

The Life of Me: An Autobiography

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Figure 1: Collins Kipyegon

Acknowledgements

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1 **Introduction**

2 **Books are the Compass**

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7 **Introduction**

As I have been asked to furnish a complete account as I am able of my own life, and it is usual when people undertake to do so to start at an early period as possible, I will begin with my parentage. My parents were of humble means, living in the village of Kiptogoch, in the county of Bomet.

7.1 **Early Life**

I was born in 2001 on a bright sunny morning. Being the second-born son, my parents had, brought joy and ululation rendering the air. My birth took place in Rift Valley, Kenya, in the small village of Kiptogoch. Kiptogoch was a picturesque village situated on the highlands, overlooking the beautiful lush tea plantations. Situated in the heart of the Great Rift Valley in Kenya, it was a serene environment

situated along river Kipsonoi. This water was an oasis of tranquility and beauty amidst the rugged terrain. Approaching the river, you will be struck by the breathtaking vistas of the surrounding hills and valleys. The calm waters of the river, shimmering in the sunlight, create a serene and otherworldly atmosphere that transports you to another time and place.

As you explore the river shore, you will discover an array of fascinating and unique natural features. The river was also a sanctuary of wildlife, including pelicans and other water birds. Its raw unspoiled beauty was to leave you spellbound and make you feel connected to something greater than yourself. The surrounding environment was a lush forest, teeming with life, which made for a stunning backdrop to my childhood. Growing in this part of the world has shaped who I am today, and it is a story I am excited to share with you.

As I look back on my childhood, it unfolds like a canvas painted with the sweeping vistas of our landscape and the endless expanse of the sky above. Each day was a tapestry woven with the values of hard work and perseverance, virtues that were not merely taught but ingrained in the very fabric of our family life. From dawn till dusk, the toil of the fields and the care of our livestock were not just chores but rituals, binding us closer to the land and its bounty.

In the embrace of this rugged terrain, I learned the lessons of patience and resilience, watching as seeds sown with hope blossomed into fruition under the watchful gaze of the sun. Our days were governed by the cyclical rhythms of nature, each season bringing its own blessings and challenges. Yet, amidst the uncertainties, there was a steadfastness in our resolve, a belief that with hard work and determination, we could weather any storm.

It was within this crucible of life that I forged my identity, drawing strength from the land that had shaped generations before me. The hills whispered secrets of ancient wisdom, and I listened intently, eager to glean the lessons they offered. Theirs was a language of resilience and adaptation, of finding harmony amidst the ebb and flow of life.

As I reflect on those formative years, I am grateful for the legacy passed down to me by my parents and the land that nurtured us all. Their teachings continue to guide me as I navigate the pathways of adulthood, reminding me of the importance of staying grounded in the values that have shaped me. And though my journey may take me far from the green places of Bomet their spirit will forever dwell within me, a beacon of strength and wisdom lighting my way forward. Growing up as the offspring of both farmers and pastoralists, I was immersed in a world where the pulse of the earth dictated our daily rhythms, and the land itself became our greatest teacher. From the tender age when I could barely walk, I was initiated into the sacred dance of stewardship, where every chore held the weight of responsibility and the promise of sustenance.

In the fields, under the blistering sun or the gentle patter of rain, I learned the art of cultivation from my parents' weathered hands. Together, we toiled the soil, planting seeds with hopeful anticipation and nurturing the tender shoots with unwavering care. Each furrow plowed, each weed pulled, was not just a task but a pledge to honor the earth's generosity and safeguard its fertility for generations to come.

Similarly, on the rugged hillsides where our livestock grazed, I discovered the symbiotic relationship between man and animal. As we tended to our herds, guiding them to greener pastures and sheltering them from the harsh elements, I realized the profound interconnections of all living beings. Our flocks were not merely a source of livelihood but cherished companions in our journey, their well-being intricately linked to our own.

Indeed, the land was not just a provider of sustenance but a living, breathing entity that demanded reverence and reciprocity. Its bounties were a testament to its resilience, yet its fragility reminded us of the delicate balance we must maintain. From the delicate bloom of a flower to the sturdy oak reaching for the sky, each manifestation of life held a lesson to be learned and a story to be told.

Through the teachings of my parents and the tutelage of the land itself, I came to understand that stewardship was not just a duty but a privilege—a sacred trust passed down through the ages. And as I carry forth the mantle of responsibility into the future, I do so with humility and gratitude, knowing that the lessons learned in the fields and on the hillsides will guide me on the path of stewardship for years to come.



Figure 2: First family

7.2 Family

My late grandmother, whom I miss so much today, was a kind and nurturing person who made me feel loved and cared for. Despite her wrinkled face, she always had a warm smile and a twinkle in her eye that made me feel special. A visit to her at the village, as my siblings and I often did, brought joy to her. She would welcome us with hugs (*kongoi we batiemisiek*). With a walking stick in one hand and a cup of tea in the other, she hobbled around a tiny mud hut with chickens running around her feet. Her home was a rustic wonderland, complete with thatched roofs, mud walls, and a donkey tied up outside. This was the life of a purely made Kalenjin woman. Her garden was a sight to behold. Rows upon rows of maize, beans, and other crops stretched as far as the eye could see.

My grandfather was a pillar of strength and wisdom in our family. He was a farmer, a businessman, and a hunter for game meat. He was a man of few words, but his actions spoke volumes. His love for the land was evident in all aspects of his life. He tended to his crops and livestock with care and precision, and his hard work on the farm always paid off in a bountiful harvest. As I reflect on my life growing up in this village, my grandfather had a profound impact on my upbringing. His bedtime stories brought awe to me; the expeditions he undertook as a Kalenjin Moran made me want to emulate him.

My father, Stephen Koskei, with his big, comforting presence, embodies the essence of care and love. His gentle strength is a source of constant support and reassurance, making everyone around him feel safe and cherished. Despite his imposing physique, it is his warmth and kindness that truly define him, reflecting a heart that is always open and a spirit that is endlessly giving. His ability to blend firmness with tenderness is a testament to his exceptional character, making him not just a father, but a pillar of love and stability in our lives.

My mother, Zddy Koskei, was slender and straight as an arrow, with head well set on sloping shoulders, brown, wavy hair, brown skin and spotless, and with wide apart eyes, flecked with amber. Her family had been Kalenjin from the clan of Narachek with the bird being their clan animal. Mother's sensitivity to beauty found some of its expression in flowers. We had no money to buy them from the nearest shopping center, and she had no time to grow them, but the woods of the Forest and community fields were our garden. I can never remember sitting at a table not brightened with blossoms; from the summer to the rainy seasons, we had an abundance.

Although it was a village deep in the rifts, we had some bits of civilization including education in our home. The late grandfather himself made our furniture. He had cut and polished the slab of a table in our dining room. Only in the spare room stood a piece bought at a store – a varnished rocking chair. The things you made yourself were not considered quite good enough for guests. In between tramping the woods and talking it helped frame the roof of the house. The scar on my grandfather's knee was his badge of him being crowned a Moran. It was during the harvesting season when rogue elephants from the forest paid a visit to the community land devouring every single crop on their paths. That Saturday night was eerie like no other night when the thrilling experience was yet to unbound before my grandfather's eyes. "Get me the flashlight quick, the elephants are breaking the barbed wires" was my grandfather's words on that terrific night.

Christmases were on the poverty line. If any of us needed a coat or a pair of shoes this constituted our presents. I was the first child, after me others kept coming until we were two. A pine beside the door was our Christmas tree. Mother liked us to use natural things and we had to rely upon ingenuity rather than the village stores, so we decorated it with wild orchids and other wild flowers. Our most valuable gift was that of imagination.

We had little time for recreation. School was three miles away and we had to walk back and forth twice a day as well as perform household duties. The boys milked the cows, tended the chickens, and took care of Simba, the old toothless brown dog. The girls helped put the younger children to bed, mended clothes, set the table, cleaned the vegetables and washed the dishes. We accepted all this with no sense of deprivation or aggrievement, being, if anything, proud of sharing responsibility.

