



THE OPTIMIST'S CREED

How to make the most
of opportunities *by your*
hopeful outlook to life

GIDEON MUTAI

PRAISE FOR OPTIMIST'S CREED

“The language is simple and Gideon brought about the relatable aspects of everyday practices like team work and time management amongst others to show how one can achieve purpose through them. As the title suggests, it is the book every optimist should have.”

www.flashesofvices.com

“... The Optimist's Creed has given me reason to live and struggle again in life after having given up and had opted for suicide ...”

Reader

“The Optimist's Creed is a masterpiece that makes you realize that if you want to walk on water you must get out of the boat. It gives you a roadmap of walk in faith to the realization of your dream with specific emphasis on how faith builds optimism. A must read for all out there.

Evangelist Peter Sitati

(Presenter Hope Channel Kenya (HCK) and Forensic Investigator at Bank of Africa)

Written in an insightful manner, *The Optimist's Creed* is a book full of nothing but prudence. There is so much logic and enlightenment in the text. The author's style of putting out points is artful and well expressed.

LightenUp (www.nancyoyula.wordpress.com)

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Outlook to Life

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Dedication

To my loving and caring parents Reuben and Alice Koech.
They are a blessing to me.

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No book is ever written alone. There are those who endure, those who motivate, those who intercede and those who inspire.

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Foreword

The feeling of hopelessness and regret after missed opportunities is a constant reminder of our pessimistic past. But it is dangerous to keep this as our platform to dive into our future. It is through adapting change that we make regrets past and use our past as a learning library through which our potential is unveiled.

The Optimist's Creed aims at bringing out the potential in you. This is brought out in a way never heard or written before. The Author uses examples that the reader identifies himself or herself with. This allows the reader unravel their potential in the easiest way possible.

Reading this book transforms your weaknesses to strengths, your promising past to a future of possibilities and your thoughts to actions and achievements. No matter who you are, where you are, what your thoughts are and how you perceive yourself, this book is there to lead you in burying your fears and weakness and maximizing your strengths.

It is a book I will recommend to everyone who wants to transform their aspirations from a tiny mustard seed to a giant tree of achievements.

The best time you should have read this book was the first time you were able to read, the next best time is now.

Dr Nyangaresi Justine (M.B.,Ch.B)

Founder, Health Consult-Kenya

1

Don't Give Up and Don't Give In

'Take control of your destiny. Believe in yourself ignore those who try to discourage you. Avoid negative sources, people, places, things and hotels. Don't give up and don't give in.'

~Wander carter~

Many of us are guilty of the dreams they have forgone just because they couldn't persist a little more. More have even missed once in a lifetime opportunities because of mere impatience. Most have died the day they gave up; only waiting to be buried later.

In the land of Masaya, there lived a king named Zakayo. Many people respected him but some, out of trepidation. His fame spread to nearby villages. This king earned his fame through good leadership, incomparable character and motivational speeches. He could convince you to do something you were initially against doing.

People sought advice from him because they believed he

could advise accordingly and make concrete decisions. Some people were calling him” GMT “to stand for “*Give Me Time*”. He probably said many times for people to pick it up as his new name. He took his time before doing anything. He looked before he leaped. He could weigh the merits and the demerits of doing something.

With time, he acquired a lot of wealth .This amazed the villagers though he deserved it. This wealth won him false friends and true enemies. The jealous ones became his sworn enemies but surprisingly, Zakayo treated everyone equally and respected all.

One day, the King wanted to plant his 10-acre piece of land. He asked the villagers for a helping hand. Grudgingly, they provided the required labour. Afterwards, he thanked the people very much; many were angered by this as they wanted to be appreciated with something tangible. You could hear some say, “The King managed to just say *thank you* and nothing else as if that will replete our energy. It was just a waste of everything. ‘Thank you’ isn’t enough!”

The King’s act made some drop the praise titles they had crowned him with: Boss, Major, and *Mkubwa* among others. They substituted them with distasteful names: Ingrate, Wolf, Nihilist, and so on. Not that these names described his real character, they just wanted to offend the king. The chief showed indifference as he wasn’t affected by their actions.

Zakayo, a man who would never be discouraged or miffed by nasty names engraved on him, invited the same people when harvesting time came. People, still having intact in their minds the reward the King had given them during planting season, went with small bags. Still, it was not a surprise to find some with big bags and wheelbarrows. This group of people was met with insults and discouragements.

You could hear, “Look at these fools carrying big bags. They think they will make the King appreciate them more and be his favourite lot. They don't use their brains!” Some of those who heard this wanted to prove that they had brains so they sneaked to their homes and substituted the big bags with smaller ones to be accepted in and identify with the ‘majority’. Others gave a deaf ear to the dissuasions from the majority group so they had to be at an appreciable distance away from them.

The king summoned them all and announced: “My people, how great are you! Welcome to my house once again to help me with the work of harvesting. You all know that no one reaps what he has not sown. I asked for your help during planting season and you responded well, I still say thank you for your good hearts. This time I don't have money to pay you but the Almighty will pay you abundantly. Thank you everyone. Please start the work now if you don't mind. Thank you my people.”

The people went to the farm amid incessant clicks and murmurs. The words of the King offended many than it encouraged. They were tired of being thanked by the word of mouth. His speech was turning into a tirade, stinging on people's ears and piercing their hearts like a double edged sword. Many wanted to abandon the work but feared to be singled out and would be like a show of open disrespect to the King. They then resorted to do the work reluctantly and unwillingly.

