

“An amazing read. Inspiration at its best ... the best
for the mind and soul.”

Koeh Titus

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

A Student's Guide to Educational Success

KERICH JONAH

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

The Book of Educational Success



What an amazing read! Inspiration at its best, points well-articulated and demonstrated ... the best for the mind and the soul.

Koech Titus K

Medical Student, Kenyatta University

This book is a MUST-read ... if you buy it, you invest in your dreams. It provides a motivational thinking that will turn your life around.

Rita Abuyeka

Deputy Principal, Koiluget High School

The book is a masterpiece. I recommend it to any student who dreams of a brighter tomorrow.

Emmanuel Melly,

Author & Motivational Speaker

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A Student's Guide to Educational Success

KERICH JONAH



MYSTERY BOOKS

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FOR

My dad, David Kiprotich Too, and my mum, Clarah Chemeli Too, for your unwavering support. Despite numerous bottlenecks during my upbringing, you always fought for me and my siblings to have a better life. May the Lord grant you more decades so that you keep seeing your son scaling the heights of success.

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FOREWORD



I HAVE KNOWN JONAH KERICH for the past three years and had the chance to interact with him closely as he put this book together. I am impressed by his determination to share his experiences and insights in order to help others lead more meaningful, more successful and more fulfilling lives. Many people never realise their purpose nor their potential; they merely get by because they are ignorant or unwilling to exert themselves. The fact is: if we are to make an impact in this life, we must be focused and resist the temptation to procrastinate. Success is not an accidental phenomenon. Rather, it comes as a result of hard work, careful planning, and clear thinking.

Kerich's experiences lessons can help the reader avoid pitfalls that impede success. After all, a wise

person learns from the experiences of others. Following Kerich's sound advice could transform your life.

Finally, Kerich urges us not to despair even when odds seem overwhelming. Persistence is a virtue and those who practise it reap the benefits. Doubt, negative thinking, complacency, and mediocrity must be rejected.

I recommend this book without reservation.

Dr Charles M. Gecaga,

*Department of English
and Linguistics,
Kenyatta University*

PREFACE



MY OLD TIME FRIEND, LENNY, lost his father when he was barely five years old. His father was a tycoon; a prosperous businessman who imported classy cars from Germany. Lenny's siblings lived big: posh life, international schools, and foreign vacations. After his father's death, Lenny's life took a different turn.

His father's friends and family members who visited and socialised with them when his father was alive abandoned them. Some relatives grabbed his father's property. His mother could no longer support them with her meagre teacher's salary because the family had bad debts. They moved to a smaller house, and she struggled to pay their school fees.

Lenny had a choice to make: either to work harder and restore his family's lost glory or give up in life.

He was always top of the class, now a sixth - year student at the University of Nairobi pursuing Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery.

Millions of people are held captive by the *Monster Fear*. They are tense; incapacitated by inferiority complex. They believe that others but not them are predisposed to greatness. They end up feeling they are an afterthought of creation hence, they are on the downfall track.

Some people are born with a silver spoon. Others don't have access to the spoon and wonder if they will ever make it in life or overcome their seemingly deplorable life.

Writing this book (in a period of close to two years) has been a nice experience for me to share my opinions towards life. It was a critical moment in which I was almost giving up but I made a decision that became a turning point in my life, although to many it seemed like a stupid option I want to give someone else who might have undergone similar experiences as Lenny hope to see that they can break through in life if they remain bold.

When writing this book, I got an insight that there will come a time in your life when your close friends, family members, and your purported "future relatives" will turn their faces and attention away from you and you may end up feeling bitter and

betrayed. I discovered that is your best moment to make a wise decision and make a difference.

When I sat for my secondary level final exam and scored less than my family and societal expectations, I drew so many lessons; my friends who had performed so well abandoned me, my family became bitter claiming that I had wasted their resources while my neighbours could not see any hope in me until when they realised that I had gone back to school to re-sit for my Secondary level education and scored highly after a period of two years.

I later learnt that, the moment people around realise that you made the right decision they will join you to celebrate your success and fruits of your decision. My classmates at times could not understand why I was reading materials out of my coursework. Other times, I would spend nights thinking of what to include in the book. Such turmoil taught me not to give up.

The book is palatable to all and sundry. I believe it will give you a new twist to approaching each new day. Life is not a rehearsal, people don't meet their success because they allow their setbacks to set standards for them. Instead, they ought to use them as the key to success.