And we made the most of our vacations. There were so many of us that we did not have to depend upon outsiders, and Sunday afternoons we used to put on plays in the compact disk. Ordinarily we were shy about displaying emotions. Play- acting was however something else. Here we could find an outlet for talent and win admiration instead of lifted eyebrows. I rather fancied myself as an actor, and often mimicked some of the local characters, to the apparent pleasure of my limited audience of family and neighbors.

All outdoors was our playground, but I was not conscious at the time of my love for the village. Things in childhood change perspective. What was taken for granted then assumes great significance in later life. I knew how to read weather patterns like if there is no dew in the morning that day it would have to drizzle, and with a feeling of superiority I showed these mysteries to town children. Not until pavements where my parts did, I realize how much a part of me the country was, and how I missed it.

We were all, brothers and sisters alike, healthy and strong, vigorous and active; our appetites were limited only through necessity. We played the same games together and shared the same sports– rope skipping, swimming in the village river, hunting and football. Nevertheless, except that we all had black hair, we were sharply distinct physically. Boys were burly and brawny; the girls were small and feminine. Being born and raised in this small village, life was tough but we made the best out of it. My family were cattle herders, and we spent most of our childhood days out in the fields. On a certain occasion we were out herding the cattle in the long maize fields that had been harvested, my friends and I got thirsty. We were tempted to break into a nearby hut to get some water. We didn't think it was a big deal, and we assumed no one would notice. So, we went ahead and broke into the hut. However, our actions had consequences that we never anticipated. Inside the hut, there was a radio, which we accidentally broke while trying to get water. When the owner of the house returned and found out what had happened, he was furious and reported the incident to our parents. Being born in a Kalenjin family it is a norm for mistakes not going unpunished. Beatings and deprivement of food were a harsh lesson to learn, but me and my younger brother knew we deserved it.

My brother was an ardent sportsman. They could use their fists and were as good as their grandfather. For that matter we all knew how to shoot; any normal person could manage a bow and arrow. Our best times were when friends of his came to spend the night, talking late, starting early the next morning for the heavy woods full of rabbits, quail and mountain goats. Their expedition would end eight in the morning.

Little too little responsibility – if any – was assumed by grandfather for the specifics of everyday chores. I can picture him reading poetry or making jokes when he was short on supplies. Mother, however, was constantly busy with cooking, sewing, and other tasks. He must have been struggling with a child who was so passionate and brave, and I continue to be amazed at her endurance. We were all buddies, but not in the modern sense of the world. We were always addressed in our full names, which preserved a sense



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of dignity and formality. Young people were seen but not heard back then until they were requested to speak. However, as soon as our mother deemed us old enough to have ideas or opinions, we were allowed complete freedom to voice them, regardless of how young we were. He firmly believed in gender equality and despised the pattern of imitation and slavery.

Sunday was when we attended Sunday school. During Christmas and Easter, is when you receive oranges and candy called lollipops. Without the ballot box present, father never discussed religion. In actuality, he adopted socialism because he thought it was Christian philosophy put into practice, and in my opinion, it still adheres to values that are the closest to what Christianity was intended to do. He never stopped to teach us that our responsibility was to improve the lives of other people now, rather than worrying about what might happen to us once we pass away. One of his maxims and his parting remarks to each of his sons and daughters who had become mature enough to support themselves was, ‘you have no right to material comforts without giving back to society the benefit of your honest experience.

8 Books are the compass

Growing up, I was always captivated by the natural beauty that surrounded me, and I would often spend hours during my free time exploring the lush tea plantations, streams, and fields that lay beyond our footsteps. But it wasn’t until I began meditating in the afternoons that I truly began to appreciate the incredible majesty of my surroundings.

Every weekend and school holiday, I will find a quiet spot in our backyard and settle into a comfortable position, letting my thoughts drift away. And as I closed my eyes and let the stillness of the world around me seep into my consciousness, I couldn’t help but feel a sense of awe and wonder. Around me, the air was filled with the sounds of birdsong and the rustling of leaves as the gentle breeze stirred through the trees. The ground beneath me was cool and soft, the grass and wildflowers swaying gently in the breeze. And all around me the untouched beauty of nature stretched out in every direction, a vast and unspoiled world just waiting to be explored.

Years have passed since those afternoon meditations in our backyard, but the memories of those peaceful afternoons have stayed with me, reminding me always of the incredible beauty of the natural world and the sense of wonder and awe that it can inspire in us all. And as I look into the world today, I know there is still so much to be discovered and explored- and that the magic of nature is waiting to be experienced, if only we take the time to stop and appreciate it.

Naskia sauti, naskia sauti
Sauti ya mama, sauti ya mama
Sasa ni saa sita, sasa ni saa sita
Kwaheri mwalimu, goodbye teacher
Tomorrow we shall meet..

The tune was so infectious that it would stay in my head for hours after we had finished singing. I remember feeling so happy and carefree as I sang the song with my friends. My kindergarten years were some of the best times of my life. As far as I can recall, books and education have always been part of me. Even at the tender age of three, I was already fascinated by the world of learning. My older sister Faith schooled at Kiptogoch Primary School. I would often watch them leave for school in the mornings. At one time I decided to follow them, sneaking out of the house dressed shaggy and unnoticed by my parents.

“Where do you think you are going!” Faith uttered with anger boiling down her face ‘School’ I replied with mere shyness. My brothers on the other hand were laughing all. That passion for education never waned in me. I joined Kiptogoch Primary School (Kindergarten school) at a tender age. My kindergarten teacher Ambrose was a warm and caring person in our classroom, always greeting us with a smile and making us feel welcome. Just one year at the kindergarten I transferred to the main Primary School. My daily journey to school was a gruesome and exhausting ordeal that left me feeling drained and disheartened before I even arrived in the classroom. Me and my neighbor friend Ronaldo had to take the three kilometer walk through a treacherous trek that traversed rugged terrains, winding paths, and treacherous hillsides.

Growing up, education was always a top priority in my family. My parents themselves instilled a love of learning in me and my sibling from a young age. They believed that education was the key to a successful

future, and they wanted nothing but the best for us. After finishing Kindergarten, The transition to Kiptogoch Primary School, a far more established school in the same village in terms of resources and performance. All my sister, brother and I made that journey to Kiptogoch to and from.

At Kiptogoch Primary School, nestled among the undulating contours of our community's hills, my educational journey commenced. For eight trans-formative years, I embarked on a daily pilgrimage along dusty paths to this modest institution, where my eager footsteps echoed the aspirations of generations before me. Despite the hurdles posed by our rural setting, each day dawned with renewed enthusiasm as I eagerly anticipated the wealth of knowledge awaiting me within its humble walls.

Within the classrooms of Kiptogoch Primary School, I found not just a place of learning but a sanctuary where dreams took root and blossomed. Guided by dedicated teachers who ignited the flame of curiosity within me, I embarked on a voyage of discovery that stretched far beyond the confines of textbooks. From the pages of history to the wonders of science, each lesson sparked new insights and fueled my thirst for knowledge.

Outside the classroom, amidst the vibrant pulse of school life, I found a community of peers who shared in my quest for learning and growth. Together, we laughed and played, studied and explored, weaving the threads of friendship that would endure long after our time at Kiptogoch Primary School had passed.

Yet, our educational journey was not without its challenges. The rural setting presented its own set of obstacles, from the scarcity of resources to the trials of navigating unpaved roads and unpredictable weather. But in the face of adversity, we forged ahead with resilience and determination, fueled by the belief that education was the key to unlocking a brighter future.

As I reflect on those formative years at Kiptogoch Primary School, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunities it afforded me and the foundation it laid for my academic pursuits. It was here, amidst the rolling hills of our community, that I learned the true value of education—not just as a means to achieve personal success, but as a tool to uplift entire communities and transform lives.

Though my journey has since taken me far from the dusty paths of Kiptogoch Primary School, its lessons remain etched in my heart, guiding me as I continue to pursue knowledge and strive for excellence. And as I look to the future, I do so with deep appreciation for the humble beginnings that shaped the trajectory of my educational journey. In the vibrant atmosphere of Kiptogoch Primary School, amidst the laughter of classmates and under the watchful guidance of dedicated teachers, I found not only a sense of belonging but also a clear sense of purpose. The sun-drenched playgrounds became my sanctuary, where the boundaries of play blurred with the earnest pursuit of athletic excellence.