In the first rounds, they filled their bags with maize but this reduced when the King went to attend a meeting. The work could have been finished by lunch had everybody come with a big bag but it had to spill over to the afternoon. The faithful ones continued filling their bags hopping to finish the work before darkness set in.

The King came back from the meeting when the work was just about to be completed. It was actually the last trip. The indolent, malicious and the unwilling ones had filled their bags with maize ear leaves. They pretended to be weighing heavily on their backs as you could hear ceaseless groaning under their breaths. These were the people who were carrying maize up to the second last trip and opted to relieve themselves early before time. They knew well that the King would not check the content of their bags. To dispel any trace of suspicion, they were on the front line backing up their groaning with: “uuuih” “aaih” and such like words.

Unexpectedly, the king stopped them from pouring the content of their bags into the store house. He then said, “Listen my faithful people, I am aware I didn’t give you anything during the planting session. One has to wait till the harvest period to be rewarded with what they planted. I am very grateful for the work you’ve done and my reward is what you have carried in your bags. Let everyone take home the maize that you have brought. Thank you very much! Enjoy your evening my people. Bye!”

Those who had big bags and had been faithfully filling their bags went home happy and contented while those who had small bags and others with maize ear leaves as the content of their bags were fogged off cursing. You could hear one swearing, “I am really a big fool! Why did I return the big bag home?” Another one had this to say, “...and I had filled my bag with maize in the second last trip. The last trip I decided to fill it with maize ear leaves. Why didn’t I persevere? I gave up when I was about to finish. I ate up the whole cow and was defeated to finish the tail. How shameful of me!”

The Optimist Creed

I bet you have gleaned several take away points from the story. It takes a critical mind to pick up such. What other people say and think of you should not affect you at all, what you know and believe about yourself is paramount. It is rare for people to view you in a better place or position than where you place yourself.

You can't prevent people from talking and thinking ill of you. You can only prevent their words and thoughts from affecting you. In like manner, you can't prevent birds from flying over your head but can prevent them from building nest on your head.

Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.

Thomas Alva Edison
(1847-1931) American inventor

If you start a project and don't complete it, then you'll have wasted your energy and time. You are never counted a victor for what you start and fail to finish. You'll never know success if you rest before achieving your goals in life. You'll never know a moment of happiness for the wasted chance that you had but didn't utilize until you learn from the same. You'll have maize ear leaves as your reward for incomplete projects.

A good example is a student in college or high school. S/he cannot graduate or be counted to have studied for four or whatever years if s/he misses some exams at some point in time. In their transcripts, they'll have 'incomplete' remarks and as such, will not graduate. More energy is needed to

finish a task than to begin. What does that tell you? You need to prepare well before you embark on any project. What is the reason of holding so much on to something and then letting go when you are just about to realize the fruits? You would have rather not clung unto it in the first place. It is the same way in building; we need more resources to complete it than to start.

Those who start many projects and abandon them half-way are comparable to incomplete buildings. Do you admire incomplete structures, buildings for that matter? Can you live comfortably inside them? That's the kind of person you will be like if you give up in the morning or even in the evening.

The Bible in the book of Timothy tells us that, "An athlete is not crowned unless he completes, according to the rules." Does it happen that Pamela Jelimo or Bolton is given gold medal or silver for they are going to win? It's not until you cross the finish line that you are crowned or rewarded. You might have all prospects promising but motivation is what will keep you going.

Success might seem to be near yet it is far. You are the one to decide when you want them and how you want them depending on what you are willing to lose in order to achieve them. You have to move away from your comfort zones, you have to sacrifice your time; you have to put in more efforts for *more* achievements; you need to work extra hours if you want extra pay.

You got to read more books for more knowledge. You got to pray more for more power and pray much for much power. You got to walk an extra mile for a better experience. Success if quantifiable is directly proportional to the effort we put in. The graph of the same if sketched will not be a

direct line though. It will reach a point where the initial effort, strength and resources are running the whole thing. Listen to what Ghigna has to say:

Finish lines

*Success is never measured by
The things we try to do;
It only comes when we have seen.
A task completely through*

Charles Ghigna
*(An award-winning poet, children's author,
Speaker, and nationally syndicated feature
writer)*

So we are not supposed to give up? Someone might want to ask me. Yes, sometimes you need to give up! Are you asking yourself **when**?

In pursuing bad acts which will in turn form your habits. Habits if not checked eventually become your character and character determines your destiny. Give up bad habits!

A Chinese proverb says, "Habits are cobwebs at first, cables at last." And St. Augustine warned, "Habits, if not resisted, soon becomes necessary."

Do not ever give up pursuing things worth pursuing. I mean the things which are profitable and productive. Giving up in pursuing good things is like giving up your life; that you are tired of living. That you are waiting for your burial. That your life is uneventful.

What happens if you run in to a wall? Do you turn back to where you came from or you just remain at a loss?

‘Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run in to a wall, don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it or work your way around it’

Anonymous

Never say die because surely you will die. The road to success is not always smooth. Obstacles, problems, challenges, ridicules and discouragements are the surest signs that you are heading on the right path. If you experience all this, then take courage, success is not far from where you are.

Do not fear doing something for fear of what people will say or have said already about it. Do something for your benefit and most of all, for the benefit of all. People will never stop commenting on anything you do. Some will be against you or your views, so learn to live with all this and understand the nature of different people.

Understanding the nature of people and appreciating the differences that we have will help us a lot in relating well. But always remember that it is better to be alone than in ill company. It’s a common proverb. The majority is not always right! That does not mean you have to stand aloof and fight for things you surely know they are not right.

