

POWER

PLANT

present, future me

MIKE OCHIENG

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PREFACE

This book is dedicated to all young people with zeal to make the best of today for a better tomorrow. It's a seed planted in faith to help them in hard times of their growth and as a reminder of their worth. All parents, school heads, psychologists, religious leaders, and students should purchase it.

We have tried to look at the challenges that affect the young mind and, if not weathered well, may derail a young mind forever. A ruined youth and childhood is a ruined adult. Among the topics covered include sexuality, addictions and how to overcome them. Personal stories have been interwoven.

Also, we have delved into life's realities and emerging trends that youth should be on the lookout. There are open letters at the end of the book.

Lastly, the book looks at life from a total wellness perspective, where physical, spiritual and social wellness are emphasized. A well -rounded approach and balance to life makes the journey healthy and fun!

FOREWORD

In "Power Plant," Mike Ochieng Odhiambo, CEO of GORBA Total Wellness Services, delivers a profound message that transcends the realms of fitness and ventures into the core of personal growth and development. As a dedicated fitness expert and an invaluable contributor to our church's team-building activities, Mike brings a unique perspective to the table—one that blends his expertise in physical health with his passion for guiding others towards holistic well-being.

As a teacher by profession, Mike understands the importance of equipping young people with the tools they need to navigate life's challenges and make informed choices. "Power Plant" serves as a beacon of insight, offering readers a bird's-eye view of life and empowering them to cultivate their inner strength and resilience.

In this book, Mike's wisdom shines through as he shares practical strategies for harnessing personal power and unlocking one's full potential. Whether you're embarking on a fitness journey or seeking guidance on life's path, "Power Plant" is a must-read that will inspire, motivate, and empower you to thrive in every aspect of your life.

Get ready to embark on a transformative journey—one that will awaken your inner power and propel you towards a brighter, more fulfilling future.

By

Pr. Maxwell Mwashighadi

Seventh Day Adventist Church Youth Director - Kenya Coast Field

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IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning, before time and space, before there was anything there, God was!

I've grown to see God's goodness and would want to highly acclaim His divine providence and proclaim His grace for this book to come to. As you will come to read in the subsequent chapters, God is the pillar of everything! Many things man does without involving God first come a cropper. I therefore thank the Almighty God, Elohim, Ebenezer for this book, the reader and all who will be impacted by it as their lives become better, transformed, inspired to live life as the creator intended- to the fullest and to His glory!

As we flip, though, may our inner self be inspired and renewed as we grow into what we are supposed to be. May the seed in us be fully watered and nourished for its desired growth.

Let's read this prayer together prayerfully, as you mean it, and own it:

Heavenly Father in whom we live and have our being, great is your faithfulness in my life. Unworthy as I am, your grace has never failed me. Your mercy always follows me- great is your faithfulness. Today, every day, I desire to grow closer to you. As I read this book, gives me a learning heart. Guide me to read The Bible daily for a healthy heart, mind, body and soul. I am a victor over my addictions. I am a victor over my struggles. Amen.

Put GOD at the centre of all you do! Enjoy the reading.

WHO AM I?

Who you are is a question you should really grapple with? Are you the same person that took dinner yester night? Are you your name, body?

Are you the toddler that cried their lungs out when mother left you in school for the first time? Let's say I repaint my initially blue house to red or add a room to the initial one-bedroomed house. Does it remain the same?

Teens and adults should satisfactorily answer the question "who am i?". this is so important because once we know who are then we have our lives in check, our self-esteem is on, confidence back, purpose in life, oomph and groove hits a high.

Self-esteem is a very crucial aspect of our lives. It's always on our lips, so and so has a positive or negative self-esteem, right? Sometimes even outrightly arrogant people are portrayed as having self-esteem, how wrong.

Self-esteem can be so many things, but it's basically how we view ourselves. How we view our bodies, attitudes, mind, life—that's self-esteem. You can view yourself as capable, important, beautiful/handsome, intelligent, athletic and fit, lovable. All this account for a positive self-image. Others view themselves as incapable and all other negative traits and, true to their self-image, they become the perceived and new realities they think, believe and set of themselves.

It is imperative, therefore, that we think, speak, believe and do positive things to ourselves. This can be done through changing our belief systems, environment where possible, inner conversations, actions, and thoughts. Needless to say, we can fight off all negative thoughts.

What contributes to our self-esteem then? Environment, roles in society, experiences, achievements or lack of it, to mention but a few.

Environment.

Our environments greatly contribute to our self-view. Some people have experienced the worst of experiences in life in their schools, colleges, workplaces and most importantly homes. Suchlike physical abuse, mental torture, sexual abuses are detrimental to the health and self-esteem of one. Some have even been sexually assaulted in their homes by their caregivers. Such people develop self-hate, have low self-esteem and don't fathom any good coming out of them because their environment conditions them to believe so. It's advisable then that one fight against the tide of such environments by developing their strong will power, and reaffirming themselves who they really are. **Their true selves and potential are in them, not in their environment.**

Those who are in supportive environments have minimal issues varying from extra personal interactions since the surrounding people affirm positive things to them. Most of the self-esteem issues arise from intrapersonal issues, especially unresolved insecurities, addictions and so forth.

Having said such, it doesn't mean that those in negative environments don't overcome. The opposite is true. In my layman evangelism in prisons, I have seen hardcore criminals, including youth's transform their lives completely while in prison!

Many examples abound of people who have been mentally, physically, sexually abused but still rose above it to make impactful living. Yes, sometimes our environments can have an impact on our lives, but yes, we should be motivated by it not thrown under. There is always something positive to pick, if only we open our eyes to them.

Our inner voices should scream louder than the noise outside. There is an old African proverb that says "**when there is no enemy within, the one outside will do you no harm**"

Roles in society.

Many professors I know really get offended big time anytime they are referred without their titles, prof, doc. Have you ever thought of it? Anyway, forget about it.

Are you a teacher, politician, social media influencer, priest, doctor? Most likely you are referred by the said titles. Most people derive their good vibes from their roles in society, i.e. leaders, opinion shapers, influencers. Remove their titles from them, and their self-confidence goes down. Some even literally feel degraded when you leave their titles out!

Some in a family feel degraded simply because they have no jobs, are the youngest and so forth. Hold your head high. Your status should not define. They are temporary.

As we become aware of ourselves, therefore the following 4 questions are key for us to answer.

1. Who are you? Most people answer this question with their names, titles, skin colour, gender, and so forth. But this question deserves an inner look into our real selves. It begs us to go deeper into who we really are. I present to us that this entails: our beliefs, our convictions, thoughts, virtues-that is who we really are. If you believe in sleeping around every Friday when you hang out, that makes you. If you believe that nothing goes comes out of life that shapes you. On the other hand, the same applies to a person that believes in piouness. In the age, old discipline of our bodies being temples of God, of everything good in life at our disposal only if we make the right choices.

2. How do you view yourself? How can you describe yourself? What do you tell yourself each time you wake up, look self in the mirror. How you view yourself even manifests in what you do to yourself. If you take or administer hard drugs to yourself, it shows how you view yourself. If you take time to do some work out and eat healthy, it communicates. If you degrade yourself by saying negative things either in speech or inwardly, like I'm ugly, I'm not good enough. It eats into your self-esteem. Say good things about yourself, write them down, and say them out loud-then live so showing the world the greatness and uniqueness that is you.
3. What influences you the most? What influences the decisions you make? Sadly, most of us are influenced by social media, influencers, actors so much that we feel downgraded by not matching their standards and that's dangerous to our self-esteem. It's good to be motivated by them but not to be controlled.!

Most youths tend to be influenced by their peers. Their words, opinions of us, advice really weigh in. so they tend to conform to their peers so much they end up losing their voices, identity.

Same applies to adults who would want to fit in a social class. They force themselves to do things sometimes beyond them. Some get depressed, do drugs so as not to lose friends.

Unfortunately, in this digital era of people going for likes and followers, some get so influenced by other people's opinions of them. They feel validated when they post videos and people give likes. They feel offended when the likes don't come or when they are trolled online. They hurl insults at us; we believe them. They brand us names. We live those names! That ought to stop. **Someone's opinion of you is never your reality.** Make your own reality by countering people's opinion with your

own true assessment and pursuit of yourself. If you live for the likes, you will die of the boos.

4. What would you like to be? The past is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift-that's why we call it present! Our future self is what we do today! Is the current you, your habits, beliefs the ones that you are proud of and would like to be your reality? If your answer is no, then begin to make changes now. If the answer is yes, then you are making good strides in the right direction.

Experiences

Yesterday at 6.45 pm, who did you talk to? Maybe you can't possibly remember since you didn't register as very significant. I bet you can still remember a particular event or day that happened to you when you were very young and you still remember it very vividly right?

So we can imagine the kind of person one can become when they have experienced bad experiences as children! And vice versa to those with pleasant experiences.

The ones with traumatic experiences like rape, abuses tend to not outlive it and this forms part of their character portraying through sadistic tendencies, anger, and the likes,

What's more important, moving forward, is the kind of experiences we choose to give ourselves now.

When you keep living your life on the edge, being promiscuous=- your experiences become your new reality.

Have a vision

Without a vision, there is no mission. Simply put. Have a picture of your ideal self. The traits you would like to have, the future you desire, the

person you want to become. Secondly, ask your present self what you really have to do to be your ideal self. Therein lies the roadmap to your desired future.

THE MIND

One of my favourite verses is roman 12:1-2 that begs of us that to transform our lives we must renew our minds. In short, **change your mind, change your life!**

How true this is. That means we should really put much thought into what we think, envision, feel, desire. They automatically become our actions and habits.

The mind has both short memory, mid-term memory and long-term memory. Meaning, if you give me your number and I am not interested in it will go to the short-term memory. After five minutes I won't even remember it. if I am interested, I will try to repeat it for half a day, that means if you ask me within the day I may still remember. That is short-term memory. However, if I really want to remember it, I will dial it offhead daily to talk to you, that way it will stick with me for years to cement our relationship. Same way you know your parents' number, wife's number but not your stranger's.

Should it bother us then of what we repetitively feed our minds food? Oh yes, our minds should eat balanced food, the same way we feed our bodies.

Should it not bother us what we meditate on, think, tell ourselves? Our mind is literally the gateway to our lives.