It was here, on those hallowed grounds, that I discovered my deep-rooted passion for sports. From the exhilaration of kicking a ball across the field to the adrenaline rush of racing down the track, every moment spent in the throes of athletic competition was a testament to the boundless joy that sports brought into my life.

At first, the transition was tough. We had to leave behind our usual kindergarten friends who were in lower grades than us and our old way of life. But as time went on, we began to settle in and appreciate the new opportunities that this move had brought us. The new school was larger and more diverse than the old one (Kindergarten). One of the biggest changes for me was the shift from a small, close - knit community to a more urban environment. The pace of life was faster, and there were more opportunities for extracurricular activities and clubs.

Unlike my old Kindergarten school, teachers and students were typically natural rivals, and the one I had in seventh grade was particularly skilled at inciting conflict. She appeared to despise her work and the children she was responsible for just as much as we did. She used sarcasm as both a weapon and a defense. Midway through July, I missed my bus to go to school that day. I raced, pulling and tugging at my first pair of kid gloves, fully aware that being late was a dreadful crime. However, the bell had already rung three minutes before I entered the room, flushed and gasping for air.

The teacher had already begun the class. She looked up at the interruption. "Well, well, Collins I'm so glad you could join us! We were just waiting for the master of ceremony to arrive. Everyone else, hold your applause until our latecomer takes his seat". Giggles rippled around me as I went and took my seat. He continued even after I sat down. I made an effort to shift my focus, not paying attention, and grinned along with others. I put up with it for as long as I could before pulling out my books, grammar, spelling and math, strapped them up, rose, and left.

Mother was shocked when I barged in. "I will never go back to that school again!" I exclaimed dramatically. "I have finished forever! I'll work, I'll starve! But back to that school and teacher I will never go" My older sister arrived home in the evening, they were as horrified as mother. My mother sent me for two weeks to a scouting camp at my aunt's place to hear lectures from prominent speakers, listen to music and general preexposure. This was intended to arouse my interest in learning and discourage any notion of finding employment. My instinct had been misinterpreted. I wasn't rebelling against education in general, only that specific institution and teacher. Well, I never parted ways with that same school. Summer time was already here and I had to recover the lost tracks of my absenteeism. The eighth grade was first approaching and I had to buckle up for the upcoming Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.

School holidays were the most delightful time of year. It was a time for my sister, brother, Ronaldo and me to forget about homework and examinations and simply have fun. We made a pact not to be idle during the holidays and packed our days with various activities. Playing games was one of our favorite pastimes. We were big fans of board games, card games, and video games. We would play for hours, laughing and taunting each other as we struggled for victory. Football was our favorite game, and we would play it for days on end, simply stopping to eat and sleep. We also had a lot of fun fishing. We used to frequently spend our afternoons sitting on the banks of the river near where we lived, casting our lines, and hoping to catch something. We didn't catch anything, but we enjoyed the tranquility of being outside, far from the activity and commotion of the city.

Adventure quests played a significant role in our holidays. From treasure hunts to espionage missions, we would invent all kinds of assignments. As we investigated the area, we would develop maps, make hints, and put on disguises. We had a lot of fun playing secret agents, figuring out mysteries, and finding lost treasures. Another one of our passions was music. We enjoyed listening to all genres of music, including rock, pop, and classical. We used to create mixtapes of our favorite songs and dance around the living room while listening to them repeatedly. We would occasionally even write our own songs and sing them for our parents, who would always congratulate us and point out our brilliance.

Another significant aspect of our holidays was spending time with friends and family. To see our grandparents, who lived in the country, we would do road excursions. We would play in their garden for hours, gather fruit from their orchard, and assist them with household duties. We enjoyed talking to them and hearing their stories. We also cherished going to see our pals, who resided in various districts of the city. Together, we enjoyed playing soccer in the park, going on bike trips, and having picnics. We enjoyed meeting new people and traveling to new locations, and we always felt joyful and worn out when we got home.

During the holidays, we also enjoyed baking, painting, reading, and watching movies from our neighbor. From cakes to cookies, we would prepare all kinds of sweets and top them with frosting and sprinkles. We would create paintings of our travels, our pals, and our favored figures. We would act out the stories we had read after reading novels about fantasy, adventure, and mystery. As we watched films about superheroes, wizards, and aliens, we would discuss which character was the coolest. A turning point for me came when I started seventh grade. Prior to that, I had been more interested in playing and interacting with people than studying. That year, though, something changed, and my attention soon turned to academics.

It surprised both my parents and my sisters because it wasn't a conscious choice; rather, it was a natural tendency. They were accustomed to seeing me spend the majority of my free time watching movies, playing video games, or hanging out with friends, but now I was spending more time reading and doing homework.

After school, my classmates Ronaldo, Philip, Amos and I would frequently set out for the neighborhood library. We were grateful for the break from the hectic and demanding academic schedule that this bibliophile paradise offered, and we cherished the chance to browse and examine books that aroused our intellectual curiosity.

Ronaldo frequently searched the library's large collection for the most recent books on robots and artificial intelligence because of his passion for science and technology. On the other side, Amos, who loved history, would spend countless hours reading old books and novels that related stories from earlier times. For my part, the world of fantasy and adventure has always attracted me. I was drawn to books that told tales and far-off realms because of my literary preferences. My friends were always excited to join me on these literary adventures, and the library, with its endless possibilities, offered an idyllic and peaceful area for me to immerse myself in the rich images and tales of the books that enthralled me. As the



Figure 3: At So

school year came to an end, I found myself getting ready for my eighth-grade exams. I was filled with anxiety and eagerness since I knew that my test results would have a significant impact on how my academic career developed in the future. I struggled with a variety of feelings leading up to exam day, including enthusiasm, worry, and a tinge of fear as also it was also that year to undergo rite of passage of circumcision. I was eager to test my knowledge and see how I would do, but I was also quite conscious of the seriousness of the situation and the potential consequences of my performance for my academic future.

I went to the testing facility on the day of the exams with a sense of purpose and commitment. I took a seat at my desk, inhaled deeply, and started gradually and meticulously working through the questions. Knowing that I had studied gave me a rising sense of confidence and self-assurance as the exam went on.

Fortunately, my thirst for knowledge did not come to an end when I was at school. I was passionate about statistics and science. This passion helped me gain a profound knowledge of these areas, and I was admitted to the university of my dreams. Today, I am a student at a Defan Kimathi University of Technology and I feel very happy about it.

9 Stepping into the unknown

I asked my father, "Father, how much longer do I have before I have to go for the inaugural day at Kiromwok High School? Could you tell me the reason for your urgency? While I was checking my bag and making sure I had everything I needed for the day, my mother was rushing around the house. Little do I know, my father did want me to join Kiromwok High School, he want me to follow my elder sister who Tumoiyot Secondary School. My father responded in a harsh voice, emphasizing the value of timeliness. "Kipyegon you must recognize the significance of punctuality. Being punctual demonstrates discipline, respect, and responsibility. It shows that you appreciate learning and are dedicated to being a model student. But what if I am only a few minutes late, Dad ? Will it really make that much difference? I pushed back after becoming increasingly uneasy.

I nodded in agreement, comprehending the gravity of his remarks, but I was still a little worried about running late. "Mother, that's OK. I vow that I will leave right away to avoid any delays, as I am keen to prove my responsibility and punctuality. Going away to school was epochal in my life. The self-contained family group was suddenly multiplied to five hundred strangers, all living and studying under one roof. I had the impression that I had been transported to a completely different universe when I entered Kiromwok High School. The atmosphere, which was semi-arid, was sweltering, and the sun pounded relentlessly on my skin. I was having a hard time adjusting to the dry heat as I could feel my sweat glands working overtime.