Be faithful in your work to the end. You’ll get your reward on time. It is when the bag is weighing heavily on your back that you shouldn’t put it down. You can groan and have to sigh but neither give up nor give in. It’s when the night is the darkest that the dawn is near. It’s when the hill is becoming steeper that the peak is not far away.

Success has never and will never be earned easily. You have

to struggle and persevere to succeed. You need to think outside the box and live through the hard times to develop resilience that will earn you success. You have to develop that capability of bouncing back in the face of trauma, tragedy, stress, adversity and various life challenges without having being too much negatively affected. That only happens when you don't give up.

People don't fail, instead, they give up! How many times have you given up therefore? You should never admit defeat and never have an excuse for the same. Let that be a challenge for you to do better next time.

Thomas Edison dreamed of a lamp that could be operated by electricity. Despite more than 10,000 failures, he finally made his dream into a reality. He succeeded not only in inventing an incandescent electric light, but also an electric lighting system that was practical, safe and economical.

'I have not failed; I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.'

Thomas Edison
(1847-1931) American inventor

Benjamin Franklin, who was an American Statesman, Scientist, Philosopher and Printer, failed a test and all he could say was: "I didn't fail the test; I just found 100 ways to do it wrong."

If you have a positive attitude towards negative situations, you will see real opportunities in problems themselves. You will make out of a challenge a new means of doing something or combating a problem such that next time you will be prepared to face the same if it re-occurs.

The Chinese Proverbs assert: “Failure is not falling down but refusing to get up.” Winston Churchill, familiar to many, failed in sixth grade. He was subsequently defeated in every election for public office until he became Prime Minister at the age of 62. He later wrote, “Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never-in nothing, great or small, large or petty-never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never, Never, Never, Never give up.”

‘Our greatest glory is not in never failing but in rising every time we fall.’

Confucius

(BC 551-BC 479) Chinese philosopher.

There are many other people out there who can recall their own stories of how they never gave up. If one example cannot suffice you or cannot change you, then it will be useless even if you hear a hundred stories of people who never gave up.

‘No matter how hard you work for success, if your thought is saturated with the fear of failure, it will kill your efforts, neutralize your endeavours and make success impossible.’

Bandjuin

The bottom line is: Neither give up in pursuing good nor give in to negatives of life!

2

The Victor

*'If you think you can, you can,
"If you think you can't,
you're right.'*

*-Many Kay Ash (1918 - 2001),
An American businesswoman and founder of
Mary Kay Cosmetics, Inc*

As I was growing up, fable were used to teach morals. Seemingly, it is being phased out slowly as it only appeals to the younger generation but believe me, we use animals to learn other things not so obvious to human beings.

In the animal kingdom, bees were the most musical creatures. Animals could be seen crowding around the beehive to listen to their music. They believed that it was a good way of not only entertaining themselves but also releasing stress. Animals came to know that they had a drum left to them by their ancestors. It would be a lie to say that no animal admired the bees and didn't want to be identified with them.

The day approached for the Lion, the King of the jungle, to

celebrate his seventh birthday. Arrangements were made for the party. It was to be the most colourful party since it was for the renowned king. The compound was cleared of all that was not good ranging from big bushes to collection of litter. Large amount of delicious food was made enough for all invited guests and gate-crushers.

To entertain his guests, the lion invited the bees. The bees wanted to be paid for their time but the lion refused. He said that he had nothing to give them since it was the party for their leader in the animal kingdom. The bees turned him down. The lion thought quickly and said, “You have refused to attend my party and entertain my guests but I’ll take that drum of yours and hire the Hare to be the drummer.” The bees unanimously hummed and said, “You will not take by force however strong you may be!”

The long awaited day arrived. Animals from all walks of life were represented. Elephant met the minimum requirements to be the emcee of the party.

He had this to say for the opening of the ceremony: “The Lion, distinguished guests, invited gentle animals, insects and gate-crushers; this is a great day in our animal kingdom. We invited the bees to entertain us but they refused disdainfully. The Lion, whose roar terrifies all the animals under his kingdom will himself go and take the drum. The Hare has experience in beating the drum and therefore he’ll assume that position as soon as the drum is here with us.” What followed were cheers and applause from the animals.

The Lion went steadily up to the tree where the bees resided. He then roared once to frighten the little creatures and also to announce his arrival. All this time, the bees were calm but unknown to the Lion; they were ready to fight back. They all at once came out of the hive and attacked the Lion’s

head which was trying to push through the hive to reach for the coveted drum.

Unexpectedly, the Lion took off as he couldn't bear the thousand stings on his head. The Elephant on realizing what had happened to the King, was angered and said thumping on his big chest, "Who is bigger than me in this kingdom? The bees will have to submit to my orders whether they like it or not. They'll have to give me their drum with their pleasure or by lack of it." He trumpeted twice before leaving for the beehive.

The bees were quick to realize the approaching Elephant. The word circulated among them that the Elephant wanted the drum and therefore they need to be ready to attack if provoked.

The Elephant announced to the bees when he was just below their hive, "You stung the Lion thinking that you could do away with that easily but you'll not sting me. I'll stamp on all of you before you have the chance to sting me. My powerful trunk will sweep across the hive and scatter all of you. I'll make you Internally Displaced Bees (IDBs) and others will have to go to hell. Let's see who is smarter and stronger." The Elephant used the trunk to poke them out of the hive. This came with a price. A swarm of bees attacked the trunk almost immediately. This sent hot searing pain down the spine of the Elephant. He tried feigning lack of pain but then more attacked the whole of his body. He had to run for his dear life. His trunk swelled up but couldn't be noticed because of his huge size. He only could tell that.