There is a group of people who will never feel comfortable on their territory; they always believe

there is grazing field outside their vicinity instead of blossoming where they are and to leave it a better place than they found it. It doesn't make things better by grumbling. Concentrate on creating your own orchard and watering it.

The book has been packaged to initiate the process of compelling you to make a decision today in order to get roses within your own garden.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



WITH HEARTFELT HUMILITY, I THANK God without whom I wouldn't have realised my dream of writing this book. It is upon His grace that I have gotten to this point of my life. May He bless me and grant me ability to write more and inspire more.

I am grateful to my mentors for their sacrifice and encouragement when I was almost giving up on writing this book.

Thank you to my lecturers at Kenyatta University: Dr Charles Gecaga, Dr Mark Chetambe, Dr Justus Makokha, and Chaplain Kenyatta University SDA Church, Dr Kigundu Ndwiga.

Thank you Mr James Tallam, Principal Cheplaskei Boys High school; Mrs Rita Abuyeka, Deputy

Principal Koiluget Secondary School; Mr Emmanuel Melly, author and motivational speaker; Mr Daniel Rop, IT Expert, Kabianga University; The family of Ben Kemboi for their unwavering guidance support and Mr Simon Samoei, Administrator, Uasin Gishu County office.

Without forgetting my friends: Mathew Kogo, Matthew Maina, Tabitha Lang'at, Paul Kibet, Maureen Chumba, Leonard Ondigo, Boniface Sagini, Valentine Wendy, Faith Jepng'etich, Titus Koech, Sheila Koech, Miriam Ndinda, Vivian Talai, Nelson Mukewa, Kiplimo Tallam, Asenath Chelagat, Maureen Osero, Virginia Wilson, Janet Boit, and Judy Chepkoech.

I am thankful to Mystery Publishers Vincent De Paul as the custodian for publishing this book and guiding me along during the process; specially, I appreciate Andanje Wobanda, my dedicated editor.

To Kenyatta University fraternity; I am humbled, you made me realise my ability in writing. To my brothers and sisters; you have always been the apple of my eyes. To my readers, you are the reason this book was written and, finally, to everybody who took part in terms of finances and consistent push to ensure my book got published.

CHAPTER 1



TURNING SETBACKS INTO BETTER COMEBACKS



Life is like a blanket, too short. You pull it up and your toes rebel, you yank it down and shivers meander about your shoulders; but cheerful folks manage to draw their knees up and pass a very comfortable night.

Marion Howard

LIFE IS DEFINED BY PEOPLE who are equal to the task, capable to work tirelessly and face the hurdles they encounter along the way with grit.

During my high school, one of my classmates kept telling me that there was no reason for him to put

more effort in his studies because his parents couldn't afford to pay his school fees. He was dejected.

Every human being is prone to withdrawal from a struggle. My friend had already lost the grip and had magnified a mere challenge with the microscope of the highest magnifying power. He was waiting for time to elapse, sit for his end of course examination and "finish" school to become a "hustler" as he termed it.

I took the initiative and lit his candle; encouraged him that nothing was impossible and nothing was too powerful for a human being. I told him of several people who had experienced the worst in their lives but emerged successful. My friend got the sense and re-energized himself. He realised that everybody experienced financial constraints. It was upon him to remedy every challenge his family was going through.

We later sat for our final examinations and, surprisingly, he performed well and joined one of the leading universities in the country. When we face hurdles in life, we have to remain optimistic. Challenges are packages with expiry dates, your tomorrow has a better package than today's and you will one day have a breakthrough.

Imagine what kind of life this could be without challenges: no financial constraints, no pressure at the workplace, no toxic people surrounding you,

and many more. The challenges bring each one of us to humanity.

Even the self-actualized face off with challenges. You shouldn't let these bottlenecks become a measure to your better tomorrow. Some people could not have reached their pinnacle of success if they could have been demoralized by the setbacks they encountered like affronts from their peers or poor backgrounds. Every challenge we encounter should firm us up and leave us better and stronger instead of leaving us lamenting, bruised, and grumbling. When life throws stones at us, we should be like a fruit tree, which drops fruits to people when they throw stones at it, instead of falling.

