed to us by God our creator. By doing so, it may lead us to discover our talents thus making us to turn our dreams into reality which transforms our life for the better.

There are some of the factors that may undermine our quest for unleashing our potential that we need to deal with.

Bitterness.

Most people spend much of their time concentrating on the painful heartbreaking past instead of working hard to change their current situation for a better future. You may have grown up in abject poverty, a life of shame and embarrassment which instilled a lot of bitterness in your life. Sleeping on the floor, sharing one thin blanket among a big number of your siblings to cover yourselves meant the strong would pull it for him/herself at the mid of sleeping leaving the rest of you to battle a very cold night.

In addition, doing for some time without food, going to school barefooted with tattered or patched uniforms, enduring cold chilly morning without sweater. Furthermore, suffering from laughter and humiliation from fellow pupils/students and who were well groomed.

Hey! Get up and get out of your past. Do not feel haunted or even intimidated by where you are coming from. The bitter or embarrassing past should be dealt with precisely to usher in good chances of making in life. Unfortunately, bitterness ends up eating many up from the inside and pulling them backwards every time try to come out of it. So many people miss out on their true talents because they can't get through their past.

Your need to know that you have a future to live, develop a wakeup call and say enough is enough for the past. This triggers your mind to develop positive attitude and positive energies to face our future creatively. Unfortunately, many people have failed to redefine their lives by holding on to the painful past thus developing negative energies in life. They perceive that their past only happened because someone hated them. Instead of working hard to change their situation, they spend most of their time lamenting and blaming their parents, teachers etc. They end up

developing an attitude of revenge thus involving themselves in various crimes resulting in the worst outcomes in life.

Some people hate themselves because of their devastating past stories that graduate to bitterness and remain resigned to an extent that they cannot give themselves to trying anything because of how they think of themselves. No situation is permanent. Do not accept that your situation is inevitable that you can't do anything to rise above your past and to break through your limitations.

Bitterness is dangerous. It leads to very disastrous situations that are always undesirable. Always let us be happy (*Philippians 4:4*) to exploit all the potentials that God installed in us for us to realize the good plans He has for us (*Jeremiah 29:11*)

I love the biblical story of Jabez in 1st *Chronicles* 4:10. Jabez resolved to change his past by crying out to the God almighty, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my territory. Let your hand be with me and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” The same verse confirms that indeed God granted his request. I do agree with *Mike Murdock* when he says that, “Stop looking at where you have been, and start looking at where you can be.” Jabez is a good example of a man who put into practice Murdock's advice; he stopped looking at and resigning to his pain and decided to let go of the past. He did not blame anyone. He did not shift his aggression and bitterness to his mother for naming him after pain for his name means pain.

Morgan Richard Oliver once said, “The pain you had turns into peace as you accept that everything had to happen exactly as it did for you to be exactly who you are now. You hold no blame, bitterness, or resentment toward the experience, person or yourself. Instead, you see it as the catalyst that led to your change and development. The very storm that shook you so much also worked to clear your

path.” Through this text we are encouraged to think and act positively for us to change our past for the better.

Fear.

Being preoccupied with our fear paralyzes us and steals our time. It distracts our ability to focus on constructive tasks if we are directing our time and energies to giving much attention to our fears. Worry can also make us feel worn-out, which makes us even less productive.

Fear is terrible. Most things that tend to push us outside our comfort zones make us worried and afraid thus making many people to be uncertain in trying new things in life. They cannot venture into new territories for they fear taking risks.

Unfortunately, someone may find it safe to be at home without a job than being a security guard or bodyguard in extremely risky environments yet there are fearless people who have no problem stepping straight into potentially lethal work environment taking precaution knowing that there is God almighty, the protector and the giver of opportunities and for sure the majority of risk-takers have become successful.

Atychiphobia is extreme fear of failure. People with this condition may be scared of trying new things. They always engage themselves in practical things which have been proved by others as attainable, and they avoid any activity that has potential for an unsuccessful outcome. For us to unlock our potential and do great things, we have to develop '*I don't care*' attitude, even if we fail, we shall have tried therefore, our mind should not be obsessed over fear of failure, but we should aspire to what appears illogical and unachievable. We should have the over-confidence to dream and chase the unusual dreams.