Seeing that the strongest animals didn't manage to take the drum, no other animal was willing to volunteer until one small Tortoise stood up. Animals at once burst out laughing hysterically at the Tortoise. They started booing him. The

Cheetah was overheard saying, “If the Lion and the Elephant didn’t manage to take the Drum, will you, a small creature make it? You are kidding!”

The Tortoise wasn’t dissuaded and so went up to the beehive. He then respectfully asked, “May you please lend me your drum for only three hours? I’ll return it to you.” The bees were delighted for being respected. They found themselves saying, “Let’s help the tortoise.” So the Tortoise took the Drum and went with it to the party where the other animals welcomed him with ululations though wondering how a small animal as such took the Drum. Do you also wonder?

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The Tortoise believed that he could take the Drum. He never listened to the discouragements of his fellow colleagues, of the losers who had given up to fate but trudged on. He actually did take the drum. He made it and so you can.

The power of faith will make you see obstacles, discouragements and ridicule as chaff due to be blown by the wind soon. If only we believe that we can make it, then no man so big or so mighty, no obstacle so huge, no road so long and no problem so difficult that will deter us from achieving our desired goal in life.

Ask me what the greatest obstacle to success is and I will tell you it is **belittling your efforts**.

Obstacles are bound to be there but with trust and focus, we’ll see them as great opportunities in disguise. The greatest mistake we make is to believe that we are just mere human beings. We fail to realize that we are divine in nature and limitless in potential! We are never contented with how

we are and would prefer to live like other people. Don't you know that each person is unique? So why worry of how you are instead of working hard where you are. Remember what John L. Mason, Author of *Imitation is Limitation* said. The title alone tells much.

What you should know is that wearing another person's clothes will not make you to be that person. Imitating that person will delimit you. If a leopard cannot change its skin, can you change one of your hairs to turn white? How we were created is known to God and we can't make any amendments to our bodies as we make to our constitution. If we do so, through technology perhaps, then it is like telling God that He didn't create us perfectly.

I am not saying of people who have deformities which can be corrected but of those created well but want to change their appearance, their gait, how they talk and even how they work just because someone else does so. I sometimes hear people trying to emulate others on how they talk thinking that how they themselves talk doesn't please others. Somebody somewhere is pleased to hear how you talk and furthermore, don't you think by changing how you talk, you will hurt more than please? Our aim is not to please people. After all, no matter what we did to our walking, what we did apply on ourselves, we can't please everybody. Be contented the way you were created and you'll do things more than you can imagine.

What also can limit us is our own fear. We fear failing and what people will say of us. All roads to success pass through the land of failure and as such, we should look beyond failure in our quest for success. If you fear what people will say of you, be assured that they will never stop commenting on anything you do and or will do. Fear has killed many people than even diseases.

We are all capable of performing. Let's learn to see life as a zip. We should use it to unzip our hidden potentialities.

Whether You Think You Can, Or Think You Can't, You're Probably Right

By Unknown

*If you think you are beaten, you are;
If you think that you dare not, you don't;
If you'd like to win, but you think you can't,
It's almost certain you won't.*

*If you think you'll lose, you've lost;
for out in the world you'll find
Success begins with a fellow's will.
It's all in the state of mind.*

*If you think you are outclassed, you are;
you've got to think high to rise;
you've got to be sure of yourself before
you can ever win a prize.*

*Life's battles don't always go
to the stronger or faster man;
but sooner or later the man who wins
is the man who thinks he can.*

What does Proverbs 23:7(a) say? ***“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”*** [KJV]

What you think of yourself is what you are. Stop bothering other people of what they think of you yet you have the answer with you. Nobody was born a failure but we choose to be. By failing once, twice or thrice, it is not enough to qualify us as failures but the moment we stop trying, the moment we give up, we can be called failures. Astonishingly,

we do give up before trying.

We give up pursuing our thoughts, or actualizing them. We can't wait for them to be born. They are just aborted a few minutes, or few days after conception, before maturation period is over though good they were. We never give up in pursuing negative thoughts however bad they are.

Thoughts

*Thoughts,
They determine the quality of our lives
One was born Positive
And another one Negative
They are of the same kind
But different are their course of action*

*What the eyes see
Lures and entice one
to strongly crave for
Thoughts are conceived in the process
both feeding on what the eyes see the more*

*Negative thoughts thrive in evil things
and strangled by good things
only to be revived
by exposition to the evil things again*

*Positive thoughts are nourished by good things
but aborted by the negative things
before the gestation period is over
the fruits of the same will never be witnessed*

Adapted from *Revived Through Poetry*
By the same author]

Change is the only permanent thing in this world. Change your attitude. Change your belief about yourself. Change your thoughts for the better. Sow changes today and reap honours come tomorrow. Avoid talking negative about yourself, instead talk positive always. Diminish your weaknesses and magnify your strengths.

It is not the more resourced person, or the more privileged or the stronger or the faster who usually wins the race. It is the one who believes that they can and have the DESIRE, the WILL and the COURAGE to succeed. It is the one who utilizes the available little rather complaining about the inadequate unavailable resources. It is the one who is focused and who never quits when the going gets tough.

In a fight, it is not the huge person who normally wins. Have you taken time to ask yourself why? It is one who has brain and not might. Let's not boast of unachieved success. We can all be victors and it's no crime to be a victor unimagined.