The location of the school was in a huge, desolate area that went on forever. The sporadic prickly acacia trees and the hardy, drought-resistant bushes were the only life that could be found in this harsh environment. It seemed as though Mother Nature deliberately put a school in the middle of a desert to trick us. I was experiencing homesickness throughout my first week, which just made matters worse. I yearned for my loved ones, my friends, and the conveniences of home. I longed for the comfort of my air-conditioned room and warm bed. Instead, I was tossing and turning in the stifling heat while attempting to sleep amidst the strange noises of crickets and other nocturnal animals.

I made an effort to keep a pleasant attitude despite feeling homesick and the difficult surroundings. I made a joke in my head, thinking that at least I was getting a free sauna and detox from all the perspiration. And when you can get your exercise just by walking to and from classes in this oppressive heat, who needs a fancy gym?

In the vast realm of my memories, one period that shaped me profoundly was my time in Form One. As the alarm clock pierced through the silence each morning, I found myself facing the daunting challenge of waking up and confronting a day filled with academic hurdles, punishments, and distance to school. Every morning I struggled with the need to cling to the warmth of my covers as the fight against inertia began. The alarm clock, which was once a sign of productivity, has changed into a constant reminder of my obligations. No matter how early I went to bed, it seemed like mornings were always a mammoth struggle.

The burden of eleven subjects weighed heavily on my youthful shoulders as I began my academic career. Every subject, from humanities to sciences to literature, required its fair amount of focus and dedication. There was an overwhelming amount of stuff to learn, leaving little time for personal or leisure activities. I was haunted by the harshness of my school's punishment procedure all through Form One. Strict penalties, detentions, and additional work were meted out for being late. Exam failure meant having to deal with my teachers' displeasure and the silent criticism of my peers. Although these were difficult to endure, they helped me to understand the value of time, responsibility, and discipline.

If the challenges of waking up early, walking distance of about two kilometers and enduring academic pressures were not enough, the culinary offerings at the school left much to be desired. The unappetizing meals that greeted us each day were a constant reminder of the sacrifices we made for our education. While the food lacked flavor and variety, it taught me resilience and the ability to adapt to unfavorable circumstances. I learned to draw on inner reserves of strength as the year went on. I discovered how to stay motivated even on the bleakest mornings. I improved my study habits, learned how to manage my time, and asked for assistance when I needed it. I noticed advancements in both my academic achievement and personal development as the tide slowly started to shift.

My high school experience was marred by financial difficulties, which had a negative impact on my objectives. I was kicked out numerous times for failing to pay fees, and my family was suffering from hardship. These times of hopelessness tried my willpower and made me wonder if I would ever be able to reach my objectives. Form Two was a time of relentless difficulties that resulted in a traumatic event for every member of the class. Being caned every day for a full week was the extreme punishment for a collective error. The level of my endurance and resilience was put to the test as the physical and emotional suffering appeared insurmountable.

Rather than succumbing to despair, these difficult experiences ignited a fierce determination within me. I refused to let my circumstances define my future. With unwavering resolve, I sought out opportunities for financial assistance. I remembered my parents trying their best to obtain school fees. These endeavors allowed me to return to school and pursue my education with renewed vigor.

I overcame various challenges that may have prevented me from finishing my schooling, and I eventually made it to Form Four. This accomplishment served as proof of my tenacity and unwavering will. I embraced my studies with a fresh feeling of purpose, taking advantage of every chance to do well in class. As I stepped into Form Four, the gravity of the KCSE examinations settled upon me like a heavy cloak. The realization that my future educational prospects hinged upon my performance filled me with both excitement and apprehension. It was a transformative moment that compelled me to channel all my energy and focus into the upcoming challenge. Success required a methodical commitment to preparation. I committed numerous hours to each subject, immersing myself in a strict study schedule. The extensive course materials, lengthy revision sessions, and multiple practice exams stretched my brain's limitations. I persisted however, knowing that every effort would be necessary to help me reach my objectives.

I learned the importance of striking a careful balance between academic goals and personal well-being as the pressure increased. I was elected president of the school, that really helped me noticed that my future really pride if I work harder. I participated in extracurricular activities, exercise, and hobbies to refresh my mind and spirit because I understood the importance of taking regular breaks and practicing self-care. These little periods of rest gave me the clarity and renewed focus I needed to tackle my studies.

There was a definite sense of uncertainty as Covid-19's shadow loomed huge. I realized that the world was changing as word of the virus spread and that my future plans were now in doubt. Here, we could farm and sustain ourselves during the uncertain times ahead. It was a difficult decision, but one that would shape the rest of our lives. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were confined to our community and faced hitherto unheard-of difficulties. My brother Philip and I found comfort in a straightforward yet thrilling hobby as the days evolved into weeks and the weeks into months: local football. We would look back on those six months as a period of friendship, adventure, and mischievous encounters. This affected me a lot since it was that year when I joined form four, so I was focusing on the national exams. When COVID-19 cases reduced we went back to school to continue with the preparation towards final exams.

The KCSE exams, the pinnacle of years of labor, loomed nearer with each day that went by. I went into the exams with a mix of trembling anticipation and unwavering resolve. I gave every response I gave in the test room my all, using the information and abilities I had worked so hard to develop throughout my high school years. As the final days of high school ended, my mind buzzed with excitement for the next chapter of my life. It was during this time that I resolved to mark the end of my academic journey in a distinct and powerful way.

We joyfully started our farming responsibilities each morning, taking care of the crops that kept our community alive. We were energized by the earth's rhythmic texture under our hands and its invigorating aroma, which laid the groundwork for the day's activities. We had no idea that the nights would bring up a completely new kind of thrill.

Philip and I would travel to a clearing in the middle of Mau Forest as the sun started to set. Every time we went there, a bunch of village boys were playing a competitive game of football. After a day of tending to their parents' sheep, goats, and calves, these lads, who were around the same age as us, would congregate. Their responsibility to care after the animals frequently resulted in entertaining diversions, allowing the livestock to stray into adjacent fields. The naughty antics of the animals added a new level of excitement to the football game's joyful mayhem. We would see the boys' struggle as they balanced their love of football with the duty of finding lost animals. The eagerness for their reappearance as they return home in the evening brought a sense of mischief and curiosity. We couldn't help but wonder what kind of punishments waited for their unintentional transgressions

One evening, as the golden rays of the setting sun bathed the clearing, Philip and I found ourselves engrossed in a conversation while taking a breather from the game. Sweat trickled down our foreheads as we exchanged stories and dreams amidst the sounds of laughter and cheers. "You know, Philip" I began, catching my breath, "these evenings of football have brought us closer to the village boys and their way of life. It's remarkable how they seamlessly navigate between their responsibilities and their passion for the game." Alex nodded, a mischievous glint in his eye. "And the consequences they face when the animals wreak havoc on the fields! Can you imagine the lectures they'll receive from their parents?" We burst into laughter, relishing in the simplicity of our conversation and the shared experience that bridged the gap between our lives and those of the village boys. Our relationship with the village guys grew stronger as the months passed. Together, we took part in neighborhood competitions, representing our community and creating lifelong memories on the football field. Each game brought us closer together as we cheered for wins and took lessons from losses while hearing the roar of the crowd in our ears.

A fresh chapter awaited my brother Philip and me as the COVID-19 pandemic's hold on our life started to loosen. The news of the school's reopening caused enthusiasm and expectation to flood the air. But once he entered the eighth grade, Philip had to say goodbye to our community and start a new adventure. The days before Philip's departure were fraught with conflicting feelings. I couldn't help but be happy for him and the prospects that were ahead, but I also had a small pang of sadness. The notion of him being far away made the impending separation bittersweet because we had shared innumerable moments, adventures, and laughs.

As I continue along my journey, I carry with me the cherished memories of my time at Kiptogoch Primary School, forever grateful for the role that sports played in shaping the person I have become. And as I

face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, I do so with the same enthusiasm and passion that fueled my love for sports in those sunlit playgrounds, confident in the knowledge that the lessons learned on the field will continue to propel me towards success in all aspects of my life. Engaging in diverse extracurricular activities in Kiromwok High School served as a crucible for my personal development, transcending mere academic pursuits. Participation in debates, drama productions, and club activities provided fertile ground for honing essential life skills beyond the confines of textbooks and classrooms.