Same way there are activities that are like second nature to us. We do them without blinking. It's because the mind needs no training for it. However, there are some things we struggle to comprehend, addicted to or some

bad experiences or secrets e had while young. Where do you think they are stored? The mind!

Remember, learning GIGO (garbage in, garbage out) in school? The same philosophy applies to our minds and life. GIGO.

All great inventions were conceived in the mind. All human atrocities and massacres were conceived in the mind. Sex begins in the mind. Chastity and piousness begin in the mind. Don't you know that your body, read mind, is the temple of the Holy Spirit?

In a nutshell, we are all a work in progress and achieving our ideal self requires constant reminders to ourselves, genuine love, openness to constructive criticism and a lot of trust in God to help us really live the uppermost of our lives.

CHAPTER TWO

FAITH

Have you ever lost hope? Have you ever given up on your dreams, faith, religion? Have you ever seen like the night may never end? Like it rains, yes, but it seems to be raining only on you of late? Are you a hard worker but always suffering losses in your business? A faithful steward but always having sicknesses in your family? A prudent student doing their best but always having the poorest of grades? A prayer warrior and pious person, but battling a terminal disease?

Resilience is key. Having faith is key. **In fact, without faith, it is impossible to please God!**

The Bible has many stories of faith. In fact, Hebrews 11 is at the honor roll of faithful men of old. From Abraham, Enoch, Elijah, you name them. All were faithful to God, and God rewarded their faith in the most awesome of ways.

Some never tested communion [death] and some did but all had one thing in common, their faith was stronger than ever before as their days on earth grew shorter by the day.

Many a time we don't take a lot of time think about that. In fact, the contrary happens. Our faith grows smaller and smaller.

One day I made a personal prayer. I had just clocked 18. I prayed to God to make me successful. TO be an instrument of honor both before him and before men. It seemed quite a big deal to me because I was struggling with many issues then, yet I had not yet comprehended the full meaning of life. My body and my mind were not together. to make matters worse, my KCSE results were out and, sadly, not as expected.

The fear of the unknown seemed to always tip toe behind me. MY interest in things and people I will took at back seat. It seems in life there

are times to make things happen and times to let things happen; the latter was the stage I was in.

During that time, God gave me a job as a shop attender in a family friend enterprise. Prior to that I had tried selling sim cards for Airtel, walking the whole day, selling nothing and getting no commission. I go back home hungry and angry. But still I had a job for two weeks until a proper one came. With all these was the pressure to remain sexually pure in a very tempting world.

As I was saying many a time we do not take a lot of time thinking about faith. Being a young man then, I owned "my troubles" as mine instead of literally giving them up to God. Our troubles of the day seem very big: from never ending debts, broken relationships with loved ones, death, disappointments, no money, sickness and so on. We become so much depressed that our troubles become very real and faith a distant illusion. We always tend to forget one thing—OUR God is always more real.

In my times of doubt as a salesman I would always remind myself that God will provide. He did it more than 2000 years ago for the Israelites by providing manna and will do it for me I would say. As usual, my patience would run out sometimes. Indeed he did it for me, after two months on the job I got a promotion from a shop attendant to a salesman.

I could now do something with myself. But how wrong I was. I had put my focus on the blessing more than on the blesser. There was a problem—praying became a challenge. How similar was I to ABRAHAM who had nothing and was on a verge of greatness? Blessing after another starting with Isaac but on command gives son as a sacrifice, he almost forgets who the voice was, the blesser, the provider. Sometimes that makes the difference in our faith. We must always put all our hope and trust in Jesus that he will do even the impossible and when he does so [make our prayers come true] we should let our focus remain there with him.

THIS is a lesson I have come to appreciate with time, test and cherish in the last 6 years. LIKE Paul, I have to experience the test of life on both ends, when I have and when I have not. When I have strong belief and when downcast, my spirit is.

1st Peter 1 vs 5-8. Encourages us that our fiery trials should be praised to God. Wow, how tremendous a seed of faith planted in God can reap the seed of faith. Despite the nice things I have highlighted so far, here comes a reality check. **Faith in God does not always guarantee pleasure, but it always guarantees happiness, and happiness comes when all we do, say, and think are in harmony.** Let's go to HEB 11.

Here we find the honor roll of the man of legacy. Enoch [vs 5] walked literally with God and never tested death. Abraham [vs 8] becomes failures of nations and faith too. THE list goes on. However, some like Abel vs 4, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Samson and Paul the list goes on, were ridiculed, maimed, rejected by family and some killed just because of their faith.

But how sweet the feeling they must have had in their hearts knowing they died for the right cause and stood for God's words and beliefs. That is what I call *Everlasting Faith*. through the heavens may fall their faith was bound to stand just like a tree by the rivers of waters because they knew who the other and finisher of their faith was.

I focused on starting this book deliberately for your dear reader. Because faith in God is the cornerstone of our faith. It helps us keep our lives safe and pure and motivated in a world that keeps growing wicked, heartless and insecure by the day.

Faith moves mountains, yes. But I call it a gift. As discussed before, the Bible gives us stories of men of old who made it upright in life. , it gives us the wisdom and strength to face today and it unfolds before our very eyes the splendor and beauty of tomorrow—the unseen.

Let me give you two more stories.

After leaving the computer firm, I did several jobs including being a *matatu* tout–plying the Bondo-Uyawi road in my home county in Siaya [and occasionally to Kisumu–on hire] This was a very challenging experience, But I had set my mind to it to raise my first semester fees for my college [degree] education at Moi UNIVERSITY.

Sometimes I would go back home to my grandmother, [whom I lived with] and would cry by myself not because of any physical pain but of the emotional torture and confusion my mind was undergoing sometimes.

I had promised my God to be faithful to him and had requested him guide me through the job and help me raise the required fees. Each day at work seemed to give me many opportunities to break this vow.

For example, women and young girls would throw themselves at me, it was me to decide. My friends had changed too. Each time we had breaks, the only discussion on the table by colleagues was their sexual escapades. Sadly, I buried a number too. An incident made my mind clear again.

One day as we were coming from Kisumu to Bondo town the front tyre of our vehicle burst. The car was at a high speed and it was only a miracle we survived and didn't crash. I was too frightened to move as we moved on the road dangerously until we came to a stop. The front part of the car was written off from the tyre blast. The feeling in my stomach I could only compare with the one I had a week ago when I almost ran over a child on my way home. I couldn't see him well as he had dark clothes and was lying at edge of the road. I swerved off the road and in God's grace, he was unhurt. I later learned from the mother who, until then, had been looking for him, that he had epilepsy and it must have been one of his fits that had thrown him down on the roadside.

Back to my major story. After the accident, I spent the next month in deep thought with reality hitting me.. My grandmother could wake me up

at 4am to pray before I could leave the house. This opened my eyes more. How stupid of me to have doubted my God. How foolish of me to have forgotten that prayer was like water to my seed of faith.

As fate would have it, when it rains, it pours. Six months later, I was to do my last shift, then report to college. However, having a change of heart I allowed my uncle to go alone [he was the main driver]. At 4 pm I got a call to go and see him at the hospital after having had a bad road accident.

Present day I'm through with my Bachelor's degree, almost done with my masters degree and still counting. Of course, I resolved to fire my faith in the days in runs cold and accepted the reality that one is most fragile and in need when not in prayer. I resolved to keep the faith.

If that wasn't faith, may be this is. A volunteer doctor in America packed up his bags and left for the Amazon area. Having heard stories of children dying from curable disease, he had made up his mind to go and contribute to positive change.

He armed himself with skills and faith, and off he went. The temperatures were not as pleasing as he had back at home, but he managed to reach a village. People there slept with mosquito nets and hardly walked at night because beasts invaded houses at times .

That night, he slept in a small room given by the villagers. He prayed for protection and went to sleep. He prayed that he might finish the work he had been sent to do. At night he was woken up by a thud on his chest. He opened his eyes and on his chest was a cobra. He froze as the reptile made itself comfortable with the warmth from his body. His heart seemed to have missed several beats as he asked God why he brought him to die this far from home and this manner- slow and painful death.

He closed his eyes but not his mind as he prayed and prayed. He thought he prayed forever. As the night progressed, the unthinkable happened.

Thugs broke in with a kick. They must have heard a rich stranger man was in town. Things seemed to be getting out of control. Just as the first one was about to hit his head with a baseball bat, the cobra in his chest got ruffled and attacked the thieves in one swift movement. He fell down in pain as he died.

The other at the door on seeing this took to his heels with the cobra running in tow. Dear reader I do not know the plans you may have for your life but I know for sure that if you reach out your faith in God, then nothing in this world will be impossible. If you believe in your heart that he will do what he says, he will do them keep your faith alive by acting and thinking in the same manner.

Talk a leap of faith and each day work towards your goals

My story

Maybe the idea of faith seems far-fetched. Allow me to share this personal learning experience.

FAITH IN PAIN, TRAUMA AND GRIEF

The year 2022 almost brought all my senses to a standstill, December 1st. My momma and wife were both seriously sick.

They had been sick for some long time now, but on this day, death was looming around in the form of sickness. After some 4 days, on December 5th, both were wheeled into theatre for major surgeries. I felt so heavy. my father-in-law had also turned blind in both eyes and was also bed ridden. My father's health the same year had not been good, same to my younger sister who was suffering a strange occurrence and was then at home from school... Our businesses had closed down, I had been reported to the police, had fallen behind on my rent. It was tough.

Cancer

Fast forward, my mom's fight with cancer has taken time, resources and emotion. She had been diagnosed around 8 years ago, but she had been in denial for some time. Years passed until it came to punish her body once again.

I really salute her resilience. She kept saying she was okay and doing her businesses when in fact she was very ill. The previous two years had been an unpredictable 24 months full of God's grace. She had taken a loan for the business. Repayment had been a nightmare. The auctioneers threatened and visited the business premises and the house. Each time she called me, I would offer hope and later my heart would burn within me since my last-born sister was also in school and needed money, mums' medication needed money, my wife's medication needed money, personally I needed money.