Buddha commented, "We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world."

James Allen, Author of *As a man Thinketh* said, "You cannot escape the results of your thoughts. Whatever your present environment may be, you will fall, remain or rise with your thoughts, your vision and your ideal. You will become as small as your controlling desire; and as great as your dominant aspiration."

3

The Optimist

'The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true.'

-James Branch Cabell- (1879 - 1958)
(American author of fantasy fiction and belles letters)

A story is told of two men, Sam and George (not their real names). They were two great friends and shared almost everything. People took them for twins yet they were not. There is only one thing ingrained in George that differentiated him from Sam.

One day, they both sat down and resolved to start similar businesses. They took loans from a local bank which was to be repaid in six months' time. They did all these hoping that their businesses would flourish and open up for them to pay back the loan. Unexpectedly, they did not make profit as they thought it would.

The area Member of Parliament (MP), as usual, had promised that his hand would be evident in both self-initiated and community projects. The two friends approached the same MP to solicit help to clear their debts before the deadline but their MP was then in a different face. He was now giving everyone excuses for unfulfilled promises.

Seeing that, the two friends went round the village asking for help promising to repay the money in instalments after clearing with the loaner. Their guarantors did press them hard because they didn't want to pay for other people whom, from their perspective, had lost direction in their journey.

It was now one month remaining before the time for repaying the loan collapsed. Everybody they went to seek help from gave almost a similar response, "I am also broke imagine. I am just down and thought you were better off because you have even opened up a business. Why don't you try so and so." This 'so and so' wasn't better off as their response was the same as that of 'so and so'.

Days rolled by and it was just one week before the agreed time for repayment of loan collapsed. The prospects of getting the money to repay the loan in time ebbed away. Sam despaired and sold his two Grade Friesian cows each at a hundred thousand and cleared off with the loaner.

George never entertained the thoughts of selling his assets in a bid to clear the debts however hard Sam urged him. He kept high his hope that he'll clear the debt in time though he didn't know where to get the funds. Sam asked him to be realistic and sell his piece of land before the loaner got mad and sells it by force had the guarantors defaulted their pledge. He could then buy a better one later.

Through perseverance, George never despaired but he remained optimistic. He was seeing light where Sam saw nothing but Cimmerian darkness. Fortunately, two days to deadline, George won a lottery of two million shillings. He paid off the loan and used the overflow to improve his business. Be not deceived that optimism is winning lotteries but there is a point I want to drive home. What was ingrained

in George that differentiated him from Sam? **Optimism.**

The Optimist Creed

The optimist never despairs quickly but perseveres for an extra minute. It is an extra minute that will save you and will in fact earn you success. It is the extra effort you put in your work that is worthwhile and will lead you to great heights of achievement.

When you don't see light at the end of the tunnel, go on groping in the darkness hoping but not against hope that light will be visible in the extra minute you persevere. Never lose touch of the direction you are heading to. Never lose touch of what you want to achieve.

Hope enables us to be optimistic even in troubled circumstances. We often cannot change external circumstances but we can change our attitude toward them.

What is hope? Vineat Bansal answers:

*Hope is bright shining light which keeps
darkness at bay
Hope is gentle cold breeze on a hot summer
Hope is to remain positive when going gets
tough
Hope is seeking more when others think you
had enough*

Be optimistic always despite the prevailing conditions. Let not your vision be tainted by obstacles and discouragements, ups and downs. Those are the bridges you must pass in your way to achievement. Those are the guideposts or the landmarks that you are trailing on the right track. They are the surest signs that you are not far from success. The

optimist proclaims that whatever good is reserved for them however long they may have to wait; and the pessimist fears this is true!

Discouragements from people as you are in your quest for success should not put off your hope. It should make it lighter and brighter. Take it that they don't want you to succeed and that is why they want you to give up. They just want you to wallow with them in the mud of stagnation, penury, hopelessness and resort to 'come what may' life. You give up your life to fate. Remember that when God closes the door, we need not pass through the window or take more time looking at the closed door. We need to wait for Him to open for us another door. You hope for the best but always be prepared for the worst. That is exactly what optimism is. Have 'I must get it however much I'll pay' attitude and nothing less. You'll surely get it if you will not give up or quit pursuing it. We are told that quitters never win and winners never quit.

Listen to the Optimist International:

Promise yourself to be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel like there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and expect only the best.

*To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others
as you are about your own.*

*To forget the mistakes of the past and press on the
greater achievements of the future.*

*To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give
every living person you meet a smile.*

*To give so much time to the improvement of yourself
that you have no time to criticize others.*

*To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, and too
strong for fear, and too happy to permit the
presence of trouble.*

I must say I love the above poem. It has beautiful gems if you should forget everything you will read herein.

Optimism is the light in the darkness; an eye to the blind; a screw to a box of doom and an opener to a positive life!

Depression is a common affliction common today among the pessimist. Are you a victim of that? Why give yourself stress in what you can avoid? We need to learn to look at the positive side of everything.

***Optimism is the faith that leads to
achievement***

***-Helen Keller (1880 - 1968)
American author, political activist, and
lecturer.***

Two men are in prison. The gaze of one is drawn to the shiny; twinkling stars that bejewel the velvety firmament. As he takes in the beauty of this scene, he is filled with optimism

and hope. There is something better beyond the bars! The other person focuses on the muddy ground surrounding the prison cells. Nothing there encourages him, and he becomes less and less optimistic. He is robbed of hope because of the direction of his gaze. Are you too robbed of hope and optimism because of the direction of your gaze? Where is the direction of your gaze?

