# **AMIE MASWAI AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY**

The moment of my birth at Moi Avenue Hospital in Nairobi remains etched in the fabric of my earliest memories, just like I was narrated to by my parents I will do it here. It was a tranquil evening, with the golden hues of the setting sun casting a warm glow over the bustling city, for simplicity “kondoo wakiingishwa kwa nyumba yao”. As the clock struck 6:00 PM, I entered the world, greeted by the screams of other women in labor at the hospital and the loving embrace of my mother.

Growing up in a single-parent household, my family unit was defined by resilience, love, and unwavering support. While my father had remarried and embarked on a separate journey, my mother stood as the cornerstone of our family, providing us with the love, guidance, and stability we needed to thrive. Her strength and determination in the face of adversity served as a constant source of inspiration, instilling within me a deep sense of gratitude and admiration.

As the second eldest among my siblings, I assumed a role of leadership and responsibility from a young age. With four siblings and four step-siblings, our household was a bustling hub of activity, each member contributing their own unique perspective and energy to the familial dynamic. Despite the complexities inherent in navigating a blended family, we forged deep bonds of camaraderie and mutual respect, grounded in a shared history and a common sense of purpose.

Throughout my childhood, I cherished the moments spent with each family member, from lively dinners filled with laughter and storytelling to quiet evenings spent curled up with a book or watching movies together. These shared experiences served to strengthen our bonds and foster a sense of belonging that transcended biological ties.

One particular aspect of our family dynamic that stands out in my memory is the way we supported and uplifted each other during times of need. Whether it was offering a listening ear, providing words of encouragement, or lending a helping hand, we stood united in facing life's challenges head-on. This sense of solidarity and empathy has been instrumental in shaping my values and worldview, teaching me the importance of compassion, resilience, and unconditional love.

Looking back on my upbringing, I am grateful for the richness and diversity of experiences that my family provided. Each family member, whether sibling, step-sibling, or parent, has played a unique and invaluable role in shaping who I am today. Their influence, guidance, and unwavering support have been the bedrock upon which I have built my life, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

Despite the complexities inherent in navigating the dynamics of a blended family, I cherished the bonds forged with my step-siblings, each relationship enriching my life in unexpected ways. Together, we weathered the storms of adolescence, celebrated milestones, and formed an unbreakable bond grounded in love, mutual respect, and shared experiences.

As I reflect on my journey from childhood to adolescence, I am reminded of the indelible impact of family on shaping my identity and worldview. From the tender moments of childhood innocence to the formative years of adolescence, I carry with me the values instilled by my family – integrity, compassion, and perseverance.

My upbringing in a single-parent family, surrounded by siblings and step-siblings, has been a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the transformative power of love. It is a journey defined by strength in adversity, unity in diversity, and the unwavering belief that, together, we can overcome any obstacle life presents.

The early chapters of my childhood narrative unfolded against the backdrop of transitions and geographical changes. Following my birth, my family embarked on a journey that led us to the tranquil shores of Kisumu, a city nestled along the banks of Lake Victoria. It was here, in the embrace of nature's serenity, that I took my first steps and uttered my first words.

Settling into our new surroundings, we embraced the rhythm of rural life with open arms. The sprawling landscapes, adorned with lush greenery and golden fields, offered a stark contrast to the bustling streets of Nairobi. Amidst the idyllic charm of the countryside, I discovered a profound sense of belonging, rooted in the rich tapestry of community life. I remember I did not know how to make friends but my sister was always taking me to hang out with her friends, talk about world greatest big sister. We used to go for boat rides and watched fishermen fish and at the end of the day buy fish. The greatest memory was visiting snake park. To date I no longer fear snakes. I reminisce with my childhood pictures day after day since I have framed and hanged them on my walls.

My educational journey commenced amidst the serene beauty of Kisumu's idyllic landscapes, where I eagerly embarked on my academic endeavors. Beginning from the tender age of baby class and nursery, I delved into the realm of learning, immersing myself in the wonders of drawing, coloring, and engaging with fellow pupils. While the majority of my time was spent in joyful activities like nap time and games, each day brought new discoveries and opportunities for growth.