I like the 'Principle of an Eagle' by the late American televangelist, Dr Myles Munroe. Eagles love storms; when clouds gather, they get excited, they use the storm's wind to lift themselves higher. Once they find the wind of the storm, it gives them an opportunity to single-glide and rest their wings. In the meantime, all the other birds hide in tree leaves and branches. We can use the storms of life to raise our status to greater heights. Smart achievers relish life's upheavals and utilize them to productivity.

Having excuses is an ego-defence mechanism to failures claiming that others achieved because they had an opportunity you did not have. There is no excuse for failure; we must believe that we were

created with a purpose thus; we must live a purpose-driven life.

The 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy once, said, 'If not us, who? If not now, when?' Have the inner drive that nobody else is more competent than you. The moment you have the driving force to propel you, nothing will ever appear mountainous to you. If renowned role models like Ben Carson had been discouraged and offered excuses when he was a fifth grade student in his class, we wouldn't be celebrating one of the best neurosurgeons in the world. If William Ruto, the Deputy President of Kenya, cocooned himself because he came from a deplorable background, he wouldn't have climbed the ladder to the second top most coveted position of leadership in the country.

Challenges Come and Go

Impediments are temporal. God is there for us, provided we believe and hope to face tomorrow. Remember, a challenge is a determinant of our destiny, if it overwhelms you then you will be reduced to ashes but if you face it with a winning heart, definitely you will emerge a victor.

Like most people, it is difficult to draw a distinct line to separate me from challenges. I have learnt that an obstacle is a focal point between your success and failure, the approach is the only factor that makes the difference, and the epicentre is just the hope. Here is an analogy: One person will wait until

midnight just to see the old year end on 31st December while another person will wait earnestly until midnight to usher in the New Year. It is all about perception that enables us to deal with our life situations.

🌀 Stop Complaining 🌀

Those who find themselves in the worst situations have got only two options: either to spend their entire life grumbling or take it as a stepping stone to success. Success does not lower its standards to accommodate someone. It is your duty to raise the bar and work towards achieving it.

Generally, it is hard to begin a process than accomplish it. I believe that 'It takes a world's treasure to begin a process than to accomplish it'. A journey begins with a single step. When you take the first step, you don't have to struggle repeating the successive steps, the energy used to begin a process is more demanding than the energy of dancing to the music of the first step.

People use different means to achieve their success; some use lifts while others may use escalators or the staircase. Some people are rich courtesy of family wealth; others win the lottery, while others work for it one step at a time. Understand where you belong. What matters is arriving at your success.

At the end of the day, it is all about the results of the struggle. I always believe the shortcuts to success do not last forever as opposed to struggling. Everybody has a story to tell, don't waste your energy and time complaining how life is unfair to you. Alternatively, research on ways and remedies to solve the unfair life in your mind.

The worst mistake people make is that they waste a lot of their energy trying to justify their status quo and analysing the cons of life in lieu of utilising lesser time and energies addressing their challenges in life.

CHAPTER 2



LEARNING TO LET GO



We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.

Martin Luther King, Junior

LETTING GO DOES NOT MEAN you are losing. It means you are undergoing a process towards better things to come.

It is normal to encounter trying moments: losing your loved ones, failure to achieve your dreams, scoring low than your expectations in exams, failing to get the Green Card, insufficient finances to pay

your tuition fee, and broken relationships. These disappointments may leave us bruised, dejected, and parked along the roadside while on our trail for a better future.

To achieve our destiny, we should get the energy to accept what we encounter and understand that the disappointments are part of success in our lives. Most people are not robust enough to understand that life is not just a landing slope but a blend of troughs and peaks.

Encountering trying moments is one thing and conquering them is another. We should accept what befalls us and let it be because we cannot change it, acceptance is the first step in finding the resolution of a challenge.

My close friend Matthew Maina reminds me that at times life may turn our dreams to smoke. Matthew had a tragic road accident when he was about to sit for his end of primary school exams. He was incapacitated and couldn't go to school. He studied for the exam from the hospital bed, never sure he would make it, but he proved his thoughts and the society wrong by being among the top candidates that year. He secured himself a place at Nairobi School, one of the prestigious schools in Kenya.

Consequently, he excelled in his O-Level examinations and got admitted to university to pursue Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery. He

wouldn't have achieved all this if he had not accepted his situation and kept chasing his dreams. Life may pack thorns for us but with God's grace and positive attitude we unpack and pack in another package of roses and stars.