In the realm of debates, I learned the art of articulating my thoughts persuasively while respectfully engaging with differing viewpoints. These experiences not only sharpened my communication skills but also instilled in me the value of critical thinking and open-mindedness. Through lively discourse and rigorous argumentation, I discovered the power of effective communication in shaping opinions and influencing change.

Likewise, involvement in drama productions allowed me to explore the depths of human emotion and expression. Stepping into different roles challenged me to empathize with diverse perspectives and inhabit characters vastly different from myself. This immersive experience fostered empathy, creativity, and self-awareness, enriching my understanding of the human experience and deepening my appreciation for the performing arts.

The ethos of service and community engagement at Kiromwok High School resonated deeply with me, igniting a passion for making a tangible impact in the world around me. Through various service-oriented initiatives, I not only contributed to the well-being of others but also cultivated essential values such as empathy, compassion, and social responsibility.

Participating in charity events, whether it was organizing fundraisers or volunteering at local shelters, allowed me to witness firsthand the transformative power of collective action in alleviating hardship and spreading joy. These experiences instilled in me a profound sense of empathy, compelling me to step outside of my own concerns and actively seek ways to uplift those in need.

Moreover, engagement in environmental conservation projects underscored the interconnectedness of humanity and nature, highlighting the importance of stewardship and sustainability. Whether it was participating in tree planting drives, beach cleanups, or awareness campaigns, I learned to appreciate the delicate balance of ecosystems and the urgency of protecting our planet for future generations.

Beyond the tangible outcomes of our service efforts, these endeavors imbued me with a sense of purpose beyond myself. By contributing to the welfare of others and the preservation of our environment, I discovered a deeper fulfillment and a profound sense of meaning in my actions. Each act of service became a testament to the power of compassion and the ripple effect of kindness in creating positive change.

As I reflect on my time at Kiromwok High School, I am grateful for the opportunities to engage in service and community outreach that have shaped me into a more compassionate and socially conscious individual. The lessons learned and the values instilled during these experiences will continue to guide me as I strive to make a meaningful difference in the world, one act of kindness at a time.

My journey at Kiromwok High School has been nothing short of transformative, leaving an indelible mark on my character and shaping my outlook on life. As I pause to reflect on the countless experiences that have molded me into the person I am today, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the rich tapestry of lessons learned, friendships forged, and memories created during my time at Kiromwok.

The lessons of perseverance and resilience that I imbibed at Kiromwok have become guiding principles in my life, empowering me to navigate through adversities with unwavering determination and unwavering strength. Through the challenges I faced, whether academic, personal, or societal, I learned to confront obstacles head-on, emerging stronger and more resilient with each trial.

Equally significant are the friendships I cultivated at Kiromwok bonds forged through shared laughter, tears, and triumphs. The camaraderie and support of my classmates and teachers provided a nurturing environment where I felt empowered to pursue my dreams and aspirations. These cherished connections serve as a constant source of encouragement and inspiration, reminding me of the importance of fostering meaningful relationships and supporting one another through life's journey.

Moreover, the memories created at Kiromwok will forever hold a special place in my heart, serving as a poignant reminder of the transformative power of education and the profound impact of a supportive community. From moments of academic achievement to times of celebration and camaraderie, each

memory serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of Kiromwok High School in shaping the lives of its students.

As I embark on the next chapter of my journey, I carry forward the invaluable lessons of perseverance, resilience, and service instilled in me during my time at Kiromwok. Armed with fond memories and a sense of purpose, I stand ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, confident in my ability to make a positive impact in the world guided by the principles of integrity, compassion, and lifelong learning.

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10 Embracing Challenges and Cultural Immersion in the University Life

Embracing Challenges and cultural Immersion in the University life. As the first rays of sunlight pierced through the curtains, I found myself standing at the threshold of a new chapter in my life - my first day at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology. Excitement and nervousness danced within me, intertwining like delicate threads. As I made my way downstairs, I found my parents in the kitchen, sipping morning tea. The aroma of freshly brewed beans filled the air, mingling with anticipation.

My father :Good morning, my child. Today is a momentous day for you. Are you prepared for this new journey?

Me: Good morning, father, Indeed, today marks a significant milestone in my life. I have prepared myself mentally and emotionally for the challenges and opportunities that await me at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology.

Mother: That's commendable, my child. Remember, university life is a crucible that molds character and fosters intellectual growth. It will demand perseverance, diligence, and unwavering focus.

The journey to Nyeri played out like a tale just asking to be recounted. With each mile that was traveled, lush green hills rolled in the distance. The trip took on more meaning than just a physical one; it represented the transforming road I was taking that would bring me wisdom, development, and new perspectives.

My cousin and I had heartfelt chats throughout our travels. His knowledge and continuous encouragement were pillars of strength that strengthened my resolve to succeed. We talked about our hometown, our loved ones, and the aspirations that had propelled us to this point. His words of inspiration rang in my ears, emphasizing the value of perseverance and diligence.

An important moment in my life occurred when I got to Dedan Kimathi University to pursue my Bachelor's degree in Actuarial Science . I felt a mixture of exhilaration and uncertainty as I stepped upon the university grounds. The feeling of loneliness surrounded me as I became accustomed to my new surroundings. I felt like a little fish in a big ocean due to the absence of familiar faces and the magnitude of the campus. But I soon understood that this was a chance for me to venture outside of my comfort zone, value independence, and create new relationships. With anticipation and excitement filling the air, we approached the university campus, ready to settle into the internal school hostels. However, to our dismay, we discovered that all the rooms had been fully occupied. Our initial enthusiasm quickly faded, replaced by a sense of apprehension and uncertainty.

My brother and I made the decision to look into other choices because we were determined not to let this setback derail our ambitions. He discovered that there was a location named Nyeri View outside the campus that provided housing for students. However, getting to this secluded place required traversing a valley-like landscape and stepping into uncharted territory.

We started out on our trip to the Nyeri View and I couldn't help but feel uneasy. My initial distaste for the location was heightened by the harsh environment and the area's remoteness. I had imagined myself engaged in a bustling community, surrounded by other students, and having an active campus experience. I felt disoriented and uneasy as I adjusted to the realities of a remote and uncharted area.

The independence that university life offered was both thrilling and intimidating. I found myself suddenly free to design my own schedule, pick my own classes, and make choices that might affect my future. With this newly discovered independence, I made my way through the maze of options, savoring the chance to pursue my interests and forge my own path. It was a rude revelation to leave the security of my Christian upbringing behind and enter the newfound freedom of school life. The initial exhilaration quickly subsided as I became comfortable in Anjis Hostel, giving way to a series of unexpected events that questioned my morals and put my religion to the test. I found myself at a crossroads between the values my Christian family had taught in me and the demands of the world due to the temptations of beer, bhang, late-night clubbing, and an apparently carefree existence.

Raised in a household where faith played a central role, I had always been guided by the teachings of Scripture. As I found myself exposed to a world that seemed to celebrate the very behaviors I had been taught to avoid, I couldn't help but reflect on the words of 1st Corinthians 6:12: "Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be mastered by anything." The scripture echoed in my mind, a constant reminder of the choices I had to make and the consequences they carried. It was a call to discernment, to find a balance between embracing the freedom that college life offered and remaining steadfast in my commitment to my beliefs.

The temptations increased daily as friends and acquaintances tried to lure me into their world of excess. There was a lot of pressure to blend in and be accepted. But deep down, I understood that giving in to these pressures would undermine my faith and divert me from the course I had chosen.

I found strength in my Christian upbringing and found comfort in prayer and thought. I sought the advice of mentors, who reaffirmed for me that the path to true freedom did not lie in giving in to worldly luxuries but rather in upholding my morals and the calling I sensed in my heart. They pushed me to seek out like-minded people who could offer support and accountability, as well as to form friendships based on shared principles.

The academic setting introduced a distinctive language environment. Instead of "subjects" or "courses," they were now referred to as "units." This surprising change in nomenclature revealed the rigorous academic work and area-specific focus that lay ahead of me. Each course stoked my desire for intellectual expansion by presenting me with a fresh area of information to explore.