4

Teamwork

The purpose of life is not to win. The purpose of life is to grow and share. When you come to look on all that you have done in life, you'll get more satisfaction from the pleasure you have brought into other people's lives than from the times you outdid and defeated them.'

~Rabbi Kushner~

Author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*

Three cows Lelkina, Derinja and Chalant lived together peacefully in their field. Despite that, they constantly faced treats from their neighbouring Lion. Lion had eaten up all the small animals around. He tried the trio but he couldn't defeat them. He feared letting his cubs stray to the cows' field. The Lion, Mkabe, still remembers what happened to one cub of their extended family one day when it threatened to eat the cows. The cows gored the cub severally thus sending it to its creator. Mkabe wanted to have his revenge on the cows but dreaded taking the bulls by its horns. The trio's horn scared any potential predator. Mkabe had to think before coming to a conclusive result. He

said to himself, “Together they stand and divided I’ll eat them leisurely.”

One day Mkabe passed by their grazing area. He coughed once to attract their attention. He then said, “Excuse me; I see you are almost done with grass in the field. I know of a place where the pastures are plenty and greener. I really want to help you because I don’t use grass. We can go with one of you to see the place and bring back the report.”

Lelkina, who was always mischievous but the leader of others volunteered to go with Mkabe. They went for some miles before Lelkina was exhausted from the long walk. “Hey, we are not coming to the place. How far is it? I am tired Mkabe!” the cow cried. Mkabe took a deep sigh then answered, “You know when you want something in life, you need to persevere and never give up easily. I thought you knew this. Courage my... it is just after that bush. They say it is when the night is darkest that dawn is near. It is the same thing with traveling. It is when the journey seems long and you are tired when you are almost there.”

The cow continued pestering the Lion with rhetorical questions before Mkabe became irritated and turned against his neighbour. Mkabe charged Lelkina with the words, “How I have been craving for your tasty meat. You think plenty of grass is on this other side? You miss the mark if you think so. From the look of things, you are delicious, especially the big udder...” Mkabe changed his face and tore her into pieces.

The next day, Mkabe passed through the cow’s field where he was threatened. Quickly, he defended himself, “Oh, hasn’t Lelkina come back to take you to the place? I know she is feasting and might have forgotten about you.” Derinja and Chalant wanted to go to the place together but Mkabe, undoubtedly, knew that he had to separate them for him to

make them his prey. The two could outdo him easily. Mkabe, in protest said, “The owner of the place gave me conditions that only one cow at a time will be allowed in the grassland but in the long run, all of you will get a taste of the national pie.”

Derinja, who was older than Chalant, went with Mkabe. En route to the so mentioned place, Derinja warned Mkabe that if what he was saying was a lie, then she would gore him with her big horns. Mkabe turned to Derinja at the spot and said of how he had longed for her tasty meat. He also said that he couldn't sleep nor eat when he thought of Derinja's body. Derinja tried fighting back. The fight ended in Derinja being feasted on.

The remaining Chalant was but a mere heifer. It was now easier for Mkabe to feast on her any time. Before Mkabe feasted on Chalant, he had this to say: “Together you stood and divided, I ate you up.”

The Optimist Creed

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with people. Going with people, you'll not feel the pain of the distance but will realize at the end that you have gone far than you could walk alone. Combined efforts make work easier. The English proverb says: Many hands make work light. That is the essence of teamwork with the following acronym:

T - Together
E - Effectively
A - Achieve
M - More

If we work together, we shall effectively achieve more.

Alone, we shall onerously achieve less. Take a look at a football match, though it is a common example, where the players are disorganized. Each player is accelerating the ball in any direction, not coordinating with other members of the team. Just have a look at that picture.

Let me paint it the more. The team is a national one playing for your country in a competition where the winner is given a much coveted price. You realize that each player wants to score a goal alone.

When any player gets the ball, he tries to move deftly past their opponents to score a goal alone without passing the ball to others. Is there any possibility of them winning the game taking the other team to be an organized one? How do you feel when watching such a match as a fan? Definitely you'll feel bad and wish that the players could co-ordinate and play as a team. You are justified to feel bad but then why feel bad when others don't co-ordinate and yet in one way or another you don't co-ordinate with others in your team?

We do say a team because they work together but if they don't work as it should be, they'll lose the game to their opponent which is a waste of time and their energy. I'm not saying if we lose a game, it means we were wasting our time. Let's lose when we were working as a team. That will be a credit and in fact an encouragement to us because we'll get to strategize on how we can play better next round.

Let me ask this simple question though many cannot answer well. **What is the main reason for being in a team?** I'll give you the answer. It is to achieve a certain goal or an objective. What is the main reason for a country to remain united? This question will be answered in this section where I'll talk on the importance of teamwork.

If you are in a team, which position do you hold? An active or passive player? If you are not in a team, are you planning to join one? What are the considerations before joining a group and which type of a group? As a group, what is your goal? As an institution, what is your target? As a company, what is your aim? As a country, what is your aim?

A team can be defined as a number of individuals each with a specific role working together in a program, project or institution towards achieving a specific major goal.

Characteristics of a team

- 1) There is close collaboration and co-ordination between members. No member wants to score a goal alone. We are with different talents and abilities so we can't do everything alone.
- 2) A thorough understanding and appreciation of individual roles. That is the beginning of success. Appreciation motivates one to do more but lack of it comes with its price. The individual who should have been credited for something will lose morale.
- 3) There is respect for one another. They say respect is a two-way traffic but you can take it as you are the only one who needs to respect others. Sometimes, other people will not respect you but don't pay them the same coin. Respect them and they'll be ashamed of themselves. There should be no discrimination against the weak and the less endowed members in a team.
- 4) Members in a team exercise interdependence amongst themselves. No member wholly depends on others without his/her hand being seen in the whole project. Don't be a parasite but develop a symbiotic type of relationship where there is mutual benefit among the members.