You might climb a ladder and later realise that the ladder was leaning on the wrong wall. People will deal with such a scenario in two ways: some will alight and search for the right ladder while others might spend all their life dejected and disappointed, regretting why they climbed the ladder. The former will have learnt some lessons and made a resolution never to use the same ladder again while the latter will be milling around the ladder.

There are those issues that you have been holding onto dearly in life believing that letting them go will be the end of your life; it could be friends who are restraining you from achieving your dreams, poor eating habits, wandering in your comfort zone, or entertaining time wasters.

To some point, these drawbacks go up the spiral and become your 'earthly gods'; the more you hold on to them, the more you lose the grip and you trudge your way to failure.

Come up with a checklist, highlight all your dream-killing habits and let them go. Draft your goals based on your priorities and, each day, evaluate yourself. On 1st March, 2013, the harsh reality of life smashed

on my face—I had failed in my Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams. I had scored a C- (Minus) of 38 out of 84 points. This spelt failure to join the university.

My hopes had turned into smoke, falling into an endless pit. I tried to figure out how I could get to my aspirations in academic pursuit. I spent the entire week lamenting while my friends were celebrating and happily waiting to be admitted to several universities within and out of the country. My results couldn't even enable me to be admitted as a self-sponsored student.

Several pieces of advice began streaming in from close friends, family members, and the clergy. Their advices revolved around accepting the situation and finding a remedy. They encouraged me to go back to school. This, at first, was difficult for me but, later, I accepted the offer and went back to form three. I analogized with a wounded lion in the jungle who was looking for refuge.

It wasn't a walk in the park but with God's grace, prayer and fasting, and hard work, I finally sat for my final examinations in 2014 and scored an aggregate of B+ (Plus) and joined one of the leading universities in the republic.

It will be well, soldier on, accept the challenge and remain optimistic. If it worked for me, why not you?

Cry if you must; crying doesn't mean you are weak, at times it could just mean you are cleaning your eyes in order to see clearly how to figure out life with a better resolution.

Always be ready to face your challenges because, in the end, you will have a breakthrough. If you fear battles then you will end up losing. Some of us are not ready to face the reality of life, I won't tire reminding you that 'challenges are part of humanity'.

Shun mediocrity. Shun situations that drag you back to anything other than the best version of yourself. I have learnt that impossibility only exists in our mind. There is always a resolution to every situation regardless of how impossible it seems.

Do not give time and space for disappointment to flourish; accommodating a hurdle is like allowing a tenant to have a home in your house without paying rent.

After you let go, be optimistic that things will be okay. The song by Brendan Graham, *You Raise Me Up*, motivates that indeed, God always makes a way and delivers us from our daily disappointments and lifts us from one horizon to the next.

When I am down and oh my soul so weary,
When troubles come and my heart burdened
be,
Then I am still and wait here in the silence,
Until you come and sit awhile with me.

You raise me up so I can stand on
mountains,
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas,
I am strong when I am on your shoulders,
You raise me up to more than I can be.

There is no life without its hunger,
Each restless heart beats so imperfectly,
But when you come and I am filled with
wonder,
Sometimes I think I glimpse eternity.

You raise me up so I can stand on
mountains,
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas,
I am strong when I am on your shoulders,
You raise me up to walk more than I can be.

We don't have to strain forcing some situations in life that cost us a lot and lead us to lose our lives while holding onto them. Let us be ready enough to develop tactics on how we will solve them. If you are given a task, spend time cushioning yourself and gird yourself. Develop the strategy on how to tackle it, later, you will spend minimal time solving it. In case of a frustration, wake up, dust yourself off and keep going, it will just last for a while.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



KERICH JONAH IS A RENOWNED motivational speaker, mentor, educator, and a writer. He writes from his experiences and the society around him. He believes that life is about how we approach and handle it.

He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree at Kenyatta University. He has taught in several schools both at primary and secondary levels.

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This book is a MUST-read for anyone who dreams of success ... if you buy it, you invest in yourself.

Rita Rotich



Educational success is the harbinger of good life. From improving one's life to weaving through the social fabric, education is the cornerstone of civilization.

In *Breaking the Glass Ceiling*, Kerich Jonah gives invaluable tips to students and anyone who is a student of life tips on how to succeed.

This is not your usual 'do this and that' book but a story of resilience, determination, motivation from a young man who defied failure to succeed in his educational journey.

KERICH JONAH is a renowned motivational speaker, mentor, educator, and a writer. He writes from his experiences and the society around him. He believes that life is about how we approach and handle it.

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