Mum's medication in Kisumu had hit a snag. We did a transfer to Mombasa. Here we got another shocker, due to her breaks in treatment she had to start afresh despite the fact that her NHIF card had exhausted all her tests to be covered. It only had cover for some chemo sessions and there we were in urgent need of Ksh 40,000 to kick-start the initial tests immediately. How many of them will she need/? We were told to take a day at a time! This was a road she was going, and we did not know how long it would take us. My place at that time was quite far from the hospital. I remember her tears as we left the hospital. For her to be taken to the hospital by the caregiver: either my brother, wife or I, it would cost at least Ksh 1000 a day for fare to and fro. At this point I would really say may all power, glory and honour be to our Lord Jesus Christ, who made everything possible. It would be mean if I fail to say a special prayer also to my family: wife Eunice, dad, bro Tony, sisters Emily, Susan, Joyce and family, cousin Betty, for God using them for provision and through friends. God's way of doing things marvels me. I won't forget to mention the Ongombe's family, friends, neighbors and colleagues, then led by my boss, Mr. Mzughha Dennis.

We used to pray every evening after meals for good health.

Mum's medication went on unperturbed. I really see it as a miracle up to today. How else can you explain us being at the bus stop numerous times and getting lifts from strangers who later became family? How else can you explain that we never slept hungry? She never lacked drugs? she even later went for further treatment at Kenyatta hospital and finally recuperating at home. There is so much I would have put to spare since I saw firsthand her reaction to the chemotherapy and radiotherapy and brachytherapy, but God enabled her through the pain. She stands strong as a survivor.

wife's sickness

My wife has had to undergo 4 surgeries in between 5 months! So much draining to an individual. So much emotional and physical pain. the chemotherapies, radiotherapies, brachytherapies have had a big toll on her. I remember my wife's 4th surgery as I wheeled her down to the theatre. She really cried a lot that day. She kept saying something was not right, but I encouraged her, telling her it was just anxiety... She thought it was her end-and it almost became! Something went wrong during the procedure. I remember the siren and the doctors rushing her back with her convulsing, kicking, eyes out, screams. It was scary.

In all the times she underwent the procedures, it found me dead broke! This last time, I cried as she writhed in pain. The pain over the years was so intense and had to be let out in some way. The doctors found me sobbing in the room as they tried to contain her screams and pains. All the emotional pains came out in my tears and strangely, I felt light. I kept praying. I keep praying. God's provision still keeps us.

I remember walking to the stage with no care at all, but still would find myself home and back to the hospital the following day. **I've slept**

uncountable times on hospital emergency corridors, or at best - visitor's arm chair- till morning. Sometimes, kind doctors have allowed me to sleep in the emergency room when they had no patients. I've never seen fighters like my wife and mother. And every day I'm grateful for the strong women God gave me. I love you, my wife.

There are many times in between where our prayers have been tears. The doctors sometimes have been at a loss with the recurrent problems. Sometimes, in pain, she questioned her existence, wondered if cancer patients get healed, why not her? The pain has been so real, raw. And in that situation, we discovered our faith in action through daily prayers. Our house is a house of prayer. We have claimed that no matter what, nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8:39)

My point is we all undergo pain in many forms. Physical, emotional. Some pains are for a short time. Others take time-a year, two and some may take forever. The thing with pain, I can say, is that it's very hard to process it, but it is temporary. Pain may result from different things: pain of death; sickness; traumatic experiences; very personal traumatic experiences and so forth.

Pain and grief follow the same process, if we may call it so. That is denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance.

DENIAL stage is where we tend to fight off the reality of the pain or its cause. It can't happen to me, we say.

Anger stage. on realizing that trouble is with us, we get consumed with so much anger. We are angry with God, family, ourselves. Anyone or anything take the blame.

Bargaining stage. We tend to give promises to God of how we might change if the situation is reversed. We tend to promise anything as long as the cup is taken from us, literally.

Depression stage. We tend to give up. We resign to fate and the powers that be. We are sad. Everything is gloom. We lose interest in everything. We even don't want to go work. Nothing is interesting anymore.

Acceptance stage. Is where we make peace with our situation. If it has an expiry date, fine. Let's say you have lost a loved one. You now come to terms that the person is physically gone. If the problem has no expiry line, let a terminal disease. You also come to terms that the healing may take time or forever and agree to take a step of faith.

The processes above don't necessarily have to follow the same patterns of flow in that logical progression. Some have it jumped up.

Same applies to time. Everybody takes different time to go through what they go through and the stages. That said, however, it's prudent that we accept life's unpredictable outcomes with a lot of prayers and a teachable spirit. Always ask God *"what is there for me to learn?" and not "why me?"*

Enemies of faith

1. Fear

Fear has many definitions: face everything and run or face everything and rise. Fear is among the most subtle of human emotions. It can paralyse your mind and body. Imagine unexpectedly encountering a lion during one of your evening walks-you will be noted to the ground for a second there. Fear can make us not think, it leads to in action.

When we fear, we don't even plan for the future, for we fear it may not come through as we would want it. It's time we came out of our fear cocoons.

What is the plus in you fearing? Alright, you have feared long enough to do one, two, three things, alright, where has that fear gotten you? Nowhere!

We should really step out in faith, and that is how we overcome our fear and change our mindset. **By changing our inner conversations, reassuring ourselves that things may happen not in the perfect way but they will happen in the best way, by taking practical steps in the direction of our fear. It's time to set ourselves free!**

Stop asking yourself *what if?* Ask yourself *why not?*

2. Self doubt

We doubt ourselves so much, especially when we are learning the ropes. Anytime you do something, you should proudly step out and say, yes, I did this. If it was not up to expectations or you scored a grade you are not proud of, tell yourself and the world yes I did it, though not the way I really wanted but yes I did. This is my training period. Nobody was born a master, and this is my time to be the best.

You do something great. It will speak for itself and give you the impetus. You do some shoddy work, put your head up and rise the next time. It's enough of burying our heads in the sand. Whatever you do, do it in the best way you can, the only way you know you can.

Faith is a must in life

Generally, it's imperative that we live a life of faith because with faith comes hope. I have seen many students report to high school with only their former primary school uniform only! No school uniform, no fees, no essentials, even pads for the girls, but still they have completed their education and living independent decent lives.

I have seen cancer patients getting healed.

I have seen people transform their lives for the better.

I have seen Him in my marriage. I even had a beautiful wedding year back literally by faith literally. (a big thank you to my church–Ziwani: elders Bonnie, Ongicha and team)

God is interested in you, no matter your pain or grief. Full surrender to him means you pray about it, then leave it to Him that His will be done. Faith in Him means patience. Faith in Him means doing His will every day, praying, living by His principles. faith in Him means you know He will provide and come through for you even when it seems impossible. It means you depend on Him alone and fully live and talk to Him as a friend. Faith is simply living the word even when it makes no sense to you at the moment. Faith is belief. Have total, unwavering faith in God, believe in yourself.

DILIGENCE

Dear school going youth,

A story is told of a wise old man and an aspiring future leader. The young man asked the old man the tit-bits of how he should scale up. The old man gave an appointment at the beach. On the material day, the old man took steps into the ocean with the young man in toe. With each step deeper, the young men followed with renewed fear, since the water levels kept rising until finally, they were all submerged.

After a few minutes of gasping for air, the young man came out panting and tapping his chest out. The old man held his breath more and after a few minutes came out of the water casually. He told the young man casually, "Therein lies your answer. If you want to succeed as much as you were panting for every breadth then you have it".

I believe this book has been impactful to your life and helped you take a firmer control of your life and add the needed fresh breadths of air.

Allow me to delve into the heart of youthfulness. Nothing comes easy as the internet may want to make us believe. We must work hard, stay hard and be resilient.

Time and energy

Youthfulness is the prime of our lives. We have both time, energy and the ideas. Many a time it's the money that lacks and rightly so, but the above mentioned- time, energy and ideas or talents are our currency and if rightly developed will earn us a fortune in not so long a time.

Take a student, for example. How can one utilize the three?

a. Time.

Can best be utilized by having a proper working timetable? This brings a lot of needed order to a young person's life. I advise 4: one timetable for the weekdays, one for the weekend, one for the exams and lastly for the public holidays and break holidays, this saves you a lot of time that will be put to good creative use both in and out of school.

A timetable not only gives you order but also discipline and character. One is able to do specific activities diligently and consistently. One is able to have a clear plan on how to break down the work at hand, since with a timetable, you can easily arrange what to do when and how. We also overcome the tendency of working on emotions or needs and procrastination. One also develops virtues like diligence, meeting deadlines, checking progress, doing assessments. These are valuable skills for the job market.

Without a timetable, the vice versa applies and chaos rule. And if not careful, one's plans come to a cropper. Distractions will automatically come and easily drag you off your plan. ***Without a timetable, there is no more plan and when we fail to plan, we plan to fail.***

b. Energy

From an organized life comes the drive to push and work things through. Your plans and dreams will be so clear and that will be the fuel to drive you. Being young, you should be very hungry for the future you want. Being hungry means thinking and seeing that vision in your hands, living it, being consumed by it, needing no alarm clock to wake up, improving and assessing yourself and progress, asking yourself how much further you should go, **willing to sacrifice current pleasures for true future happiness.** Listening to the right motivation and words, choosing the right company, having positive

self-talk and esteem. That is how you fuel your energy. You get so positive and psyched up that you feel you are being delayed. Ever had a burning sensation as you wait for a long-awaited journey or result? You can't hold or control it further. It's the only thing on your mind, right? It's very natural and intrinsic. That's how internal motivation should be.

Allow me to use the analogy of the fireplace. Your dreams are the logs. Your mind is the ignite. Your energy is the fire. This energy should consume all your dreams to light up a beautiful fire which is your future. All this is happening at the fireplace, which is your life and how a pleasant fire it will be. If our fire is channeled in the wrong place and way, then we don't have a fire but a disaster. Imagine lighting it in the bedroom.

Therefore, our physical energy should be channeled to constructive sports and talents, education, worship, and any other good errands.

Our emotional energy should burn in creative ideas, healthy relationships, innovativeness, self-discovery and connecting with God and nature.

When we handle the above mentioned well, then we should not forget to strive for good character.

Good character

A good name is worth more than gold. A simple definition of good character is just being disciplined. Striving to do good, thinking good, doing to other what you want them do unto you, obeying the principle laid in the Holy books, being a person of integrity. That's good character. Above all, be very prayerful and diligent. Yes, pray to God so much knowing all is possible only through Him and work so hard as if everything depends on your hard work.