The fear of being ridiculed or the potentially invigorating fear of being laughed at is what the psychologists referred to as *gerontophobia*. People suffering from this condition avoid having errors and therefore, their surest way of avoiding errors is to avoid trying new things, taking risks or embracing growth for fear of being ridiculed. They are afraid someone will take the things they come up with and make a mockery out of them or belittle them. Many ideas have been killed by this kind of fear before they ever got off the ground and many people have shelved their potentials.

Once you understand that you are the architect of your own destiny, that you are the master of your own fate, and that you are behind the steering wheel of your own life then you will learn to give a deaf ear to any form of mockery. Become of the sort of person who believes he/she deserves to achieve his/her goal despite adversity and ridicule.

Another fear is the fear of starting small. This fear has kept many people at bay due to their status quo. Some people invest or try something new just to boost their ego and so they despise starting at some low level due to their academic and social status so they fear to be seen engaging in small things. You can start at that level and believe me you that given time people will applaud you when that level bears fruit. For instance, some people have been selling chicken by the roadsides and now they are the main suppliers of the same in the major towns and cities.

Let us put into practice *Robert Kiyosaki's* advice that, “Don’t let the fear of losing be greater than the excitement of winning.”

To overcome this, you have to develop an awareness of your fear. “You have to start by noticing fear in the body,” she says, “The actual kinesthetic sensation. Any form of emotional or even physical discomfort is where you will find it. Then, spend some time not focusing on it with your mind but feeling it in your body –which is

different. Embrace it, treat it like a friend, ask it what it's trying to tell you. If you do this, you'll find fear is not nearly as unpleasant as we thought. It's our attempt to avoid the fear that's so uncomfortable. But once you actually put your full attention on the sensation of fear, it dissipates. It's counterintuitive, but this kind of direct attention to bodily sensation actually dissolves the sensation."

Excuses.

"Excuses are the nails used to build failure." Jules Renard.

Giving an excuse is a major way of embracing failure. You cease trying doing something once you start giving excuses. Equally, excuses are the major reasons why people have not been able to achieve their dreams. Failing once is not a guarantee that you cannot attain your goal. You have to try, try and try again till your dreams come through.

You cannot venture into your potentiality with an attitude that you will pursue it only if it is convenient, or as long as there are no hassles, or no hoops to jump through with all these kinds of excuses then it means your potential shall remain muted and dormant.

Before you give an excuse understand that God had not rejected you. In fact, He equips you for every good work He entrusts you with. He has created in every person a natural ability to do something well that needs to be unleashed. Every person has to live according to his/her abilities yet because of the excuses, this can't be realized. Many people justify why they must accept a mediocre and contemptible state of existence. They usually come up with excuses like oh I come from a poor family; nothing good can come out of my family; my family has never been known to produce any graduate; I am disabled; I am a single mother, etc. You have to

acknowledge that you have the potential that you are equipped with and no number of excuses can justify for not becoming what you wanted to be.

This situation of giving excuses is illustrated clearly in the book of *Judges Chapter 6* of the Bible where we read of a young man called Gideon who lived during the time when Israel was under the oppressive hands of the Midianites for seven years. God spotted him and saw a potential mighty warrior in him; thus, He sent His angel to him. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” (*Judges 6:12-NIV*)

It is for his potential that God wanted to use him to deliver Israel from the bondage of oppression. Gideon seemed wondering with dissatisfaction as how could it be possible for him to be a mighty warrior among the men of Israel yet, “but Lord, how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” From this passage we see Gideon giving excuses as to why he is not fit to be used by God to save Israel. However, God saw the inner virtue and potential of Gideon, and all he was required to do was to embrace, activate and initiate the process of becoming who he really was. Yes, he had that potential from the beginning. It is only that he could not realize it because his mindset had been corrupted by mere excuses.

When Gideon accepted the will of God to reign over his life, his potential was unleashed and he led one of the most successful military redemptions of a nation which redefined the socio-cultural, economic and political order of the government of the people of Israel.

Believe in your ability and come out strongly to unleash your potential because God installed in us all that we require for us to become the best we can be. Let me

remind you the words of *Allan Cohen* who said, “Don’t use the past as an excuse to miss out on your future.”

Procrastination.

It is defined as the act of putting off necessary action hopefully for a more favorable time. Also, it is considered as a deliberate omission to take necessary action at the moment of expectation.

If “I’ll just do” or “I’m thinking of how to begin or to start” is your answer to the question “When?” then you don’t need any judge to justify that you are a procrastinator.