Transitioning to the countryside, I continued my educational odyssey, progressing through pre-unit and into the early years of primary school. Here, amidst the rustic charm of rural life, I expanded my knowledge and honed my skills, guided by dedicated teachers and surrounded by the natural beauty of the countryside. Every lesson, every interaction, was a stepping stone on my journey of academic exploration, shaping my understanding of the world and fostering a love for learning that would endure for years to come. Every morning at the local stage of ‘Bronjo’ center a school van which was also used as the local matatu during the day would pick me and my older sister and because I was the youngest I had the privilege to sit next to the driver. For me it was the scariest time of my day because the driver would tell me to hold the brakes with my tiny short legs and would tell me if I let go we would all die. I know you are all thinking what kind of person he was but, one time when I was visiting my grandparents he recognized me and told me that he was just training me to not be afraid.

To this day I know that he brake pedal is at the center among the three pedals. Anyway that one year at the country side moved really fast but I made friends with my teachers. Whenever I get an opportunity to visit my grandparents I would also go see them. I remember my mother telling me a story of how they came to realize I am anti-social. She said she was called to school by one of my teachers claiming I do not talk to other kids in the class, she said I sit alone, don’t raise my hand when she asks questions but I excel. My mum told her to lock me and my sister in one room and she will see the results. She was so shocked.

As I reflect on those formative years spent in Kisumu, I am reminded of the profound impact of my rural upbringing on shaping my values and worldview. It was a time marked by simplicity, resilience, and the enduring spirit of community. In the embrace of nature's embrace, I discovered the transformative power of education and the boundless possibilities that awaited on the horizon.

Though our journey would eventually lead us to new destinations and chapters in life, the memories of my childhood in Kisumu remain etched in the corridors of my mind, a testament to the beauty of beginnings and the resilience of the human spirit.

The next chapter of my childhood journey unfolded against the backdrop of Nairobi's bustling streets, where the rhythm of urban life pulsed with energy and vitality. We stayed at a place called Umoja estate, lived in flats. It was in this vibrant metropolis that I continued my academic pursuits, navigating the corridors of knowledge with determination and curiosity at Eastend Primary School, from class one to class four. From the towering skyscrapers to the bustling markets, Nairobi offered a kaleidoscope of experiences, each contributing to my growth and development. Every morning we would be woken up at 6am, prepared and walk to school. In the evening with our daily snacks allowance money we would buy ice cream at 10 shillings and the remaining save in our piggy banks.

As I delved deeper into my studies, I found myself immersed in a melting pot of cultures and ideas, expanding my horizons and broadening my perspective on the world. The city's diverse landscape provided fertile ground for exploration, fueling my thirst for knowledge and discovery.

Yet, just as quickly as we had arrived, our family found ourselves drawn to the tranquil beauty of Ngong, a serene enclave nestled amidst the rolling hills of the Great Rift Valley. Here, amidst the whispering winds and the gentle rustle of leaves, I discovered a newfound sense of peace and belonging.

Enrolling in a local school in Ngong called Kenvic Preparatory School, I embarked on a journey of self-discovery and personal growth at class 4. The two transformative terms spent in this idyllic setting left an indelible mark on my soul, as I immersed myself in the wonders of nature and the simple joys of rural life. From exploring lush forests to picnicking by pristine streams, every moment in Ngong was a testament to the beauty of simplicity and the power of connection with the natural world. It was a sad year since my dad decided to move out and join another family. But my mum would always find a way to cheer us up. Sundays were for church, Saturdays for family picnic.

The scenic beauty and peaceful atmosphere of Ngong nurtured my love for the outdoors, instilling within me a deep appreciation for the wonders of creation. As I roamed the verdant hills and gazed upon the expansive vistas stretching before me, I felt a profound sense of gratitude and wonder, humbled by the majesty of the world around me. We lived at a hilltop and without a car that was exercise. We were the third habitants at that place and this meant no neighbors, no friends. But soon the place was filled with house constructions then neighbors. Too bad the place was no longer safe.