It breaks my heart so much to hear young people being proud of exam cheating! It has become a norm rather than an exception. What are people proud of? Stealing exams? Surely and denying the deserving chances at the prestigious competitive slots? What a shame to those who celebrate having aided or participated in exam cheating. Little wonder the same became adults and become the unscrupulous doctors and professionals who engage in social crimes, the leaders who are corrupt.

Volunteering

Many youths are losing out on the sheer joy of knowing you did something that made a difference, the networking and friendships that come with volunteering. It's nowadays almost being considered old fashion, but didn't you know old fashion rocks? Let's say doing things the old-fashioned way: being polite, helping the needy, being prayerful, and of course doing a lot of volunteers work!

Cleaning the baths

Dr. stockman in, *An Enemy of the people*, famously said the baths were polluted. He was referring to the corrupted political systems and press. To him, and rightly so, values societal and individual seemed to make a man- not his position or status. At the end of the award-winning play, surrounded by no one but his family, he quotes the famous words- the strongest man in the world is he who stands alone.

Closer home, our baths (education system) seem to be the ever-present elephant in the room-exam cheating. It has christened many a names- *gomba*, *mwakenya*, *mwaks*, name it. Youth and adults alike are throwing diligence out of the window! They call it working smart, but is cheating really smart? We should encourage hard work and toil and honesty as well.

Every year, the KCSE exams in particular seem to be Pandora's box that hardly makes us see our skeletons in the closet. We are so used to false grades, exaggerated means, bribing ways into careers that anything goes for the ultimate prize.

At whose expense? Sadly—the young souls, the future professionals and profession, and the cycle sadly goes on.

The learner feels disenfranchised the most. Those that put in the extra work and hours honestly work their backs off, feel cheated out since the connected ones cheat their way to the top universities and "success" or is it really?

Exam frisking you ask?

Why, pray, do we invest in so much logistics, security briefs, hiring experts, frisking before, during the examinations? It may seem a no brainer- to prevent cheating-but do we?

Our learning and education system is slowly being turned into a charade and, sadly, it's growing into a praised culture. Why engage in exam frisking for foreign materials in exam rooms when the exams were leaked months ago? It's even rumored that many a student oil the aiders of exam leakage handsome amounts running to millions just to get the papers. Social media, most notoriously telegram, is awash with exam materials during exam times, with many candidates falling prey.

Are we not sick and tired of these dishonest grades? Cultures? And endless atrocities that seem to rob of our moral fibre. Allow me to recommend some **effective study skills** to help one out of this trap of cheating among them constant revision, discipline in adhering to the timetable, group works and constant review through tests, especially on the learned topics.

These coupled with what teachers give and guide should make one confident enough to face exams. Hard work is a process often painful, and not an event as mostly in peoples' thoughts.

I don't tire of emphasizing the importance of revision techniques. Constantly reminding you.

Dear young leaders and students, it's time we changed the script-a person at a time. We change it internally with our thought system and character building, we change it by managing our time and energy, we change by our belief system and actions.

CHAPTER FOUR

POWER OF THE WORD

Being grateful in speech is being grateful in the heart, which equals being grateful for life. Sample this:

“There is a roof up above me. There is a good place to sleep. There is food on my table and shoes on my feet. You gave me a life, Lord, and a fine family. Thank you, lord for your blessings on me,”

Above are the lyrics to a song that capture the heart of gratefulness. Even for the simplest of reason or things, be grateful.

A father, mother, child, student, teacher, doctor, president, we all need positive energy in our lives. That’s where a grateful heart comes in. We are surrounded by so much ungratefulness that we tend to forget the simple art of living with a grateful heart. I will tell you why I made a personal commitment to never complain, especially publicly. It doesn’t mean I don’t experience pain and setbacks. I do, but would rather talk about it objectively than complain.

The half empty, half full glass analogy is always a great illustration of how our hearts ought to be. Each time you look at a glass halfway with water, what do you think? Is it half full or half empty? I propose we look at the glass as half full.

One may wonder how it affects our mental health and life. Let me explain.

When we view life with a grateful heart, we become mentally strong. A person with such a mindset overcomes or goes through anything life throws their way, knowing there is something to learn from every experience. It’s always *what am I learning rather than why is it happening to me?*

Gratefulness sort of gives us some bullet proof over life's negativities. It inspires hope, faith and a belief that the darkness you are going through will come to an end.

Secondly, gratefulness spreads love. A simple thank you lightens our hearts, both the giver and the receiver of the good deed. Being grateful like a painkiller to the receiver of the act or words, it is like honey., it's a good habit we should try.

Being grateful has numerous advantages.

It's a cure for mental health. When you are a grateful person, your mental health receives an additional layer of protection. Instead of complaining much and being grumpy and sulky, you get to renew your worldview. The most traumatizing of events is viewed through a different lens. You stop saying why is this happening to me and. You stop saying why is this happening to me and you start saying what is this teaching me. You stop saying everybody hates me and you start saying what is this teaching me. You stop saying everybody hates me and you start saying; I am a unique person who is still yet to give my best. Gratitude replaces bad attitudes.

Gratitude opens many doors along our path in life. Whether a message, a card, a call, a gift-any way you may deem fit to appreciate people is okay. Never let an opportunity pass you. Remember the story of the ten lepers in the Bible? Only one felt the need to go back and say thank you. How sad. In fact, it creates room for more blessings to follow you.

Lastly, it creates room for good spirit and making friends. Most people are comfortable around optimistic people. It brings about the best out of everyone. Don't worry, all things pass with time.

I know this too well. There was a time, not long ago where I had my wife, mother, father-in-law-all in hospital and in extreme pain and in need of life-changing surgeries. All at the same time in different hospitals and town. It was a dark time until I took it to God with a grateful heart. In

the words of job 1; 21, I murmured, *blessed be the name of the lord*. Needless to say, mum is now braver and we believe she is winning the war against cancer that has put her down for some time. Gratefulness is a game changer.

On the flip side though, what does complaining breed?

Repulsion. Most people avoid pessimistic, nagging and ever complaining people. It just drains the energy and life out of conversations. Try to change your outlook, worldview. Develop some etiquette, smile, say thank you. When you complain of anything, all the time you are doing not only yourself but people around you a great disservice.

With repulsion, come lost deals and lost friendships, even when you mean well.

Another let down of complaining too much is the dent it puts to our attitudes, personality and wellbeing.

We become pessimistic, sad and very angry people ready to snap anytime. This creates a very hostile environment around us. Such an environment breeds no joy, neither creativity.

As I rest my pen, it's worthy to note that we advocate not for us to keep quiet when things go wrong or not to express our displeasure, no, but we can have a shift of mind, approach to life and most important change of heart.

In a world where we could be anything, let's be grateful and generous with good words. We can correct with kind words.

Watching our words.

I have always been tempted to take off further and say the word whether written or spoken is mightily than any silver or gold. From words spring

war and strife, from it springs love and its beauty there in, from world's spring life and sadly death—Marital /physical/social/moral decay.

One of my most memorable lectures I had at the university was one particular psychology class. The lecturer, Dr. Steven [Moi University] was my psychology teacher [psy 210]. She seemed to have come from Mars that day; I thought she drew a big head on the whiteboard with marching big enough ears, but the mouth in the poor diagram was negligible—we all strained and warned our necks trying to locate the mouth. In life you must have big ears and a small mouth.'; she said a number of reading our minds. How true I have come to prove those words true.

As the church youth leader, I had many experiences with my peers. Some good, some not so. Some wouldn't mind to pass by or meet for a chat and some wouldn't want a listening ear. Sometimes I would painfully unknowingly neglect the letter.

One in particular really touched me. We had just had our choir practice session. Our voices in sweet melodies harmony seemed to bind us more by the day. We said the Lord's prayer and left for our homes.

As we were light moments of the day that was as we walked, one youth pulled one aside and said, 'Thank you for the text you sent me yesterday'. And for today's sharing." He said.

'No problem. You are always welcomed. Actually, I have been struggling with alcohol. And I have been encouraging myself to keep the faith. Came the bomb shell!

I was overwhelmed by emotions. I didn't know whether to shout alleluia or sorry, sorry not for not listening much. When we listen, we ought to listen to both the said words and those which go unsaid. I had neglected the latter. The incidence above made me reflect more about the power of words. The bible quotes that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth

wall speaks, which simply implies that our words echo our minds. What we think is what we say!

Words of life

In the beginning, God only had to say a word, and the word came to be. From the mightiest of the creatures to the smallest of all. THE centurion only needed Christ's words for his servant to be healed. WOW. What a wonderful world we live all because of God's word! He just had to say, and abundance filled the cash. Beautiful people, graceful animals, breathtaking fish, glorious universe, all the magic and splendor that we see and can't see. From dawn to dusk, year to year.

On the other hand, he could speak through his commandments, and prophets and kingdoms would end. He spoke and men trembled with fear. Until he had to put it down in writing—lest they forgot. He put them down first on tablets and later in their hearts and minds. People had to move from memorizing the laws to internalizing them, loving them and meditating upon them.

Have you put your goals into writing? Then you have no excuse. Here is the logic behind it. Long before I could put mine in writing, I would simply blast them out to appease my hearers. But I am urge came over me to put them down. By putting them down, you begin the first step of decoding what the brain has been encoding. Seeing them on paper makes you think about them and to strategise on when to make them come to be. A person once said, that the best way to make your dreams come true is to simple wake up,. Yes, simply wake up and smell the coffee before grows under your feet.

You have to start from somewhere.

TIMELINE

The wise man Solomon once said there is time for everything.

[Ecclesiastes 3] As you put down on paper, give them timelines. When do you expect them to come to fruition, put it down to be a constant reminder to you? You will as well realize that as you do the writing, you would not only be able to gauge the attainability of your dreams within the given time frame but also prioritize them from the most important to the least of them all.

PRIORITY

This therefore makes me to say that you will be able to connect to your mission more. By prioritizing, you will probably be asking yourself which one consumes me most? Which dreams or goals make me so motivated and energized that the thought of failing to achieve cannot be fathomed. YOU will not only identify them in the pecking order of priority but you will be better placed to organize it and eventually evaluate after the set time elapses. If your dream at this stage will only serve you and not contribute in any way to the betterment of humanity and alleviating the vices and suffering of humanity, then it is not worthy of dreaming it..