Procrastination is the greatest killer of potential thus, putting creativity and innovation at bay. Time is among the very few things that once lost can never be recovered. The lost assets can be recovered but time lost is lost forever. You have no control over time, you can set and reset your clock but you can’t do the same to the sun which signifies time i.e. you cannot set Tuesday to come before Monday. You need to align yourself with time. Time is fleeting. It is changing and it never stops. Neither does it wait for anyone nor does anyone have the power to command it. If you can’t use your time appropriately, then you will be overtaken by events and opportunities. However, no sooner than you make decisions than you will find fulfillment in executing them. Decision is vital in unleashing your potential. Nothing happens when the decision of doing it is not made. There is no perfect time, a fact that King Solomon the wise man in the book of *Ecclesiastes* concurs with: a farmer who waits for the perfect weather never plants. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest (*Ecclesiastes 11:4*).

One of the most severely limiting beliefs that many of us have is that the person we were yesterday is the person we have to be today. This belief keeps us tied to our past mistakes, habits, and limitations. We somehow buy into the notion that history truly does repeat itself, that if we were not successful yesterday, we certainly can't be successful today or tomorrow.

If you can see how ridiculous and self-defeating this belief is, you can make an instant shift toward success and fulfillment. All of us have unlimited potential and a clean slate in the moments –now, what prevents us from tapping into this potential is our own mental ties to the past. Bitterness, excuses, fear and procrastination among other limitations are mentally generated threats that hold us tight to the past. Letting go of your past is like lifting a set of heavy chains from around your neck. It frees you to pursue your dreams and rise to your greatest potential. Unleash your potential.

7. DECIDE.

“You cannot make progress,

without making

decisions.”

~Jim Rohn~

Now that you have reflected on your goals, yourself and you have identified your strengths and weaknesses, then you have graduated from your course and decided what you do like to do with your life. It is time to decide on the right course of action to take as to achieve your desires.

Success is not a matter of luck or accident or being in the right place at the right time. Success is about taking the right decisions. God has good plans for us, plans to prosper us and to give us hope and a future. Thus, He designed a right channel that you should follow in order to attain your prosperity. When you decide to manipulate this channel or deliberately avoid it by following shortcuts you confuse yourself because you may end up doing what is not designed for you. When this happens, you attain insignificant achievements or lesser fulfilment. By deciding to remain on course designed for you, however longer it may take, believe me you, the outcome will be pleasing, satisfying and acceptable.

Goals are not just achieved, they are worked for, and they are not just worked for, but they need a decisive mind to decide on how best they have to be worked out. A lot of sacrifice will be required for change to take place.

If you decide to be consistent and persistent doing the things that mediocre people don't do to succeed no matter how challenging they are, nothing in the world can stop you from becoming a big success yourself. You are the decision maker of your own destiny. You are the master of your own fate. You can build on your dream or break it; the decision is yours.

For a marathon runner, attaining credible and sterling performance will call for intensive training that requires a lot of time, discipline and commitment but some mediocre athletes have decided to engage in the unethical act of doping to enhance their performance that has led to severe consequences. Many have been disqualified, banned, or stripped of their medals. What a shame?

Every decision made bears its responsibility. Your actions, regardless of whether they are wrong or right, evil or good, are entirely your responsibility. Even if someone else asks you to do a particular thing, the decision to do it, and how to do

it, is your responsibility. When your partner or your boss asks you to do something that you find unethical, repulsive or morally wrong, then it's your responsibility to say yes or no. Indeed, it is your responsibility if you actually do it. It makes no difference that he demanded that you do it. Some people would have said no. If your junior members of staff nag you about privileges and treats they think they have a right to, and you give in even though you know that it is entirely against the rules and regulations of the institution, that responsibility lays squarely entirely on you. To blame your decision on possible consequences won't work.

Always take your time, analyze, and seek guidance and be on your right state of mind before you decide on anything. Do not decide to do anything that seems stupid when under duress. You can decide not to decide until when you are at ease.

Characteristics of a good decision

- Appropriate.
- Morally acceptable.
- Positively impacts on others.
- Fosters opportunities and growth.
- Includes others.
- Executable.
- Systematic.
- Accountable.
- Replicable.

- Pragmatic.

8. EXCELLENCE.

“Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard

than anybody expects of.

Never excuse yourself.”