One night when my dad was still living with us he was late and we all fell asleep waiting for him. My mother was awakened by the groans of a man outside with white t-shirt. First glance and she quickly concluded the man was my father. She was so terrified tried to call to confirm it wasn’t him but he did not answer. When she got the emergency contact and about to call she sees my father’s car pull up. She opened the door with towels to help the bleeding man, only to realize, that was our neighbor. He was beaten and cut severally. She went to call the wife and brought the man’s kids to our place as the mom takes the dad to the hospital together with my father. That was the day we realized it was never safe in Ngong but it was too late to relocate, we had bought the house.

In retrospect, my time in Nairobi and Ngong served as a tapestry of experiences, each thread weaving its way into the fabric of my identity. From the hustle and bustle of urban life to the tranquility of rural serenity, I embraced the diversity of my surroundings, finding solace and inspiration in the ever-changing landscape of my journey.

Embarking on the next phase of my educational journey, I found myself navigating the halls of a boarding school nestled amidst the picturesque landscapes of Nandi County. Stepping onto the grounds of this esteemed institution, I was filled with a mixture of excitement and apprehension, eager to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead.

Life in the boarding school was a departure from the familiar comforts of home, as I found myself immersed in a community of diverse individuals, each with their own dreams and aspirations. The regimented schedule of academic classes, extracurricular activities, and communal living fostered a sense of discipline and camaraderie among the students, forging bonds that would last a lifetime. That school was very comfortable and the teachers, cooks and workers were great. I started from class five to class eight were I scored 377 points. Meaning I get a chance to go to a good high-school.

As I adjusted to the rigors of boarding school life, I discovered a newfound sense of independence and self-reliance. From managing my daily routine to navigating the complexities of interpersonal relationships, every moment presented an opportunity for growth and self-discovery. I learned to lean on my peers for support, forging friendships that provided solace during moments of doubt and uncertainty.

Yet, amidst the challenges, there were also moments of profound joy and fulfillment. Whether it was participating in spirited debates in the classroom, competing in sporting events on the field, or simply sharing laughter and stories with friends in the dormitories, each experience contributed to my personal and intellectual development. I later joined St. Joseph’s Girls Chepterit High school. A walking distance from my primary school where my younger siblings joined. I managed to score a B- of 59 points. This meant I get to join the university.

The boarding school environment also nurtured a spirit of resilience within me, teaching me to persevere in the face of adversity and to embrace failure as a stepping stone to success. Through setbacks and triumphs alike, I learned the value of perseverance and determination, qualities that would serve me well in the years to come.

Looking back on my time in Nandi County, I am filled with gratitude for the experiences that shaped me into the person I am today. The lessons learned and friendships forged during those formative years have left an indelible mark on my heart, instilling within me a sense of purpose and determination as I continue on my journey of growth and self-discovery.

Navigating the transition from high school to university marked a significant milestone in my life journey. Filled with anticipation and excitement, I embarked on this new chapter with a sense of purpose and determination, eager to pursue my academic aspirations and chart my own path to success. It was a day just like any other and my mum wanted to accompany me on my first day since my older sister decided to work first before joining the university meaning I was the first one to join in my side of our family. That day we arrived at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology in Nyeri at around 5 and found a long line of admission. Luckily I met a friend who looked after me until I was settled.

Becoming a mother while pursuing my education was a profound and life-altering experience, filled with a whirlwind of emotions, struggles, and joys. From the moment I discovered I was pregnant, my world was turned upside down, and I embarked on a journey that would test my strength, resilience, and determination in ways I never imagined.

Pregnancy brought with it a kaleidoscope of emotions - from the initial shock and disbelief to the overwhelming sense of excitement and anticipation. As I watched my body change and felt the flutter of life within me, I was filled with a profound sense of awe and wonder at the miracle of creation unfolding within me.

Yet, alongside the joy of impending motherhood, came a myriad of challenges and uncertainties. Balancing the demands of coursework with the physical and emotional toll of pregnancy proved to be no easy feat. From battling morning sickness and fatigue to navigating the complexities of prenatal care, each day presented its own set of hurdles to overcome.

One particular struggle I faced was the fear of judgment and stigma associated with being a pregnant student. I worried about how my peers and professors would perceive me, and whether I would be able to fulfill my academic responsibilities while also preparing for the arrival of my child. However, I was determined not to let these fears hold me back, and I drew strength from the unwavering support of my loved ones and the knowledge that I was not alone in my journey.