Christ came for everybody to get a solution. Anybody who has an experience with him never remains the same. An example is of Martha Teresa of Calcutta. A woman so dedicated to her mission of alleviating suffering and with the noblest of hearts. **She once said that as she was washing the leper's feet, she felt as if she was dressing the lord himself.**

. It's all about organizing the mind and knowing what it wants most, and when. As I started in the beginning, we can bring forth many healings of mind and body through the words in our minds and which we later speak. In the same breath, we can as well bring untold suffering and sadly death by our words as well.

Think of Christ's words to the sick, maimed and neglected of society and the impact it had on them. Think also of others like Hitler whose words made millions die. The parallels are there for us to see.

ADDICTIONS

Having big troubles:? God is bigger. Facing giants? God is the creator of giants. What a refrain!

In my serving as a youth leader, a student's leader at the university, I have painfully seen people I know, love and care about to go down the drain due to their addictions and lust.

I believe this book has found the right hands as we help each other from the monsters that can become of us. We sometimes are our own worst enemies when pushed by circumstance.

Many a time when we find our minds pushing us to do what we know is wrong or when our bodies give in to its lusts, we tend to justify the wrongs. We tend to heap blame on people who hurt us or pushed us to go the way we find ourselves in. For instance, a promiscuous man may blame his actions to a cheating partner he once trusted, a student who is habitually caught stealing in exams may blame the system for pushing him, a drug addict may blame his family problems for pushing him to drugs.

It's time to take care of our own lives and shift, not the goal posts. It starts and ends with us or, as one of the famous American presidents used to say; the buck stops here. And leaders of our own lives, we are in our own strengths.

FLAGS, -THE RAINBOW FLAG?

The rainbow flags, apparel and promotion days are gathering storm.

In the recent months, we have had groups going to the streets in the USA; some advocating for the rainbow nation, others protesting.

For those in the dark the rainbow is the emblem for the lesbians (women having sexual relationships with women), gays (men having sexual relationships with men), bisexual (sexual interest with both male and female), transgender (people who feel they are born in the wrong body and go through corrective procedure to change) and queer. In the USA, most states recognize them and they were trying to push it further by commemorating their day on the streets and even in schools!

Religious leaders, straight parents and even learners being forced to recognize such rights were left confused, angry or both!

Closer home in Kenya, similar protests have been witnessed in the streets of Nairobi and Mombasa.

The biggest battle I still believe is in our homes. Children are being recruited through movies, cartoons and kid's shows with the same message-accept LGBTQ, or rather choose LGBTQ.

High school kids will tell you of harrowing stories of how they are recruited into the dormitories in the full knowledge of prefects, some who are members, and sometimes teachers! Maybe through rituals, intoxications, some are naively introduced, some deliberate choice.

Can LGBTQ change? Yes. Do they want? That's a personal question they each have to answer.

What are some of the defenses and reasons for people falling into this trap? Let me explore the major six fallacies, because they are not true.

1. I was born that way

No one is born with a sexual urge for the own gender. There has never been discovered a lesbian or gay genes!

People are programmed this way, not born this way. This learned pattern of life and behavior is from our networks and role models, thoughts, environment, past trauma, i.e. sodomy when

young, cross-gender clothing when we were young that led to confusion, among other factors.

WHATEVER IS LEARNED, CAN BE UNLEARNED. It needs serious commitment, will, and consistency to fully come out and avoid relapse. Total shift in mind. Rom 12:1-2 reminds us that the only real and sure way not to conform to the lust and negativity in the world is to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Renewing simply means telling yourself new truths. The real truths and starting to live in the new beliefs. New thoughts, new actions, new friends and life..

2. I can't change

All people change. It's the guaranteed constant in life. As long as you decide to, you will change the pattern. Once you have decided it's good, you see a counselor to guide you on your new path. A total change of environment is key. Change thought, movies and websites, friends, social places.

3. I am attracted to my own gender

As discussed, that was your learned past that you can unlearn.

4. It's cool or the inn thing now

Apart from the group, remember you have your own identity. To fit in to the group or trend robs you of your personality and confidence. Will you jump into fire because everyone else is jumping into the fire? That's precisely what you do when you jump into a harmful trend.

5. It's a good source of money

Joining this community to get money is not a solution to your monetary problems. The surest way to get money is to work, do

legitimate business or be employed. Shortcuts only offer temporary fulfillment.

6. It makes me high

Do you know that's the exact reason you are being hoodwinked to join the society? Pleasure are mostly produced at the hypothalamus part of the brain. And this pleasure releases a lot of dopamine. It's the same principle for drug abusers, addicts of all kinds. Engaging in this queer sexual behavior is meant to hook you for life.

Are you aware the pleasure, if any, lasts only for a while, thereafter you keep yourself going on in a vicious cycle?

Do you know you are playing with addiction? Are you aware gays have to put on diapers for the rest of their lives since their rectal muscles are so loose to hold stool?

It takes more than being high. Who will repair your mind, body, soul from this rapture within?

Having said much is worthy of saying that different people have different push to these sexual orientations.

1. Some have had troubled parenting, or were molested while young and might even have never reported it. They deal with this trauma by fully embracing the darkness it brought.
2. Poor self-esteem. Most people have not come to a realization of accepting their side. They feel weak in i.e. voice, body, and so forth. They end up accepting negative opinions of others or negative voices in them.
3. Peer pressure. There is a lot of peers pressure and particularly from social media. Many men are cross dressing as ladies and

even in demeanor you can hardly tell or notice they are not male! Some are dancing like females, applying makeup and so forth. This is not just for content but for a lifestyle. They have a community to conform to and please.

HIV/AIDS is also a reality to this community. It goes against nature and therefore puts the affected in serious medical harm to their minds, body and soul.

Most victims take time to come out of the closet because of guilt, fear of rejection, since major religions abhor such.

It's imperative, therefore, that we love and accept our flaws. A positive self-esteem, understanding our personality and being firm and resolving our traumas can help prevent many from much confusion.

Having values and subscribing to the beliefs of your religion can also lead you to the right path where you connect with your maker.

Parting shots

Victims: you can always start over again. Forgive yourself, love yourself and develop a positive self-esteem by changing your thoughts and environments that contributed to this. Be honest and seek help.

Support system: don't judge your loved one. Help them on the road to recovery. Get to know the push factors that brought them to this point. Be there to offer support and guidance. and any influence from the west is always deemed upright. Its A PERSONAL CHOICE to make God your friend through prayer, praise and study of the word of God. Better still, you can join like-minded people and society to help you grow in faith.

PRAYER changes everything. It's unfortunate that now a bigger percentage of Europe believes there is no God. Similarity in Africa, the carefree attitude.

TEENS SEXUALITY AND SEX ADDICTION

Teen hood is or should be the most exciting stage of one's life. I mean, nothing beats the adrenaline rush, the curiosity, and the many adventures with friends—the self-discovery!

However, sadly but truthfully, 80% of the time young people are thinking of sex. How to do it, who does it with, when to do it, how many times to do it? It's important that a youth knows how to hold this burning energy for the right time.

Being a teen is so fulfilling, yet intriguing. You are neither a child anymore nor an adult yet. But you seek one thing: recognition and to be treated with respect. Teens want to know that their opinion counts.

Being a teen comes with its own fun and not so fun moments. I remember with nostalgia those days we wrote love letters in school with the infamous lines.... "*my heart perambulates as my pen dances on this Webuye product just to wallow in your miasma of deep-sea like love...*" those times!

How we believed we were better than the Le Bron's and Injera's, men we were flying high. We even dated Alicia Keys in our autobooks and school "*funkiez*" of course.

All these seem old school but each generation has its own in thing, not to mention the fashion clad styles. This generation, for instance, fancies tight clothes and doesn't touch my heels, complete with sport shoes—that makes you the ultimate drip kid. Being young comes with its own share of confusions too.

Unfortunately, in this mix, the youth fall into the *sexual intercourse trap*. This is **not fun, neither casual at all, as they would rather think**. Dear young lady and gentleman; sexual escapades, attachments or

engagements of whatever nature are very detrimental and are your fastest way to kill yourself. Let me explain.

It's not God's design

Everyone is doing it it is rather a lame excuse to indulge. What does God say about it Eph 6; 18. God's intention was for it to be enjoyed within the confines of marriage and between the husband and wife. That way, both are protected physically, spiritually, and emotionally. It's not surprising that many youths are killing each other, especially in universities over love triangles. God's intention, if observed, saves us a lot of time, heartache and gives us a bonus—good health, enjoyment and heaven on top.

Within marriage, there is no feeling of being used, there are no regrets of sex, no guilt or condemnation, no fear of diseases. It's just pure bliss at the right time. Casual sex creates spiritual husbands and wives ties that are never healthy for you. Remember the woman at the well with five husbands, yet none was her husband?

One, therefore, can still enjoy one's youth without sex in so many ways. There is lots of fun in meaningful friendships and organizations. Being physically active is very key.

Texts for references: Eph 6:18/Gen 3/Exodus 20

By observing God's design, we get to exercise self-control as we master the powerful tool of our sexuality. This has many advantages including: clarity of mind, good health,-mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically. No fornication=good health. I will talk about how to overcome it for

What then are the challenges pushing youth to early sex pressure?

Upbringing and role models or lack of it

The environment is one of the fastest ways a child learns as they grow up. It is therefore a caregiver's responsibility to provide an environment healthy for a child. Unfortunately, some parents are laying ground for a vicious circle of immorality. Most young people take their parents' experiences and opinions for the gospel!

They may figure out their own truth later in life, but some parents bring pornography materials to the house, have multiple sexual partners, have controversial stands in marriages and the list goes on and on about the negative sexual activity. Before they know, a whole generation with a perverted mindset on sexuality is before us. The family is the first training and should take the lead on matters sex. Let the first education on sex come from the caregivers. It will be a test by which other information will be measured by. It will be their true North as it points them to a bigger light, The Bible.

Peer influence and social media

The youths need a group to identify with. Perfectly normal for them. The only challenge comes with what brings the clique together. Do they share common goals and beliefs? That's where church groups, mentorship clubs, sports clubs come in handy to direct their sexual energy the right path. If left unchecked, some peer groups lead the young ones to extreme dare devil taunts like sex orgies, daring activities that always leaves a trail of regrets and a bitter pill to swallow.