~Henry Ward Beecher~

God created and gave us power and dominion over everything on earth, and we all have that. He placed the seed of excellency in us so that we can effectively fulfil our purpose in life. No one can give it to you, and no one, not even your parents can take it away. This seed can germinate and blossom through education, training, exercising our talents and abilities, determination and commitment. The virtue of excellence is suppressed by laziness, immorality, corruption and mismanagement of time and resources.

You can be a model in your family and you can break that ceiling which has blocked your family members from attaining greater height for long. Have confidence that you can, anticipate the future and create it now. Apply yourself into the due process that leads you to become whom you can be.

For you to meet your anticipation in life, you need to have a touch of excellency and integrity to the point that someone can trust you in their absentia. The sense of excellency and integrity do not give room *excuses*. How far do you think you would be if you put aside all the excuses that you have been giving for your current

situation? Because there are people who did not have any foundation but they have created themselves, they had all the excuses to say that they were unlucky to have meagre resources and mediocre support but they have invested some ways to reconstruct their future even on those challenges that life subjected them to and now they are living pleasing and fulfilling lives in their villages.

The senses of excellency and integrity are developed by good character. Academic excellence gives opportunities but an excellent character makes us successful in life. Do you know anyone that is very good at what he/she is doing? Do you know anyone that is excellent and has a good character that lives a miserable life? Probably few, but majority want the reward of excellency in exchange of mediocrity. Many people don't want to pay the price of hardwork and painful tiresome due process instead they forgo the pain of acquiring the mastery by shelving their integrity in cutting shortcuts to obtain their desires very fast, a thing that is not sustainable.

You can stand out in your performance be it in your career, farm, studies, family or in any other field if only you can make your mind. No matter what it takes and no matter how long it will take, believe me, even if you do your things in silence, people will still spot it because excellence manifests itself vehemently. Excellent people with integrity are outstanding icons and beacons to others.

Remember, you can attain your high-ranking status by starting small but there is this thing called fear of starting small which has kept many people at bay and there are two things that can trigger your inability to start small and the first one is *education*. Many people go to school not to acquire knowledge but to boost their ego and so they despise starting at some low level due to their academic status and pride so they boastfully say, "At my level! How can I do that?" fantastic, yes! Cannot start

at that level but someone will start at that level and give that person time, he/she will employ him/her when that 'level' he despised bears fruits

The second thing that can sponsor your stagnation and inability to start small is *previous success*. If someone has tasted a higher level before, it will call for high voltage humility to start small again. If you can check, all these two things are crowned by the perception of an idea of what will people say about me? If you can take that statement out of your mind and minding your own business you can be surprised by the exploit that you can do. Stop giving excuses no matter how convincing they are as to why you are not doing something. Someone else in the same situation or even worse has decided to put aside the excuses and is doing better somewhere. Break through your limitations, be on your right attitude and keep keeping on working on your abilities of becoming your Excellency.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LOVE OF GOD IS UPON OUR LIVES.

The love of God is so great, so deep and so high that no one can equate it with anything on earth. God has demonstrated his divine love for us. What a great love that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in Him shall never perish but have eternal life? (*John 3:16*) It is indeed an intense feeling of deep affection that He has affirmed to us.

I am imagining if a pandemic disease hit a community and a boy of age between 12-15 years old has to be slaughtered and whoever believes and feeds on the prepared stew shall never succumb to disease but have his/her health recovered. A big concern is, who will accept to offer his/her son as a sacrifice even if he/she has seven sons? I think my guess is as good as yours. No one will make such a bold sacrifice, and they would rather die all of them than to make such an offering. The love of God is inevitable that He sacrificed His only son for us to be freed from the bondage of sin.

Due to this great love, God has good plans for us. He is ready to bless us always. Check on this, *Romans 8:31-32*. "What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? 32. Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all." Our almighty God is ever ready to bless us. He wants our acceptance that we are His own sons, the sons of faith, and definitely no matter the situation of lack you are in, the bad names the earthly people call you for being financially disabled, no matter how powerful they are praying to block you from getting up, remember that God uplifted Jabez from pain to gain from shame to fame.

Our heavenly father, God of miracles and wonders is our provider every day. God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance of every good deed (2nd Corinthians 9:8) God's blessings aren't necessarily material things. As much as we pray for materialistic riches and wealth, God has divine blessings for each one of us. Our pursuit of acquiring wealth and riches should be informed by the fact that they are earthly things which are perishable. For this reason we need to: "Seek first the kingdom of heaven and all these things shall be added unto us." (Matthew 6:33). We gain a lot by working under this principle. We are sure of living our lives and in abundance when we allow this principle to guide us to focus on the right source of our livelihood. If by seeking God's kingdom 'these things' we struggle to achieve would be added unto us, then we have no reason whatsoever of doing otherwise.