Despite the challenges, there were also moments of profound joy and connection that filled my heart with warmth and gratitude. Feeling my baby kick for the first time, hearing their heartbeat during prenatal check-ups, and seeing their tiny form on the ultrasound screen were all moments that filled me with a sense of wonder and awe at the miracle of life unfolding within me.

As the months passed and my due date drew near, the anticipation and excitement reached a fever pitch. I spent hours preparing for the arrival of my child, setting up their nursery, and imagining what life would be like with them by my side. Each moment spent in quiet reflection or bonding with my unborn child filled me with a sense of peace and purpose that sustained me through the challenges of pregnancy.

Finally, the moment arrived when I held my precious child in my arms for the first time - a moment that will forever be etched in my memory as one of pure joy and overwhelming love. In that instant, as I gazed into their eyes and felt their tiny fingers wrap around mine, I knew that my life would never be the same again.

Despite the sleepless nights, the endless diaper changes, and the challenges of early motherhood, I wouldn't trade a single moment for anything in the world. The bond that formed between myself and my child during those early days and weeks was unlike anything I had ever experienced before - a bond forged in love, nurtured by sacrifice, and strengthened by the shared journey of motherhood.

Looking back on my experience of becoming a mother while pursuing my education, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude for the privilege of motherhood and the opportunity to continue my academic pursuits. Though the road was challenging and filled with obstacles, it was also filled with moments of joy, connection, and profound growth that have shaped me into the person and mother I am today.

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Faced with the daunting prospect of balancing the demands of motherhood with my academic pursuits, I confronted a myriad of challenges and uncertainties. Questions swirled in my mind - How would I manage my coursework alongside the responsibilities of raising a child? Would I be able to fulfill my dreams while nurturing new life within me?

Despite the daunting nature of the circumstances, I made the courageous decision to embrace motherhood while continuing my education. It was a choice fueled by a deep-seated determination to defy the odds, to prove that motherhood need not be a barrier to academic and personal growth.

In the months that followed, I embarked on a journey of self-discovery and transformation, navigating the complexities of pregnancy while maintaining a steadfast focus on my academic goals. Each day presented its own set of challenges - from managing morning sickness to attending lectures and completing assignments - yet, through it all, I remained steadfast in my resolve.

As the months passed and my due date drew near, I found solace in the unwavering support of my loved ones and the strength derived from within. With each kick and flutter of life within me, I was reminded of the immense privilege and responsibility of motherhood, and the boundless love that awaited me on the other side.

Finally, on a day etched in my memory forever, I welcomed my precious child into the world - a testament to the power of love, resilience, and unwavering determination. In that moment, as I cradled my newborn in my arms, I knew that the journey ahead would be filled with challenges and triumphs, laughter and tears, but above all, an abundance of love and joy.

Today, as I stand on the threshold of a new beginning, I carry with me the lessons learned and the strength gained from my journey through motherhood and academia. It is a journey marked by resilience, courage, and unwavering determination - qualities that continue to guide me as I navigate the complexities of life's ever-unfolding tapestry.

The period following the birth of my child marked a profound chapter in my life, defined by a delicate balance between the joys of motherhood and the pursuit of my academic aspirations. With the arrival of my newborn, I made the decision to defer my studies for a year, recognizing the importance of dedicating myself fully to the nurturing and care of my child during those formative months.

In the embrace of motherhood, each day brought with it a tapestry of emotions - from the overwhelming love and joy that filled my heart at the sight of my child's smile, to the moments of exhaustion and self-doubt that often accompanied the demands of round-the-clock care. Yet, amidst the challenges, there was also an unparalleled sense of fulfillment and purpose that permeated every aspect of my daily life.

As I navigated the sleepless nights and the endless cycle of feeding, diaper changes, and soothing cries, I found solace in the profound bond that blossomed between myself and my child. Each moment spent cradling my newborn in my arms was imbued with a sense of awe and wonder, as I marveled at the miracle of life and the boundless capacity for love that existed within me.