University life presented a profound transition into adulthood. Suddenly, I was responsible for managing my finances, balancing academic and personal commitments, and making choices that would shape my future. The challenges and responsibilities that came with this newfound independence provided valuable lessons in maturity, resilience, and self-discipline.

As the initial loneliness started to fade, I discovered that I was surrounded by a wide range of people who were traveling in a similar direction. As we managed the challenges of university life together, bonds naturally developed. These relationships developed into pillars of strength, enhancing my experiences and serving as a constant reminder that learning is best accomplished in community.

Living in Venus alongside my friend Amos, who was pursuing the Engineering course , brought with it a unique set of experiences and challenges. One of the most notable aspects of my daily routine was the need to commute to and from Dedan Kimathi University. The journeys themselves were a mix of discomfort and amusement as we navigated through the bustling streets of the Nyeri View, bouncing along muddy pothole-ridden roads with a determination to get to our desired locations.

One of the aspects that fascinated me the most during these navigation route to school was the conversations that unfolded between the residents. They spoke in the melodious tones of the Kikuyu language, a language that was still a mystery to me at the time. The air inside the Nyeri View would be enchanted with the rhythmic cadence of their conversations, creating a captivating soundscape that added to the overall enigma of my experience.

My acquaintance with Nyeri County and knowledge of the cultural mysteries that surrounded me deepened as the weeks transitioned into months. The navigation routes came to represent tenacity and flexibility. I discovered moments of connection with my fellow students while walking in those cramped streets, having little discussions and smiling at each other.

My ears gradually grew accustomed to the Kikuyu language, which had previously been a mystery. I started to recognize specific words and phrases as I slowly deciphered the meanings of the lively conversations going on all around me. Learning more about the language and the rich cultural history it represented became a personal goal.

11 Transformative Academic Journey

As I ventured forth into the unknown, I did so with gratitude for the foundation laid at Kiromwok and excitement for the adventures that awaited me. Though the path ahead may be filled with twists and turns, I embraced the journey with an open heart, knowing that the lessons learned and the memories created at Kiromwok would guide me every step of the way. Kiromwok would forever hold a special place in my heart, a beacon of inspiration and a reminder of the transformative power of education, friendship, and purpose.

As I stand at this pivotal juncture, poised to transition from the structured environment of academia to the unpredictable terrain of the real world, I am acutely aware of the transformative power of education. It is a beacon of hope in a world often shrouded in uncertainty, offering not only knowledge but also the tools and perspectives necessary to navigate life's complexities. Through education, we not only gain mastery over subject matter but also cultivate critical thinking, resilience, and empathy – qualities essential for success and fulfillment in any endeavor.

My journey at Dedan Kimathi University has been more than just an academic pursuit; it has been a profound and enriching experience that has broadened my horizons and deepened my understanding of the world around me. Here, amidst the rigors of coursework and the camaraderie of fellow scholars, I have discovered the power of collaboration, the joy of intellectual discovery, and the importance of perseverance in the face of adversity.

But perhaps most importantly, my time at university has reinforced the notion that education is not confined to the walls of a classroom or the pages of a textbook. It is a lifelong journey of exploration and discovery, fueled by curiosity and driven by a thirst for knowledge. It is about embracing uncertainty, embracing diversity, and embracing the endless possibilities that lie ahead.

As I prepare to embark on the next chapter of my life's journey, I am filled with a profound sense of responsibility – not only to myself but also to those who have supported and believed in me along the way. I carry with me the hopes and aspirations of my family, the encouragement of my mentors, and the collective wisdom of generations past. And it is with this sense of purpose and determination that I step boldly into the unknown, ready to confront whatever challenges may lie ahead.

Yet, even as I embrace the uncertainties of the future, I do so with a firm belief in the transformative power of education to effect positive change in the world. Whether through scientific innovation, social advocacy, or creative expression, I am committed to using my knowledge and skills to make a meaningful impact on the lives of others and contribute to the betterment of society as a whole.

In the greens places of Bomet, where the echoes of generations past mingle with the whispers of the wind, I have found my voice and discovered my purpose. And as I set forth on this journey of lifelong learning

and growth, I carry with me the spirit of resilience, the courage to challenge the status quo, and the unwavering belief that education is the key to unlocking a brighter, more equitable future for all. During my tenure at Dedan Kimathi University, the corridors of academia became more than just pathways between classes; they became conduits for intellectual exploration and personal growth. The technical skills and theoretical knowledge imparted by dedicated professors were undoubtedly instrumental in preparing me for the challenges ahead. However, it was their unwavering commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning that truly set the stage for my development.

In the lecture halls, I found not only mentors but also champions of curiosity and innovation. These educators went beyond the syllabus, encouraging us to push the boundaries of our understanding and to question conventional wisdom. Their passion for their respective fields was infectious, igniting a flame within each of us to strive for excellence and to embrace the unknown with enthusiasm rather than trepidation.

Moreover, the guidance and support extended by my professors transcended the confines of academic discourse. They served as trusted confidants and advisors, offering sage advice and compassionate encouragement during moments of doubt or difficulty. Their mentorship was not limited to the classroom but extended to life lessons, instilling in me values of integrity, perseverance, and humility that will continue to guide me long after graduation.

Beyond the individual mentorship, the university community itself became a fertile ground for collaboration and mutual growth. Interactions with fellow students, each with their unique perspectives and backgrounds, enriched my educational experience immeasurably. Through group projects, discussions, and extracurricular activities, we forged bonds of friendship and camaraderie that transcended academic pursuits, creating a support network that extended far beyond the university walls.

As I reflect on my time at Dedan Kimathi University, I am filled with gratitude for the holistic education I received – one that nurtured not only my intellect but also my character and values. It is this comprehensive approach to learning that has equipped me not only with the technical skills necessary for success in my chosen field but also with the resilience and adaptability to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Looking ahead, I am mindful of the responsibility that comes with the privilege of education. Armed with the knowledge and wisdom imparted by my professors, I am committed to paying it forward by serving as a mentor and advocate for future generations of scholars. Just as my professors and Doctors invested in my growth, I aspire to do the same for others, empowering them to realize their full potential and make meaningful contributions to society.

In conclusion, my time at Dedan Kimathi University has been a transformative journey of self-discovery and personal growth, made possible by the guidance and support of dedicated professors and the vibrant community of scholars. As I prepare to embark on the next chapter of my life, I carry with me not only the technical skills and knowledge acquired but also the values and principles instilled by my alma mater, shaping me into a lifelong learner and a responsible global citizen. Reflecting on my academic journey, I'm struck by the profound realization that education is not just about acquiring knowledge but also about leveraging that knowledge to create positive change in the world. The study of mathematics and modeling has opened my eyes to the immense potential that exists within each of us to effect meaningful transformation. Armed with this understanding, I am more determined than ever to harness my education and talents for the betterment of society.

In a world confronted by myriad challenges – from climate change to social inequality – the need for innovative solutions has never been more pressing. Through scientific inquiry and technological advancement, I believe we have the power to address these issues head-on and pave the way for a more sustainable and equitable future. As a statistician, I am particularly drawn to the role that data-driven analysis and predictive modeling can play in informing evidence-based decision-making and driving positive social change.

However, effecting change requires more than just technical expertise; it demands empathy, compassion, and a commitment to social justice. That's why I am equally passionate about leveraging my education and talents for social advocacy and community engagement. By amplifying the voices of marginalized communities and advocating for policies that promote equity and inclusion, I hope to contribute to a more just and compassionate society.

Moreover, I recognize that effecting change often requires collaboration and partnership across disciplines

and sectors. As I prepare to embark on the next phase of my journey, I am eager to work alongside individuals from diverse backgrounds and fields of expertise, united by a common goal of creating positive impact. Whether through interdisciplinary research projects, community outreach initiatives, or collaborative advocacy efforts, I am committed to building bridges and forging connections that transcend traditional boundaries.

At the heart of my commitment to effecting positive change lies a deep-seated belief in the power of education to empower individuals and communities. By equipping people with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to thrive, we can break down barriers, challenge injustices, and create opportunities for all. As a future educator myself, I am excited about the prospect of inspiring and empowering the next generation of change makers to realize their full potential and drive positive social change.