Social media makes the peer pressure unbearable. Be it movies, the internet, social sites like tick tock, Facebook the youth get to be pushed to a certain perception of sexuality that easily derails them. It's the sort of pressure that justifies the use of abuse of sex and sexuality as okay, being cool and preaches instant gratification.

Some are ridiculed by their peers with taunts like "how can you be a man yet you have not had sex yet,... or how can you be a woman if you don't have multiple sexual partners... or you must test or do this to prove your man/womanhood" and so forth. Many seem not strong enough and fall into this pressure to conform with their peers or to gain their respect and admiration.

Past traumas

Some youths have undergone extreme situations like rape, incest assault that has left indelible scars on their esteem. Some have undergone inhuman psychological and physical torture, having their biological parents sexually exploit them. Many times, this happens in silence since they are young. We're doing this put them? It removes their faith from the other gender and even gives them a warped idea of sex and their sexuality, since they feel objectified. If not checked, they can have an extreme fear of having a close relationship with the other gender or can exploit them sexually in return to get even.

Porn addiction

Scientists have discovered that porn consumption has the same effects as cocaine addiction. The dopamine levels are the same! So the more you consume porn, the more your brain disintegrates, and the more you will have multiple problems like addiction, fall in grades, poor reasoning, and of course higher chances of engaging in illicit sex since that is the direction and purpose of it.

Drugs and substance abuse and addiction

Some youths get high on alcohol and drugs to engage in sexual desires and fantasies, hoping to drown the effects and guilt that come with it. This scapegoat in the long run drowns them further down the drain. This poses another grave danger of addiction to these substances. Drugs and substance abuse affect the body's homeostasis, making the cravings more

and the cycles repeat themselves, with each cycle getting heavier, pushing teens to try harder stuff as they grow.

They no longer have control of their lives, with the most part affected being appetite, sexuality, reasoning and attention, basic coordination and psychomotor skills, evidenced by clumsiness and breaking things. Such evidences are seen a through a drop in grades; lack of attention, poor decision making and engaging in risky behaviour and casual sex.

Curiosity

Young people are ever curious. They want to venture in the world of the unknown. They always want to try what they hear. Always desiring, like the Biblical Thomas, to see and touch. This we know how misleading and dangerous it is as already discussed.

What shall we, as young people, do then? Abstain. Flee all evil thoughts. Practice self-control. How? Let's delve into it..

The mindset

Romans 12:1-2 talks about overcoming the world only after overcoming our mindset. We should see, think, believe and, most importantly, do good things and expect Godly things as well. Talking the talk is always the easy part. Walking the walk is always the hardest.

Changing your mindset involves re-looking into your belief system. Making a commitment to self, and like Paul in Damascus, going the opposite direction. Day in, day out.

A man without self-control and the ability to say no is like a city without a wall-defenseless!

Substitution

I love, have practiced this before and have seen it work with the youths I have counseled.

Take note of the people, places, and things and even times when you are doing the wrong thing and replace them with the right and different events, people and things. For 3 weeks, consistently the results will be there. Be careful not to slip back. Keep moving forward. For instance, if you do watch porn when alone and, in the evening, replace that by not being alone in the evening and having another activity at that time- like playing basketball.

Lastly, forgive yourself, love yourself and live your life to its uttermost best. At the end of the day, ask yourself, did you make yourself proud?

Have life philosophies

Job declared in his heart that he would let no unclean thing in his eyes and heart. That is a principle and a philosophy. Create yours. It's easy, you can claim a bible verse at heart and set your mind to it. It will keep reminding you when you feel tempted. A simpler one can be, "I will only have friends and friendships with the other gender. Only when I am ready to marry will I date and date the right way". Believe me, good attracts good. God will give you a good person at your right time. Let's not break people and lose ourselves.

Direct your energies and attention to constructive ideas and be very physically active. Don't be alone most of the times. You got this.

Volunteer

If you have free time and are willing to do a number of volunteer work, especially in your preferred line of profession. You will gain much needed skills, keep busy and have a lot of networks.

LEADERSHIP

Are you newly elected into student leadership? Or into elective politics? Many a times people get it so wrong. Leadership has been reduced to the pinnacles of politics. Politics has its space and if you look around, very few of politicians are leaders. Leadership is so bad. Yet so specific. Who, then, is a leader?

A leader is one who knows the way, shows the way and where there is no way he lives a trail. This is the definition that has stuck with me and the one I offer in my numerous seminars across the country. In whatever capacity you serve, do you know why you are there/ the goals and vision for your team? Such details, among other nifty grittier make a picture of what it is.

Of course, there are virtues like integrity, courage, vision, empathy and concern for your team, resilience that make you one. Everyone will look up to the leader for inspiration during the hard times, direction and clear communication and on who will stand up for them. This gives the subjects the courage to follow you. Most surprisingly don't want to hear the talk, but see you walk the walk. A leader is someone who is honest in intention and speak. Integrity is the core of leadership. Leadership isn't simply for prestige or to get the trappings of power or whatever privilege you think comes with being in authority brings, but to serve your subjects, to achieve the visions of the institution and to harness the different energy and people around you for maximum productivity. That is leadership. So a leader should literally walk head up.

We sometimes aspire to be leaders at some point, don't we? We build dreams of us being the boss and climbing up the ladder of life. HISTORY provides us with examples great leaders. Abraham Lincoln, whose humanity and obedience to God is highly rated, Nelson Mandela, the world's pretreat

Martin Luther king Joshua- man of courage, obedience and who led Israelites from one victory to another all in GODS GLORY.

How about the ultimate leader Himself-Jesus Christ, so full of humility yet the knower of it all, the one at the beginning of all and still esteemed self low to experience life firsthand in our flesh?

Leading by example, showing how survival to humanity is service to God-touching the untouchables, healing the incurable and hugging the cursed. Indeed, He struck true to His mission of setting man free from His experience and life. The called disciples needed no further conviction. The millions of believers need more sermon-He was the sermons, He was the experience. He was Christ. He was a king who didn't force it down people's throat. He was Lord, who didn't rub it in our faces. He was God who didn't misuse His powers when tempted in the wilderness.

Tue leadership

Isn't about intimidating others or those you lead but with humility, dignity, wisdom, respect and patience, bringing the best out of everybody around.

Leadership is integrity and consistency. He never gave up. He never gave in. Not even in the face of death would he denounce his mission nor His place in the Godhead. Always fell on his knees to get clarity of thought and strength.

Circumstances and seasons need not change a man or woman. That's integrity and consistency. It's talking the talk, walking the walk, keeping the word, upholding the belief. Even if heaven falls by our side. It doesn't mean that we are infallible and perfect in every sense, but that our eyes never leave the prize.

MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

It's also worth noting that you find yourself a leader that you can look up to. It can be an overall leader or specific leaders in specific spheres, say, politics, religion, corporate world and the likes. As you settle on a mentor, if they are within reach, it's equally important that you notify them that they are your mentors and that you look up to them. This way, they can easily guide you along your chosen fields. With much foresight, your step in the leadership arena will have an impetus.

A mentor can be an expert in the area of your desired field of influence, or an older person, or better still, an icon. There will always be one to look up to. If you find one, you can have a physical interaction with, the better.

Leadership styles

There are different leadership styles that a leader can take on cue of which I will summarize in a nutshell.

1. Authoritative leadership or dictatorship.

These are leaders whose authority is not questioned, neither delegated. There is no room for second opinions or thoughts. It is their way or the highway. Such examples may be prefect leaders in school who beat their colleagues, don't allow others to raise their concerns. These include heads of states who order assassinations or cling to power by all means. If one is to choose this style, it's clear as light of the day that it stiffs all freedom, leads to bad fear of the leader, uprisings from the people you lead.

2. Laissez-faire

Its origin is in French, which loosely translates.. let them do as they wish. This is quite tricky since the leader's voice, influence and control weathers down since he/she can't be listened to. Examples include prefects in schools who see their friends smoking bhang or stealing and simply pass by and do nothing. Next time they will do worse or make the

offence second nature, since the leader has been accustomed to seeing them do the wrong and say nothing. It's like the same traffic police officer manning the same road and he/she keeps soliciting bribes from motorists to look the other way. The day he tries to put up a roadblock to check on the excesses, the motorists might not take it seriously and may protest. A head of state with this style of leadership may end up not doing much when he allows junior officials to loot public coffers, and he sees nothing does nothing.

3. Transformative leadership

This style tries to involve the subjects as much as possible with an aim of devolving the authority to others down the hierarchy to assist the leader deliver. This style makes the ones assisting the leader to feel motivated and responsible for their actions. There is mutual growth and understanding of one's roles. Ven, the subjects get to feel inspired by change and positivity. Such leaders had euphoric moments captures in their lifetimes like the Obama magic AND Martin Luther wave in America that made citizens believe in equality of races, the Kibaki moment in Kenya that led to believe in economic empowerment among many other examples.

4. Democracy

It's rather cliché but allow join the bandwagon by saying this is the leadership of the people, for the people and by the people. The subjects and their concerns are at the heart of things. What are the challenges for the people I lead? That among others, is the concern of the leader. How best can we better their lives and experiences? Though it's rosy, it's also important for the leadership to not let the subjects control them too much to deviate from the objectives of the institution or body.

Having described the above four is worthy of noting that leadership can sometimes e a cocktail of all the aforementioned four as circumstances and times will dictate. For instance, a police officer

will fire on air to disperse a crowd (no negotiation needed here-dictatorship), but the same officer may urge youths to keep off drugs (transformative). A prefect in school may talk to his/her colleagues to see sense and not torch their dormitories due to misunderstandings with the Administration, the same student leader will in another incident may shout out to members still sleeping in the dormitory past the morning official hours. Different scenarios may call for different leadership styles. And the more one is exposed to leadership, the seamless it is. It's good, however, to pick a style that appeals to you most.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP IN INSTITUTIONS: LEADERSHIP WITH A PINCH OF WELLNESS

Prefects are the most integral part of the school system. Not only are they students themselves, but peer leaders. They carry a lot of influence on their peers that a mistake by them can easily lead to unwanted chaos in schools-the strikes being testimonies of such.