- 5) Team members cover each other's natural weaknesses and inadequacies. They just complement each other like hearth stones or table legs.

The Bible interestingly mentions something about teamwork when it says two are better than one. You have to read this:

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, they are warm; but how can one be warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

[Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, RSV]

Importance of Teamwork

- 1) Teamwork reduces fatigue. Members will use less energy to achieve more objectives than it would have taken one working alone to achieve the same.
- 2) It creates synergy. Synergy is defined as the potential ability for people or groups to be successful working together than on their own.
- 3) It leads to improved self-confidence. It is a chance for the members to develop their art of communication and attain confidence in the process of expressing oneself.
- 4) I cannot avoid mentioning increase in productivity and development of the individual. One gets important skills like problem solving. If it is joined partnership to open a business, there will be an increase in the profits. If it is a students' group, each member will

get to learn more and reinforce what they already know.

Thomas Edison had a team of twenty-one assistants and when asked why he had a team, he said that if he could solve all the problems, he would. We need other people in our search for success. We were not endowed with everything and therefore we don't know everything. It will not reach a time we will not need other people's help because one thing is sure: we will never exhaust everything on earth. We always acquire knowledge through our interactions with people and reading of books but that does not mean we will know everything. A little here and a little there fills the jar. Alone, you will not fill the jar.

Barriers to Teamwork

- 1) Overdependence by some members. All members should be active participants and no one should opt for parasitism.
- 2) Jealousness/pride/lack of openness. Some members might have vital information but not willing to share with others. It can be also that they share what is obvious but not what they learnt the hard way.
- 3) Lack of co-ordination and close co-operation. This is when the members do other things which do not pertain to the group or team and want to justify those deeds.
- 4) Domination by some members whereby one knows something but does not give others a chance to present their views. They want to suppress others or mislead by giving incorrect information. They are not open to the views of others.

What you share is multiplied; what you withhold is divided. In the process of sharing with others, you'll gain more. No

man is an island and as such we should learn to share what we have with others. I remember when I was in class six and it was just before exams. I had the necessary revision materials but I didn't want to share with my colleagues. It happened that a certain girl took my book without my knowledge and made notes from it. When I realized that, I took off the page from her book where she wrote the notes.

Surprisingly, when we were given back the exam papers, I had scored nineteen out of fifty, a mark I had never attained before. The aforementioned scored thirty eight out of fifty-twice what I got. Do you see what jealousy earned me? That was just an example. I know each and every one of you has a story to tell on what individuality or selfishness or want of accumulating things for themselves has negatively impacted on their lives. You can well succeed but that success will be short-lived.

Before I come to the end of this topic, I would like us to look at the life of geese and learn from them. It is interesting learning from nature and more so animals.

Lessons about teamwork among Geese

Geese are birds characterized by long necks and non-iridescent colouration. Even though they are waterfowls, they spend most of their time on land. Their life expectancy is twenty five years. These birds have invaluable lessons to teach us about teamwork.

Character One

As each goose flaps its wings it creates an “uplift” for the birds that follow. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson:

Geese fly in a common direction, in a V formation. They have a common target. “V” has an apex, a common point of intersection, so do geese. People sharing a common direction and goals in life will get easily and quickly to where they are going if they create “uplift” for the members following them. It would be a Herculean task for one to work alone the distance of one’s dream in life. Working together will mean each achieves their goals easily and earlier than expected.

Character Two

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation and takes advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Lesson:

When you fall out of a team, do you suddenly feel the drag and resistance of standing aloof? How long does it take you before you move to the formation and take the advantage of other members? We should be willing to accept help and give our help also to others. We do all need help but surprisingly, some people are unwilling to solicit help from others or worse even, can’t accept to be helped by Good Samaritans. We got to stay in the formation of those headed where we want to go.

Character Three

When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies to the point to take its position.

Lesson:

As we are all not robots, we do get tired. To reduce fatigue,

we need to share tasks. People are interdependent on each other. We don't all have the same skills of solving problems; neither do we have the same talents, abilities or capabilities. This therefore calls for teamwork where we will pool the available resources, energies, skills, talents, gifts and capabilities for the same goal.

When your neighbour falls back, take their position and make them rise again.

Character Four

The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those upfront to keep up their speed.

Lesson:

What do we do as a team to encourage those in front to keep up their speed? Honking to encourage is indispensable in a team. Appreciation and a token for something good done is the oil of the face, the light of the heart, and cold water to a thirsty throat.

When you want somebody to do something better, encourage him or her and you will have the best results. If you are an employer, do motivate your employees for a start and mark the difference in their work performance. Motivation unlocks the boxes of progress, improvement and productivity. Lack of the same disposes off the capabilities, potentialities and diversities ingrained in people.

Character Five

Geese have a great affection for others in their group. When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch

out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

Lesson:

When in happiness or in sadness, we should stand by each other as a team. We need to share together our sorrows and happiness. At all times, we should stand by each other. This will in itself solve the problem quickly.