Yet, effecting change is not without its challenges. It requires resilience, perseverance, and a willingness to confront adversity head-on. As I prepare to navigate the complexities of real-world problems, I am mindful of the need to cultivate these qualities within myself and to draw strength from the support of my mentors, peers, and community.

In conclusion, my commitment to using my education and talents to effect positive change in the world is both a privilege and a responsibility. As I embark on this journey, I am guided by a sense of purpose and determination, knowing that the road ahead will be filled with obstacles and opportunities alike. But with unwavering dedication and a steadfast belief in the trans-formative power of education, I am confident that together, we can create a brighter, more inclusive future for generations to come. Beyond the pursuit of individual success lies a deeper calling – a responsibility to give back to the community that has nurtured and supported me along my journey. I am profoundly aware of the privileges afforded to me through education, and I recognize that with privilege comes a duty to uplift and empower others. Just as I have benefited from the guidance and encouragement of mentors and role models, I am eager to serve as a source of support and inspiration for future generations.

In paying it forward, I am committed to fostering a culture of mentorship and empowerment, where knowledge and experience are shared generously and opportunities are made accessible to all. Whether through volunteering, mentorship programs, or community initiatives, I believe that small acts of kindness and generosity can have a ripple effect, transforming lives and strengthening communities.

Moreover, I am mindful of the importance of addressing systemic inequalities and barriers to education and opportunity. By advocating for policies and initiatives that promote equity and inclusive, I hope to create a more level playing field where everyone has the chance to thrive regardless of their background or circumstances.

But giving back is not just about material support; it is also about fostering a sense of belonging and connection within our communities. Through acts of kindness, compassion, and solidarity, we can create spaces where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to pursue their dreams.

As I look to the future, I am inspired by the potential for collective action to drive meaningful change. By coming together as a community – united by a shared vision of a better world – we can amplify our impact and effect positive transformation on a broader scale.

Yet, giving back is not without its challenges. It requires humility, empathy, and a willingness to listen and learn from those we seek to serve. It requires recognizing our own biases and privileges and working actively to dismantle systems of oppression and inequality.

The concepts and principles seemed complex at first, but as Dr. Ngunyi (During the First years Orientation) delved into the topic, his enthusiasm and expertise brought the subject to life. He effortlessly connected theoretical knowledge with real-world examples, making the content relatable and engaging. Dr. Ngunyi, a personable and experienced lecturer and Dean of School of Science at Dedan Kimathi University, made a lasting influence on my academic career. His commanding presence in the lecture hall drew attention, and his enthusiasm for the subject came over in every sentence he spoke from that point on I started developing interest and passion towards my pursue of Actuarial Science.

Dr. Ngunyi was a powerful presence in person. Although he emanated authority due to his height and self-assured demeanor, his friendly personality and welcoming grin made the students feel comfortable. His professional demeanor was further enhanced by his well-groomed salt-and sharp clothes. It was evident as soon as he entered the room that he took pride in his appearance and sought to uphold a

high standard of professionalism. As an Actuary, Dr. Ngunyi had an exceptional ability and was well seasoned with Actuarial Science concepts. His teaching style was dynamic and engaging, incorporating a mix of lecture, interactive discussions, and real-life examples. He possessed the rare talent of translating technical jargon into relatable scenarios, allowing students to grasp the practical implications of the subject matter.

Me: Pasaka, are you ready for church this morning? The service starts in half an hour.

Pasaka: Yeah, I'm almost ready. Just need to grab my Bible and put on my Sunday best.

Me: Great! I'm excited to go. It's been a while since we attended a Sunday service together.

Pasaka: I know, right? Sundays just feel incomplete without that sense of community and spiritual nourishment.

Me: Absolutely. It's a time to connect with fellow believers, worship together, and find inspiration for the week ahead. Pasaka: That's true. Plus, the singing and the uplifting messages always leave me feeling refreshed and motivated.

Me: I couldn't agree more. There's something special about coming together as a congregation, sharing in the joy of worship.

The lively exchange between Pasaka and me reverberated through the atmosphere every Sunday, serving as a vivid manifestation of our unwavering and steadfast faith in the Almighty.

The amazing speed with which the academic calendar moved forward at Dedan Kimathi University was a distinguishing trait that distinguished it from other universities and defined my experience there. The rapidity with which time passed seemed to serve as a continual reminder of the importance placed on learning new things and developing personally.

It became increasingly clear that the educational journey at Dedan Kimathi required an uncompromising dedication to diligence and adaptability as the weeks quickly evolved into months. Recognizing the short amount of time, lecturers would pile on the homework and continuous assessment examinations (CATs), resulting in a demanding but transforming setting.

The burden of unfinished business will steadily increase over the semester. We needed to learn how to combine our studies, extracurricular activities, and personal commitments, so time management and prioritization skills became crucial. The weeks before the end-of-semester exams were particularly stressful because of the impending comprehensive assessments.

It was during those final two weeks before exams that the campus truly came alive. The library became a hub of focused concentration, filled with students meticulously revising their notes and devouring textbooks. Study groups formed, fueled by a shared determination to conquer the vast amount of material to be covered. The energy in the air was electric as classmates supported one another, sharing knowledge and insights in preparation for the impending challenges.

I was filled with enthusiasm and expectation as I started my second year at Dedan Kimathi University. I was able to go deeper into my chosen field of study because of the foundation that had been created during my first year. I was aware that this year would present me with fresh difficulties, chances, and an enlargement of my intellectual horizons.

The addition of numerous additional modules to the curriculum of my course was one notable feature of my second year. The studies become more specialized with each subsequent semester, giving me a thorough understanding of my field. The larger selection of units was both exciting and intimidating because it required examining more complicated and in-depth topic matter.

I gained a wider perspective and a greater understanding of the nuances of my discipline of choice because of the variety of units. From cutting-edge theory to real-world applications, every unit provided its own special insights and difficulties. To successfully manage the expanding academic burden, there was a greater need for focus, discipline, and time management.

I was looking forward to the chance to put my education to use through an attachment as I neared the end of my undergraduate studies at Dedan Kimathi University. The NHIF Sotik served as the link between academic theory and practical execution. When I first entered the department of claims, I was greeted by a busy setting where the analysis of claims took center stage. I became excited at the sight of devoted experts deeply involved in their work. It was the ideal environment for me to pick up useful knowledge and experience in my subject of study.

I had the honor of working with seasoned experts who graciously offered their knowledge and helped me understand the nuances of different field of Actuarial Science during my attachment. I gained knowledge of navigating budgetary procedures, creating financial reports, and examining spending trends thanks to their guidance.

I went home after my attachment, a chapter of my life coming to a close. The feeling that enveloped me was a complex blend of sorrow and emotion. For months, I had become accustomed to the surroundings of the building, NHIF offices where I had spent countless hours honing my skills and forging connections with fellow professionals. There was excitement and eagerness as the Next semester season finally arrived. But this season was different from all the others. The aroma of barbecue floated through the air from me and my other colleagues, giving our area a sense of individuality. There was a fusion of excitement and happiness in the air mixed with fear because this marks our last academic year in the university journey.

After the first semester, now the Holiday season arrived, As the sun began to rise, my mum's voice filled the house, breaking the peaceful silence. "I am going to church," she announced, his voice filled with purpose. She had never missed the morning service on Christmas day, and this year was no exception. She hurriedly prepared herself, eager to be part of the spiritual celebration that awaited her. In our family, going to church on Christmas morning had become a beloved custom. It was a moment to consider the meaning of the holiday, to give thanks for the blessings received all year, and to come together with other worshipers in a spirit of harmony and faith. Everyone who listened to the clergy lectures noted how sincere and motivational they were, and how they left a lasting impression. The streets were decked out in decorations, and carols could be heard as we made our way to the church. The neighborhood was brimming with Christmas excitement, and the expectation only rose with each step. On this memorable day, the church stood proud and welcomed anyone seeking comfort and celebration with its doors wide open.