It doesn't help much that their role models are politicians and we all know most of our leaders' only motivation-unquenchable thirst for money and hunger for power at whatever cost it may be.

UNICEF 1984 convention of right of the child places child participation at the core of their existence among adults. This means schools that allow the students and guide them to hold democratic elections do the children a lot of growing up, hitherto unseen. This step should be commended.

However, are we training them to be future leaders or politicians? They can choose their paths later in life, but I propose that we guide them and equip them to be leaders. We have to instill in them values and virtues.

We are laden with very many examples of captains of industry who have provided remarkable leadership and guided the world to be better. The fields range from sports, agriculture and conservation, teaching, health, business—so many leaders out there can be emulated and offer life changing lessons in leadership.

Not to take anything away from the politicians, we do have examples of leaders who have provided transformational leadership. They have pricked our consciousness to rethink policies, change our way of doing things—the Mahatma Gandhi's, the Mandela's, the Desmond Tutus and their ilk all show the possibility of political class sometimes offering classic examples of good leadership.

In my ***school prefect mentorship programmes***, I challenge the young minds to conquer their demons, be free, then conquer the world.

A leader must have control of self, first. Having said much, every school should invest in meaningful training in their leadership. Why so?

Identity

First, they realize of the magnitude of the calling they have been called to. They learn to be responsible for their deeds, words and intention. They also learn to be in sync with the power at their disposal as they discharge their mandates, but at the same time learn to be individuals with individual goals and careers. This, dear principal and director, is pivotal since the young minds do lose focus sometimes and need wake-up calls.

They also get to learn clearly the roles they have been chosen or appointed to head. This, if guided, can help develop other skills below. The aim of leadership training is to help them identify the purpose. Not to be leaders to skip manual work, get extra meals or be the teachers spy. Purpose is the key word.

Communication skills

There is no better space for one to exercise their communication skills than when one is a leader. Both their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are honed, challenged and refined through the course of their tenure. No class or training beats that, but the trainings do prepare them with the requisite skills.

Confidence

Taking time as an institution to train them boosts the team's confidence since they feel thought of and try to give their best. They also exercise their mandate with an assurance of the administration's backing.

The timing of the training should be as immediate as possible after their poles. Try to encourage the head to hold at least weekly briefs and establish a good rapport and link with the administration. However, in case of urgent happenings and emergency, they should think on their feet and communicate to the hierarchy soonest.

Direction

During the training, it is important for the head to also outline his/her expectations and directions going forward. This is where the rubber meets the road. In addition, the school ethos, mottos and vision get to be re-affirmed. They have what it takes to implement them.

Try to observe and have a keen eye on them as they exercise their mandate, not with an eye of seeing every problem in what they do but empowering them, noting their strengths and making them realize it.

They reciprocate in equal measure by being responsible.

As stated earlier, the prefect body is the most integral part of running the school.

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN INSTITUTIONS, MIND, BODY, SOUL

Spiritual leadership is quite different to the conventional leadership. It deals with mind, body and soul. It saves and makes the workmanship totally equipped for the good work.

The greatest commandment is to love God with all our mind, body and soul.

That means our minds; body and soul have to be operating at their optimum to offer a worthy sacrifice of praise and to the almighty God. Imagine being in a state of intoxication? Will the three be at their best?

In my talks, I synthesize and insist on mind, body and soul making the total person. Today I choose to concentrate on the latter. The soul? Which place do schools have or already play in developing the total person and not just that, a fit one, a healthy one?

I have in previous articles talked about minds wellness. Today, allow me to write on the spiritual side-the soul.

Spiritual societies in schools, SDA, YCS, and CU play a very pivotal role in developing the soul. The spiritual man.

Guided by sound doctrine or even under the tutelage of school chaplains, students get to be enriched in character, grounded in Holy Scripture and unmoved in character.

They get soul nourishment as they get to ground their beliefs on sound teaching. This they do through guided Bible study, life-changing

sermons, guidance and counseling sessions and meditation in God's word. This is cemented by daily immersion in prayers.

I want to present to us that we encourage such societies and empower them in our schools. It is through them that students in pursuit of and education get their Damascus moment. It is better to have a morally conscious doctor than a doctor of questionable character-abortion will increase all because of profit. It is better to have morally sound engineers, quality roads and bridges will be built than a morally corrupt engineer, buildings will collapse on us. I can go on and forth.

Allow me to kick it right in and wrap it around our heads.

Mentorship

Spiritual mentorship goes a long way in our teens' overall wellness. They will have a guide in their chaplains, patrons, who will shape not only their character but worldview. Optimism, trust in and respect for institutions, assertiveness and decision making, piety are some of the virtues instilled in the young minds through our spiritual clubs and societies.

Responsibility

I have noted with admiration how students organize rallies, compose songs, do invitations. Some even take the mantle and preach when their respective schools don't have speakers for their sermons. Also, with much joy, I have witnessed societies do extensive evangelism on their peers who have "backslidden "-that's the definition of responsibility. Going above self to ensure our mates are doing well as well.

Tough mental health

Believe me, religion plays a big role in maintaining a healthy mind and lifestyle. Faith, dealing with grief, temptations, anxiety, stresses, among

other pertinent issues that affect the young minds, are dealt with in the good book.

There is hope and plenty of assurance and joy that they learn to infuse as part of their lives, challenges notwithstanding. Even in the face of death of a loved one, such students will eventually come to accept the painful reality and live on the good of the deceased.

Most of these societies also have prayer bands. In such they pray for their peers' needs, worries and burdens. They literally share burdens lightening off the weight of their brothers and sisters.

A strong religious institution instills values and ethos that resonate with the good of humanity. Such groups of young men, as few as they may be, inject real life into our school system and, in measurable ways, also do help their peers.

Think of how much virtues and values religion has imparted to your character and mental wellness.

Remember the good old question asked in primary school? "You have collected money along the way on your way home. As a Christian, what would you do?"

The question is on character. I need not say much.

Parting shot- story time

A story is told of a once successful hotel owner. With time, his acumen was waning with age and competition. Not able to sustain it, he closed the shop, disappointed.

One day, as he was cleaning his hotel and setting things up for sale, his cat of three years passed in front of him. Then he had it. He had always had it. Eureka eureka! That was it the idea of all ages.

An idea came through his mind of Him training his cat to be a waiter. Week after week, he embarked on this journey. He started by training it to walk in twos. As weeks progressed, he kept adding a task like making it walk around with a small empty tray. The week that followed, he added small cups of tea and before long, his training was complete. It was time to reopen the business.

That he did and with a bang! His hotel was the talk of town. Clients flooded in their numbers. He was selling, and the numbers didn't lie until one day when it all came to a cropper.

The cat had seen a rat, and it did what a cat would do. Ran after it, heartbreaking the man and he closed once again.

A cat is meant to chase after rats. Not serve tea. Purpose, integrity.

Bottom line to lead others is to lead self-first.

TOTAL WELLNESS IS THE REAL WELLNESS

Imagine a mentally, physically, socially, spiritually fit and upright person! That person is supposed to be you. This message is at the heart of our organization.

In our seminars, trainings, team building, we advocate for the man and woman to be nourished in all aspects.

Mental fitness

As has been discussed in our previous chapters, it's very important you feed your mind a balanced diet. Check your movies, videos, internet consumption, friends you hang up with and their conversations, your inner conversations, your self-esteem, your dreams and goals. All this and much more is your mental food. So it goes without saying that you must chew the right food.

Sometimes we have cheat meals whereby your mind plays tricks on you and you feel inadequate. Remind yourself its only seasonal and not permanent. Try to use the skills learnt in this book, like substitution.

Try to keep off much stress and depression by unwinding through prayer and meditation, self reassurance methods, talking to constructive people, indulging in your hobbies, listening to your favorite music. Trust me, such kick your adrenaline back and provide the healthy dopamine unlike what you get in drugs and porn that is all but addictive and draining.

Physical fitness

Can you pick your shoes with one foot off the ground and wear it comfortably? Can you walk to the market 3 km away and come back without panting? Can you do brisk walking for 30 minutes? Can you hold your breath for 10 seconds? All these are pointers to our health.

Physical fitness is firstly achieved through diet. That may be a shocker, but that's the painful reality. As a physical trainer, I have these conversations many times with clients. They think physical fitness means lifting the heaviest weights, but no.

I have also seen how a healthy diet really contributed to my mom's recovery from cancer. It is very key.

Eat right. This means enough water intake, lots of vegetables daily, healthy carbohydrates, healthy sugar not processed, keeping fires and deep fries in check and now the physical exercise comes in last! You can imagine. Therefore, it's important we get the basics right first. Those that can avoid sugar in its entirety, the better.

When it comes to physical exercise, 30 minutes of continuous cardio exercises like running, cycling, skipping ropes, and swimming are enough to burn the calories. Those that can go the extra mile are encouraged. The gym is also among the best places to go since you will have a guide to take you through your journey and reach your goals. For males going to the gym, I won't advise them to take the processed supplements but to go for real food. Avoid steroids. I understand everyone wants an attractive body like the bodybuilders, but avoid it.

Physical fitness simply means a strong, healthy body that can function at its optimum. The rest is just peer pressure. As you exercise, compare your gains to who you were yesterday, not another self. You are your competition.

A physically active lifestyle should really be advocated for, especially among the young people! So that once it's their lifestyle, the coming generations will have something to emulate.

Social fitness

Manners maketh a man or a woman! Have you ever tried putting up with a person who is a nuisance? They are abusive, have no manners, filthy language, no respect. Let's not be such!

When we are well mannered, we make ourselves open for approach and even help. We make the world better in so doing, habitable for all of us. I'm not saying we should be perfect, but at least embrace the bare minimum tenets of common sense, consideration and observing the golden rule of doing unto others what we want them to do unto us.

Try to make friends with all across different walks of life. You can't be a friend to everyone but at least don't be rude to people. Just be good to people. Just be human, not just a being.

Have good quality times with your family and friends. Be in the moment. Don't be so much distracted in social media you forget real people. Attend to social gatherings, especially the ones you can afford though most are free. Connect to nature-fresh air, sunshine, the greenness, blueness, brownness of life.

Smile a little. Be happy. Do the things that make you happy. The good things, that is.

Spiritual fitness

None is righteous, not even one. That, however, does not mean we continue in sin so that grace abounds (romans 6:1). Certainly not!