God's love is conjoined with His will. Every blessing we get from God is due to His great will. We need to subscribe ourselves to this inevitable will of God for us to tap what God has for us in store. We often hear people saying, or we sometimes say, "I will travel tomorrow God willing..." or "We will meet again if that is God's will..." This means that God's will is always fundamental for our plans, desires, anticipations and all that we consider worth doing to be achieved. Thus, either consciously or unconsciously, we are largely influenced by God's will in all our endeavours. Whenever we fail to reciprocate God's love by following His instructions, then we hinder His will to reign in our lives and many of our desires and plans will not see the light of the day.

Due to God's love and His will, we are blessed. We can define blessing as the experience and enjoyment of God's divine favour apart from having more wealth. What do we have to do then to attract God's blessing?

Honor God.

To honor God is recognizing Him as mighty and the highest authority in heaven and earth, and recognizing that we, as humans, are sinners, therefore, we need the mercy, grace and power of a loving Savior to love, protect, and guide us on our life journey. And no human, power, spirit, or force can contend with His greatness and might.

Thus, God is worthy of all glory, honor and praise. Shout for joy to the lord, all the earth. Worship the lord with gladness. Know that the lord is God. It is He who made us and we are His. We are His people the sheep of His pasture (*Psalms 100:1-3*) and that we need to submit to his ways and know that He has good and wonderful plans for our lives.

Why should we honour God?

King David wrote in *Psalms 27:13 (Holy Bible)*, “I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” God loved us before we loved Him by sacrificing His only begotten Son Jesus for us. If not for His sacrifice on the cross, we would still be held spiritually captive by our own sins and be destined to spend eternity in damnation under the will of Satan. I consider this to be enough reason to honor Him.

Let us honor God by;

- *Honouring God with our time.*

We need to use our precious time to glorify God. God cares a lot about how we spent our time. “ Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil” God wants us to spend our time wisely to serve Him, serve humanity, and grow ourselves spiritually ,physically , socially and economically. Our daily routine

should be well stipulated to allow holistic growth. Our free and leisure time should be spent in those activities which can help us to grow socially and physically such as visiting the less fortunate, having good times with your children or neighbours, attending gym for physical exercises or fun sport and game. Do not allow yourself to idle for it mostly leads to evil.

- *Honouring God with our talents.*

These are our God-given gifts that we need to use to serve God and to better our lives and for others. God is pleased to bless us with more gifts when we exercise our talents appropriately. Talents are the most paying on earth.

- *Honouring God with your body.*

Your body is the temple of God. Therefore, honor and please God with your body. Keep it holy for the purpose of God.

In *1st Corinthians 3:16-17* Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.” A defiled body is unacceptable to God. Sexual immorality defiles the bodies of those who fall into that sin. In *Jeremiah 32:34*, the Lord was angry with Israel because “They set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it.” Bringing idols into the Lord's temple was an act of defilement. Any type of sexual sin, alcoholism, and cigarette and other drugs and substance abused defile a person as well. Paul in his letter in the *1st Corinthians 5:11* wrote, “...not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or extortioner- not even to eat with

such a person.” God wants us to remain clean for us to commune with Him for he is holy and to attract His blessings. When we defile ourselves through sin or neglect of the Lord Himself, we must seek cleansing by confessing our sins to God (*1 John 1:9*). Only the blood of Jesus Christ is powerful enough to cleanse our hearts and make us fit to commune with God (*1 John 1:7*). Let us honor God with our bodies through our talents and abilities to better our lives and take care of our environment, through this, service, glory and honor shall be unto God.

- *Honouring God with your heart.*

Honouring God is not about the externals; it is about the heart. It is a heart issue! We cannot honor God with lip service or with religious traditions and legalism. In *Mark 7:5* religious leaders complained to Jesus, “...Why do your disciples not work according to the traditions of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?” The religious leaders valued the scriptures, and they also valued their traditions. The problem was that they were more passionate about their traditions than upholding scriptural truth.