In conclusion, the journey of giving back is a lifelong commitment – a journey of growth, humility, and solidarity. As I embark on this path, I do so with a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunities that have been afforded to me and a profound sense of responsibility to use my privilege for the greater good. Together, let us strive to build a more compassionate, equitable, and just world for all. In the intricate weave of existence, our true legacy is not measured by material possessions or external recognition but by the impact we make on others and the world around us. It's the intangible connections we forge, the compassion we show, and the difference we bring to the lives of those we encounter that endure beyond our physical presence. Standing at the brink of a new phase in my life, I'm deeply cognizant of this timeless wisdom, recognizing the weight of responsibility that accompanies each decision and action I take today.

This awareness fills me with a sense of humility and reverence, as I understand that every interaction, every choice, has the potential to reverberate far beyond the confines of the present moment. It's a reminder to approach each day with mindfulness and intentionally, mindful of the ripple effect our words and deeds may have on others, and the legacy they will leave behind.

As I embark on this new chapter, I do so with a profound sense of purpose, driven by the desire to leave behind a legacy defined not by personal gain, but by the positive impact I have on the lives of those around me. It's a journey guided by principles of empathy, kindness, and service – values that transcend time and circumstance, and which hold the power to transform individuals and communities alike.

Yet, I am also keenly aware of the challenges that lie ahead – the obstacles to be overcome, the setbacks to navigate, and the uncertainties that accompany any journey of significance. However, it is precisely in the face of adversity that our character is tested and our legacy forged. It's a reminder that true impact is often born out of struggle and perseverance, and that our greatest achievements often arise from our most difficult trials.

In the tapestry of life, each of us plays a unique and irreplaceable role – a thread woven into the fabric of humanity, contributing to the richness and diversity of the whole. It's a reminder that our legacy is not solely determined by our individual actions, but by the collective impact of all those who came before us, and all those who will come after.

As I contemplate the legacy I wish to leave behind, I am guided by a deep sense of gratitude – gratitude for the opportunities I've been given, for the support of loved ones and mentors, and for the privilege of being able to make a difference in the world, however small.

In the end, our legacy is not something we leave behind for others to remember us by, but something we create each and every day through the choices we make and the lives we touch. It's a testament to the enduring power of the human spirit and the boundless potential for positive change that resides within each of us. And as I stand on the threshold of this new chapter in my journey, I do so with a heart full of hope, ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, and determined to leave behind a legacy of love, compassion, and kindness for generations to come. Indeed, as I embark on this journey to make a meaningful impact, I am keenly aware that challenges will inevitably arise. Uncertainty looms on the horizon, and obstacles may appear daunting at times. Yet, it is during these moments of adversity that our character is truly tested, and our resilience shines through. It is through facing these challenges head-on that we discover our inner strength and determination to press forward despite the odds stacked against us.

In navigating the uncertainties of the future, I am reminded of the importance of maintaining a positive mindset and embracing a growth-oriented perspective. Rather than viewing obstacles as insurmountable barriers, I see them as opportunities for growth and learning. Each setback presents a chance to adapt, innovate, and emerge stronger than before.

Moreover, I recognize that I do not face these challenges alone. I am surrounded by a network of support – friends, family, mentors, and colleagues – who stand ready to offer guidance, encouragement, and assistance when needed. Together, we form a resilient community, united by a shared commitment to overcoming obstacles and achieving our goals.

At the same time, I am mindful of the need to practice self-care and cultivate habits of resilience in my own life. Whether through mindfulness practices, physical exercise, or seeking out moments of joy and connection, I prioritize my well-being as a foundation for navigating the challenges that lie ahead.

Furthermore, I draw inspiration from the countless stories of resilience and perseverance that have shaped human history. From individuals who have triumphed over seemingly insurmountable odds to communities that have rallied together in times of crisis, these stories serve as a reminder of the indomitable human spirit and our capacity to overcome adversity.

In facing the challenges of the future, I am guided by a sense of purpose and determination. I know that the road ahead will be filled with twists and turns, victories and setbacks. Yet, I am confident in my ability to weather the storms and emerge stronger on the other side.

Ultimately, it is through perseverance and resilience that we are able to transform challenges into opportunities, setbacks into stepping stones, and uncertainty into possibility. As I continue on this journey, I do so with a steadfast resolve to confront obstacles head-on, knowing that with resilience as my ally, no challenge is too great to overcome. But this journey is not without its challenges. I am mindful of the obstacles that lie ahead, the uncertainties that lurk beyond the horizon. Yet, it is precisely in the face of adversity that our true character is revealed, and it is through perseverance and resilience that we are able to overcome even the greatest of obstacles.

And so, as I embark on this new chapter, I do so with a sense of gratitude – gratitude for the opportunities that have been afforded to me, for the lessons learned along the way, and for the support and encouragement of those who have believed in me. It is with this gratitude that I approach each day, each challenge, each opportunity, ready to seize the moment and make a difference in the world.

As I navigate the twists and turns of the road ahead, I am guided by a steadfast belief in the power of human potential – the power to imagine, to create, to inspire. It is this belief that gives me the courage to dream big, to push the boundaries of what is possible, and to strive for excellence in all that I do. In the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, it's easy to get caught up in the rush of activities and responsibilities. However, amidst this frenetic pace, it's crucial to carve out moments for reflection and introspection. Taking the time to pause and look back on the journey we've traversed thus far allows us to appreciate the milestones we've achieved, the lessons we've learned, and the growth we've experienced along the way.

Celebrating these milestones serves as a testament to our progress and accomplishments, providing a sense of fulfillment and pride in how far we've come. Whether it's graduating from university, landing a dream job, or overcoming a personal challenge, each milestone marks a significant step forward on our journey of self-discovery and development.

Moreover, reflecting on the lessons learned offers valuable insights that can guide us as we navigate the

road ahead. Every experience – whether positive or negative – presents an opportunity for growth and learning. By acknowledging and internalizing these lessons, we can better equip ourselves to face future challenges with wisdom and resilience.

In addition to celebrating milestones and reflecting on lessons learned, it's also important to acknowledge the relationships that have enriched our journey. From friends and family to mentors and colleagues, these connections form the fabric of our support network, offering encouragement, guidance, and companionship along the way.

Indeed, it is in these moments of reflection that we find solace and strength, drawing inspiration from the memories of the past and nurturing the hopes of the future. They serve as beacons of light in times of darkness, reminding us of our inherent resilience and capacity for growth.

12 Culminating Academic Journey

Looking back, my experience at Dedan Kimathi University has truly been transforming. I am eager and determined to make the most of this crucial period in my academic career as I begin the fourth year second semester of my academic study.

Collins : "Macharia, it's good to be back. I can't believe we're nearing the end of this university journey."

Macharia : "Indeed, my friend. Time has flown by, and now you're on the cusp of completing this chapter of your life. How do you feel?"

Collins : "Mixed emotions, to be honest. On one hand, I'm excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. On the other hand, I can't help but feel a tinge of nostalgia for all the memories we've created here."

Macharia : "I completely understand. It's natural to feel a sense of attachment to the place and people who have shaped us into who we are today. But remember, this is just the beginning of a new chapter, filled with endless opportunities."

Macharia: "You're right, Etila. This journey has been transformative, and I owe a significant part of my growth to the support and friendship you have provided. I'll forever cherish the memories we've made together."

It has been an academically stimulating semester so far in my fourth year at Dedan Kimathi University. By enrolling in advanced courses in my area of study, I have seized the chance to learn more about the topics that pique my interest. The difficult coursework required in-depth research, financial modeling, critical analysis, and honed problem-solving techniques. I have actively participated in class discussions, worked with other students, and asked respected faculty members for advice as I strive for academic achievement. I have developed as a student and as a potential professional in my field by fully immersing myself in the complexities of my discipline.

"Having transpired a triennial span henceforth, I find myself penning this autobiography, delving into the culminating odyssey of my academic voyage and the conclusive chapter of my university sojourn." I am certain that my degree will become my ticket to a better tomorrow. I want to become a renowned statistician in the field of finance. I study hard and devote my free time to reading scholarly reviews and watching interviews with recognized specialists in the field.