Conclusion

So far so good. We have seen what the optimist in life go by and what the pessimists fear. Giving up in pursuit of excellence is cowardice and uncalled for. At any rate, it is planned suicide. Killing of one's dreams. If you are to give up, then don't hesitate in giving up ungodly addictions. You may not give up but you give in to lures of wet blankets that will soon turn your priorities and targets upside down. If you don't give up and give in, you will be a victor. Remember the race is not for the strong nor the swift but time and chance happens to them all. Holding on a little, going an extra mile, putting in more efforts are the simple stuff that differentiates winners from losers.

Optimism can be purchased just as you do Airtime. You can forgo fear and disillusionment at the expense of optimism. The latter is more expensive but it is worth it. If you lose your beloved, property or health, a little may be lost. All is lost when hope is gone. Can you afford to lose everything? Just remain with hope and all will come back to you. This is possible if you are a team player challenging each other and helping each other. Alone you will pass out so soon. Choose/make the best team with same objectives as yours. We were not created to be isolated islands. We need each other as we supplement and complement each other's weaknesses and strengths.

What I have just said is not forceful. What you have read is just by choice and it is the same choice that will determine the quality of life you will lead. Today's choices determine tomorrow's fruits. Today's little steps you pass through will see you to the highway you will drive in tomorrow. In other words, every choice has a consequence whether good or bad. I will use the common adage, "Your Choice, Your Life". Choose to use the precious perishable commodity (time) well. Choose that idleness is not going to be part of you anymore. Choose that you will start Dreaming Big, Thinking Big and even Stretching Big. A rubber band you are and you can change your size. You can change your position. You are not useful if you don't stretch. Embrace change for the better. Choice to do all that lies with you.

You know what? If you decide to better your life, you are choosing on the narrow path. A few would tread along. Love, Patience and Kindness are the road signs on that path. Observe the road signs and your destination you will reach. The few who walk along will get well with you if you are kind to them, patient with their weaknesses and odd behaviours and chief of all, love all.

Forget not the golden rule: Do to others what you would like them to do unto you. Simple. Right? Start from today and in a week, a month or a year, you will notice the change in the "hard-to-deal-with people". You need good to be done to you and so to bad people. The challenge is that no one is willing but be the change you wish to see in the world.

Unfortunately, it is easier said than done. You know what you ought to do but, doing it is something completely different. Don't say if you can't do and do just as you say. In medical wards, when students/interns are presenting patient's histories, they give running commentary. They

normally say as they demonstrate. In life, the best thing to do is to be an example to others of good things. Remember disability is not an excuse. Unfortunately, some have disabled themselves. They belittle their efforts. Are you one of them? Disability is not inability; inability is disability.

At this point you need to stop short and ask this question: "What is my talent?" It is not long before the master asks for an account of what you did with the talent He gave you. Don't say you don't have one unless you are not willing to work on the one you have. What is more intriguing than taking a journey of self-discovery? You are not good-for-nothing individual! At least there is something you are good at. Who knows you are miserable because you are not working on what you have? Who knows if you will not be the next Bolton or David Rudisha? Wake up from your slumber and take this important journey of discovering your talent. It is not sufficient to know what that talent is. It is more important when you use it for the best of your life and those around you.

There is one up above who created you. Any puzzles about life? Some mysteries you cannot understand? You don't know where to begin? He is the beginning and the end. He knows all about you. In fact He has good plans for you. Chat with Him in prayer to reveal His will for your life. He will not leave you alone struggle. He will walk with you all the way provided you uphold His principles. Even if you have wandered far away from Him, He is still calling out for you today.

Finally, you are pretty sure this life is short. Before you break your ego and live simply, what is it that you want people to remember you for? What legacy will you leave behind? Many have left mansions behind but that doesn't

count. Some have left huge chunks of lands but still it is just for a while. If you can help, leave impressions on people's hearts for good things. Show acts of kindness and love. Treat all people fairly. All will not love you but that is not what you are seeking. Do good and walk away, don't wait to be patted on the back. They will talk about it when you are no more.

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About the Author

Gideon Mutai is a young humble and simple writer and medical doctor in the making. Born to peasant parents in a decimal village, he grew up there and attended a local primary school where whenever it rained, afternoon classes would not materialize.

His dad digs latrines and wells for people for a living and his mother is a housewife. Relatives and friends were pessimistic about him going to high school. His parents too were not certain if he would join high school not because of performance but because of means. That notwithstanding, he was optimistic and has never used his background as a measure of what he was expected to do as his age mates did.

Just as people were asking what good thing could come out of Nazareth, it was the same question with the people of Samiytuk village. Gideon joined Kericho high school of course after passing well and there met one English teacher, Mrs. Opiyo E.C.A, who wanted the best for him. She was teaching him English from form one through four and her influence on him shaped what he became in terms of writing.

He writes poems, plays, motivational books as well as spiritual books and comedies. He started writing in form two the first poem which was entitled *Why*. He used to tell himself that he has got passion for writing. He repeated enough times until the same was confirmed. The first book which he wrote but has not been published yet is a play entitled *The Last Straw*. He tried publishing but as expected

for a first time and to make it worse young writer, there were several challenges. He didn't give up but went on writing other books. His first published book is a collection of poems *Revived Through Poetry* with Sahel Publishing Association. The book in your hand is his second published book but has others ready which will be published in due time.

Currently, at the time of this book's publication, he is in fourth year at Egerton University pursuing Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

He is a trustee and a co-founder of a charity organization *Reproductive Health Program for Rural Communities* (RHPRC Trust-Kenya). He has gone to various schools and communities giving health and motivational talks. He loves writing, making friends, nature walk, technology and Bible Study.

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