Despite the demands of motherhood, I remained steadfast in my commitment to my academic aspirations, carving out moments of quiet reflection and study amidst the chaos of daily life. With each passing day, I found strength in the knowledge that my journey as a student was not merely postponed, but rather temporarily redirected towards the invaluable lessons of parenthood.

As the year unfolded, I witnessed the remarkable growth and development of my child, marveling at each new milestone reached and cherishing the precious moments of laughter and discovery that filled our days. Through it all, I remained ever-conscious of the importance of nurturing not only my child's physical well-being but also their emotional and intellectual growth.

As the year drew to a close, I found myself filled with a profound sense of gratitude for the privilege of motherhood and the boundless love that permeated every moment shared with my child. And as I prepared to resume my studies and embark once more on the journey of academia, I carried with me the invaluable lessons learned during my year of deferment - lessons of resilience, patience, and the transformative power of love.

With a renewed sense of purpose and determination, I eagerly returned to university, ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities that awaited me. Despite the hurdles I had faced along the way, I found myself filled with a newfound resilience and a steely resolve to pursue my dreams with unwavering dedication.

As I resumed my studies, I was met with a sense of anticipation and excitement for the possibilities that lay ahead. Each lecture, each assignment, and each interaction with my peers served as a reminder of the journey I had undertaken and the goals I had set for myself. With each passing day, I grew more confident in my abilities and more determined to overcome any obstacles that stood in my way.

Now, in my final year of study, I find myself on the brink of achieving my academic goals - a testament to my unwavering commitment and perseverance. The countless hours spent poring over textbooks, the late nights spent studying in the library, and the moments of self-doubt and uncertainty have all led me to this pivotal moment.

As I stand on the threshold of graduation, I am filled with a sense of pride and accomplishment, knowing that I have overcome adversity and proven to myself and others that with dedication and hard work, anything is possible. And as I prepare to embark on a new chapter of my journey, I do so with a sense of optimism and excitement for the opportunities that lie ahead.

Though the road may have been long and challenging, I am grateful for the lessons learned and the growth experienced along the way. For it is through adversity that we discover our true strength, and it is through perseverance that we achieve our greatest successes. As I look towards the future, I do so with a sense of confidence and determination, knowing that the best is yet to come.

My life's journey has been a tapestry woven with threads of resilience, determination, and an unwavering spirit. Like a rollercoaster ride, it has been filled with ups and downs, twists and turns, each moment shaping me into the person I am today. As I stand at the threshold of the future, I am filled with a mixture of emotions - hope, anticipation, excitement, and perhaps a hint of apprehension.

Throughout my life, I have encountered challenges that tested my resolve and setbacks that threatened to derail my dreams. Yet, with each obstacle, I found within myself the strength to persevere, to push forward against all odds. It is in the face of adversity that I discovered the depth of my resilience, the power of my determination, and the unwavering spirit that resides within me.

Every twist and turn in my journey has taught me valuable lessons - lessons about resilience, about perseverance, about the importance of never giving up on oneself. Each setback has only served to fuel my determination, igniting a fire within me to keep striving, to keep pushing forward, no matter how difficult the path may seem.

Navigating the journey of motherhood as a single parent while pursuing my education presented me with some of the most formidable challenges I have ever faced. Balancing the demands of childcare with the rigors of academic life required a level of resilience and determination that I never knew I possessed. There were countless sleepless nights spent cradling my child in one arm while typing away at assignments with the other, the soft glow of my laptop illuminating the room as I delved into the depths of my studies.

The weight of responsibility often felt overwhelming, as I grappled with the fear of not being able to provide for my child while also striving to excel in my academic pursuits. Receiving rejection emails from internship roles I had applied for only added to the sense of doubt and uncertainty, threatening to derail my dreams before they had even taken flight. However, in the face of adversity, I refused to succumb to despair. Instead, I drew upon the wellspring of inner strength and resilience that lay dormant within me, determined to forge ahead despite the odds stacked against me.

In the midst of these challenges, I made the bold decision to start my own business, crafting mats and graffiti art while also delving into the world of fashion, pursuing my hobbies with unwavering passion and commitment. Through my creative endeavors, I found solace and inspiration, channeling my energy into projects that brought me joy and fulfillment. With each stitch sewn and each brushstroke applied, I felt a sense of empowerment and liberation, as if I were reclaiming control over my destiny.