A close personal relationship with your maker is the purpose of our being on earth and the conclusion of the matter. Once we love and know our God, He promises to show you great things you know not.

Knowing God can mean so many things: obeying and trusting his word, seeking Him in prayers and Bible study, but most importantly, living His word as He leads you. A teachable spirit.

God will take you places no man can. God will heal wounds no man can. God will give you peace no man can. As brief as our time on earth is, let's live a quality life when we can.

Total wellness is the real wellness and wealth. May God bless you and keep you as you find your way to total wellness.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DEAR HER

Hey you beautiful girl? Feeling pretty at 13,14,16...18? Did you know you can have this experience forever?

Many a time, the government, parents, schools, organizations of good will do their best to keep girls in school and protect their interests. However, few girls take up the personal responsibility on completion of their studies. On joining college, they become reckless.

Hey you beautiful girl? What makes you beautiful? Your smile? Your face?

YOU ARE FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE BY GOD!
That alone is enough and no man should confuse you with sweet nothings about how pretty you are. You already know that, for heaven's sake! No woman or person should make you think you are less beautiful or less of a person. You are perfect just the way you are.

Did you know by God's design, naturally being born a woman is being born with a special privilege? Yes, a woman is born with favor and value. God willing, you will become a mother of nations someday like Sarah, or a lineage of a savior like Rahab, or a queen like Esther. A woman is born with value, no wonder the common adage "educate a woman, educate a village"

However, it is worth noting that your worth is not tied to your beauty but to your godly nature, your character and the content of your brain. That's why I say **a godly woman is a powerful woman and an educated woman is an empowered woman.**

Don't be fooled by any man who tells you he loves you. A man who loves you will come home to talk to your parents/guardians at the right time. Before then, don't be fooled by any words of love. That is just infatuation

and a stage that will pass. Just enjoy the stage. When you put your energy into any relationship, that will be your downfall. There are no two ways about it. Friendships, yes, relationships no.

Your brain is not ready to handle the pressure on you. The academic pressure is already too much.

That means you have to increase your value. That power is your hand. In your head. In your choices-empower yourself!

Imagine a glass that is to be filled with pebbles, sand, rocks and pieces of wood. The wrong order of placing them inside will automatically leave out others. For instance, if you begin with sand, so many will be left out. However, if you begin with rocks, much or all will fit in in.

Hey you beautiful girl. Prioritize your life choices. Choose wisely, get wise counsel.

- ✓ Seek God in your worth by obeying His commands and trusting His promises.
- ✓ Fully focus on your academic goals.
- ✓ Set goals. Review them as you move along.
- ✓ Let your past and present life fire up and consume your dream future.
- ✓ Keep a clear head. Keep off distractions, bad influence from friends and time wasters. Be responsible and grow up. You can't blame anyone for your life.
- ✓ **KEEP OFF SEXUAL IMMORALITY.** Other mistakes are outside the body, but this will be a torture to your soul, body and mind. Protect yourself at all times, by all means. **ABSTAIN, ABSTAIN, ABSTAIN.**

CHAPTER NINE

DEAR HIM

How are you feeling, buddy? Energetic? Strong? Too much pressure? Don't worry. You are doing fine and can handle the pressure of becoming a man!

I know you're sometimes confused about your masculinity, emotions, and even sexuality. Noticing girls too, right?

Well, I was once told *"treat older women as you would your mother, younger ones and age mates as you would your sister, and when you marry-love your daughter more than yourself, your wife with your life."*

Most of us may be in the stage of still finding their way around the teen age. You have so much zeal and energy for everything.

You are actually right. You literally have the world at your feet, man! So much for you to choose from, your world can blossom in your hands. Your world can die in your hands.

It's very sad that most boys end their life through crime, drugs and women.

Many have engaged in crime from peer influences, jumping on trends, proving toxic masculinity. Some have left school sadly.

The beautiful ones are not yet born is not just cliché, but very true. The more one engages in sexual escapades before marriage, the more problems you will have in your personal life and in future marriages.

Kindly re-read the chapter on addiction and its science. It is that grave!

Dear young man, your place in society is waiting for you to be in your rightful position.

The moment you chase girls, drugs and crime, forget about your dreams. We are being endangered by our actions, habits, lifestyles and company. This veering off the road can be so gradual you won't even notice it. It creates a very false identity and perception in your mind that, if not careful, becomes a new reality.

No wonder a hitherto calm man becomes violent, since the wiring in the brain is completely changed and damaged.

Dear young man,

- ✓ Seek GOD with all your heart, mind and soul through obedience to His word and trust in His faithfulness and provision.
- ✓ Have a clear vision of your life. See yourself in the next five years, 40 years, then act now. Work hard and honestly now.
- ✓ Set academic and career goals. Review them. You are a leader naturally, so this is good practice. A man must work hard. A man must provide.
- ✓ Be principled, be well mannered. Manners maketh a man.
- ✓ ABSTAIN, ABSTAIN. Avoid adultery and fornication like a plague! Many have gone down this road. It is not a road worth travelling on. When the time comes, marry and be faithful.
- ✓ You are the one who God has bestowed on the world- yourself, your home, your future family, your country. Make yourself proud.

DEAR PARENT,

Imagine being a co-creator with God. That means a lot of responsibility. You are to love, nurture, guide the children under your care.

Providing for school fees and food is not enough. Our children's greatest inheritance from parents is the virtues they carry from home, the forgiveness they see at home, unconditional love, genuine concerns and correction, prayers, diligence and any other good thing. These are the greatest inheritances parents can bestow upon their children. Others are bonuses.

I say this with a heavy heart so that we don't force our regrets, conflicts, disappointments on our children so that they don't become angry husbands/wives in future and repeat the same cycle to their children. The home should be a little heaven where possible. Money and materialistic things don't bring the heaven down, but our committed efforts and deliberate words, actions, and lifestyles.

Outside the home, the child is not safe from many negative influences and parents must train children in good decision making. This should start from the earliest stage. So that even if they go away from the parents care soon enough when they go to boarding schools and universities, they will be proud of the person they are becoming having had the privilege of being allowed early enough to make independent, sometimes painful, but always well thought decisions. The fallacy of "YOLO-you only live once "and "*it's my life*" should never arise.

Dear parent does you know religion can make your work so easy? The more you cling to your creator, the easier your task becomes as you learn from your maker and father –Abba father, Elohim-the

eternal one. In churches and mosques, children discover the greatest treasure of all, the spiritual purpose of all that is and will ever be. They learn that there is more to life than self. That a higher being holds them responsible for their life. That a thought was put into their existence and that their birth makes a difference in the world! They are here by purpose and not by accident.

Dear parent, please treat each child God has given you differently, each with their own personality, strengths, and growing points. Never compare them. Love all unconditionally. We appreciate parents for loving their children beyond measure and despite the tough economic conditions providing for them, but we request that you also tell them you love them.

Girls should hear this from their fathers so that immoral men don't confuse them with sweet nothings. From their fathers, they experience the first true love from the male gender hence, fathers should use healthy, encouraging words. Fathers should bless their children as they show them the way.

The boy child needs to be mentored on principles to make as strong as iron, but at the same time should be tuned not to trample on people's emotions as they charge along fighting for their destinies. They ought to be as sleek as velvet on the flip side. This balance is their own duty to find.

Dear parent, God has placed children on your hands as a gift. The adults you make them as they leave your house no more than children are your gift back to God! It goes without saying that a child bought up without the fear of God has been done a great disservice by the parent. This can still be changed by God's grace and guidance. It is not too late.

A man is made of his honor and fear of God. A girl is made of her dignity and fear of God. Dear parent, this is your homework for your children.

Allow me to fix a note TO MY DEAR TEACHERS.

DEAR TEACHER,

You take up the responsibilities of a parent to the children placed under you. Vulgarity in the name of jokes is a big no! we are role models to most children. Most see the first decent person outside of the home as the teacher, hence our demeanor, words should reflect our true self. We can't change the world, but we change a child, who will change a family, the family a village, the village a town, municipality and the continent. Did I say we can't change the world?

Well, I lied.

Again, I'm not saying we are infallible or perfect, but apart from teaching knowledge and content; let's be the present, responsible adult in a child's life.

NO PAIN, NO GAIN,

Pain is very necessary. Pain can be temporary. Pain can be permanent, but pain is inevitable. Allow me to delve into types of pain—pain of discipline and pain of regret.

PAIN OF DISCIPLINE

Anytime we go to the gym, we must psyche our mind that pain is part of growth. For anyone who wants muscle growth, the pain you go through as you train the different muscles is a very sweet pain. As days go by, the pain subsides, and the growth is visible only if you are consistent- pain of discipline.

When a mother wants to have children, she must be ready to carry the pregnancy to terms. She is so excited at the prospect of having the baby until it overrides the labour pains she will experience. In fact, as days go by, she yearns for the pain so that she can give birth fast. It's necessary pain.

A student who wants to excel in their academics must be able to endure many pains: many rejections and jeers from peers, late nights, cold mornings and the pain of being consistent- very necessary pains.

A Christian/Muslim who wants to live a pious life must say no to self and submit to a higher calling, change in lifestyle and daily *carrying their cross!*

Pain of discipline therefore is necessary for any growth. And the definition of this kind of pain is **CONSISTENCY**. Any measured success requires daily consistent input that is not tied to our

moods and feelings, but to our duty to self and the mission at heart.

How consistent are you in what you really want? The second definition of this kind of pain that burns your whole being is DESIRE or PASSION. How bad do you want it? Yes, you are consistent, but what levels are you ready to take?

You are a student who makes targets but has never hit it. How bad does it eat you up to fuel you? You are determined to change some aspects of your life. How madly involved are you in your endeavours and desired change?

Pain of discipline goes beyond good affirmations, inspiration, moods. Pain of discipline, therefore, is consistency and passion.

PAIN OF REGRETS

What if? How could it have been or ended? What if I controlled myself? What if I started? Pain of regrets.

Whenever we try to avoid the first pain of discipline, we can't avoid the pain of regrets. It's imperative, therefore, that we strive for the former.

Whenever we have pain of regrets, our quality of life goes down. Therefore, it's important we pick up the pieces and start all over again. There is always hope. We can always start, restart, rebuild as we daily learn the principles of consistency and heartfelt passion!

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