Jesus responded to the religious leaders by emphasizing the supremacy of the truth of scripture over man-made traditions. Quoting from *Isaiah 29:13*, Jesus reflected the state of their blindness and hypocrisy: “This people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (*Mark 7:6b-7*). Honoring God from the heart and above all things leads to a life of joyful obedience to Him in all things.

We all go through challenges and adversities in life that melt our hearts. The good news is that by His grace we can live to honor God from our hearts in

spite all of these. Peter encourages us, “In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for hope that is in you” (*1 Peter 3:15*). No matter what our circumstances may be, there is no need to be afraid when Jesus is in our heart! In Him we have a living hope.

Let me encourage us that, the honor of God opens avenues of blessings. Purpose to honor your God always. For a child who honours his/her parents shall get love and favour and most importantly shall live long on earth. God promises to shower us with His blessings.

Thanksgiving

“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” *Psalms 107:1*. Always, we pray God for good health, protection, good harvest, and children for procreation. Out of love, God answers our prayers. There are many other blessings that God gives us without our request for His affection is beyond measure.

Pastor Jeff Seward in his sermon states that often when his car stopped at a red light, he noticed other drivers who wanted to merge onto the street from a parking lot. He often waves the driver into his lane ahead of him because he is personally grateful when other drivers show him similar kindness. Sadly, when people are treated with courtesy, sometimes there is no acknowledgement or appreciation. When Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, he said one of the characteristics of the last days is that people will be unthankful. How very common that it is in our present world! In *Luke 17:11-19*, we read how Jesus healed the ten lepers. However, only one of the nine returned to show appreciation for His miraculous healing.

The miracle revealed the attitude of the thankful leper's heart, as well as the attitudes of those who didn't express thanks. God has given us all the love and care unconditionally and we are urged to remember never to forget to say thank you. And, "Blessed are those who give without remembering and take without forgetting." Said *Elizabeth Bibesco*.

Do not major on your troubles, figure out the positive part of your incidents and thank God for that. The late *Matthew Henry*, a well-known Bible commentator and minister, was once robbed of his wallet. That night he wrote in his diary that he was thankful he'd never been robbed before this incident. Secondly, he gave thanks that the robbers had not taken his life. Thirdly, Henry noted that although the robbers took all the money in his wallet, it really wasn't very much. And finally, the minister wisely recognized that he was thankful to be the one being robbed...and not the robber.

As God's people, we have everything with which to be thankful. It is good to reflect on what you have. Every good gift is from God. Therefore, do not be more interested with the gift than the giver. Don't be so proud and happy over things that God has blessed you with until you forget God who blessed you. God has blessed you with life, access to a personal relationship with Him, daily provision, gifts and talents, work, family, friends, the family of God, and a hope of Heaven with him for eternity. The more we give our gratitude to Him for all of His goodness, the more we please God to provide us with more and more blessings.

But remember, when Moses went to Mount Sinai to receive God's commandments, the Israelites turned from God and worshiped a golden calf idol made from molten jewelry and ornaments. Eventually, the majority of the perpetrators failed to set foot on the Promised Land. Likewise, today, man has chosen

to worship the idols of the world such as materialism, prestige, and status, instead of prioritizing God in their lives.

Romans 1:21 describes this well: “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.” When we don’t have an attitude of thanksgiving towards God, then, God cannot trust us with more blessings.

In conclusion, *Amy Vanderbilt, a journalist and etiquette book author*, said, “When we learn to give thanks, we are learning to concentrate not on the bad things, but on the good things in our lives,” Thinking about the good things helps us to be grateful. Remaining grateful helps us to have a more positive attitude. And having a positive attitude prompts us to think about the good rather than bad. This attracts more positivity into our lives.

Faith and Works.

Christian faith always leads to practical action which in itself is a lesson for the workplace. We cannot divide the world into the spiritual and the practical, for the spiritual is practical. “You see that Abraham’s faith was active along with his works,” James says (*James 2:22*). Therefore, we can never say, “I believe in Jesus and I go to church, but I keep my personal faith out of my work.” That kind of faith is dead. James’ words “You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.” (*James 2:24*) challenge us to work out our commitment to Christ in our daily activities.

Faith is a gift of God, and the Christian’s work is something that God has prepared for us because we have been saved by faith. We must have faith that is desirous of

good works, one that says “I long to do the will of God because He loved me and saved me.” Desire to do good always to demonstrate your faith in Christ.

God loves His own children more than the earth do. It is through this great love that we are blessed. The big question is, are you the child of God?

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