Moreover, I began sharing my projects on platforms like GitHub, hoping that others would find value in my work and perhaps even draw inspiration from it. Despite the initial uncertainty and apprehension, I persevered, fueled by a burning desire to leave my mark on the world and make a meaningful contribution to the realm of art and technology.

Through it all, I learned invaluable lessons about resilience, determination, and the indomitable human spirit. I discovered that even in the darkest of times, there is always a flicker of hope waiting to be ignited, a spark of possibility that can illuminate the path forward. And so, armed with newfound courage and conviction, I pressed on, overcoming obstacles and triumphing over adversity with grace and fortitude.

Today, as I reflect on the challenges I have overcome and the triumphs I have achieved, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and pride. For it is through adversity that we discover our true strength, and it is through perseverance that we achieve our greatest victories. As I continue on my journey, I do so with a renewed sense of purpose and determination, knowing that no obstacle is too great to overcome and no dream is beyond reach.

And now, as I gaze into the vast unknown of the future, I am filled with hope and anticipation for the adventures that lie ahead. I am excited to see where life will take me, what new challenges I will encounter, and what opportunities will come my way. With each step forward, I embrace the uncertainty, knowing that it is in the journey itself that true growth and fulfillment are found.

Looking towards the future, I am filled with a sense of excitement and anticipation for the myriad possibilities that lie ahead. One of my foremost aspirations is to delve deeper into the world of technology and become a proficient programmer. I am particularly drawn to the realm of mobile applications development, where I envision myself creating innovative and user-friendly apps that address real-world needs and challenges.

In addition to mobile app development, I am also passionate about working with data to harness its power in creating AI generators and models for specific purposes. The prospect of delving into artificial intelligence and machine learning excites me, as I see immense potential in leveraging these technologies to drive innovation and solve complex problems across various industries.

Moreover, I aspire to work with renowned tech companies such as Oracle or Microsoft, where I can immerse myself in cutting-edge projects and collaborate with talented professionals to push the boundaries of what is possible in the realm of technology. By joining forces with industry leaders, I hope to gain invaluable experience and expertise that will further fuel my growth and development as a programmer and innovator.

Beyond my career aspirations, I also have dreams of one day starting my own business in the technology sector. I envision building a company that specializes in developing custom software solutions tailored to the unique needs of clients, as well as offering consultancy services in areas such as data analytics and artificial intelligence. Through my entrepreneurial endeavors, I aim to not only make a positive impact on the world but also create opportunities for others to thrive and succeed.

In my personal life, I am committed to ongoing growth and evolution as a person. I believe in the power of continuous learning and self-improvement, whether it be through pursuing further education, honing my skills through hands-on experience, or seeking out mentorship and guidance from seasoned professionals in my field.

Overall, I am filled with optimism and enthusiasm as I embark on this journey towards realizing my dreams and aspirations. With hard work, dedication, and a steadfast commitment to excellence, I am confident that I will be able to achieve my goals and make a meaningful impact in the world of technology and beyond.

In conclusion, my autobiographical journey has been a tapestry woven with threads of resilience, determination, and an unwavering spirit. From the tranquil beginnings in Kisumu to the bustling streets of Nairobi, and from the challenges of single parenthood to the triumphs of academic success, each chapter has contributed to the person I am today.

Reflecting on these experiences, I've learned invaluable lessons about perseverance, the importance of family, and the transformative power of love. Through the ups and downs, I've discovered strength I never knew I had and resilience that continues to carry me forward.

Looking ahead, I'm filled with optimism and excitement for the future. My aspirations to become a programmer, develop mobile applications, and work with cutting-edge technology reflect my passion for innovation and my determination to make a difference in the world.

As I stand on the precipice of new beginnings, I carry with me the lessons learned and the memories cherished. With gratitude in my heart and determination in my spirit, I embrace the journey ahead with open arms, ready to write the next chapter of my story with courage, resilience, and an unwavering belief in the power of dreams.

In the end, my journey is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the boundless potential that lies within each of us. As I bid farewell to this chapter and eagerly anticipate the adventures to come, I do so with a sense of gratitude for the past, excitement for the present, and hope for the future.