

Autobiography of Erastus Mauki Kithinji

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Part 1: Early Life and Family Background

Introduction

My name is Erastus Mauki Kithinji, born on April 22, 1999. I am the eldest child in a family of three. My early years were spent in Kibung'a Market, a vibrant yet humble area that shaped much of my early experiences and values.

Early Childhood

Growing up in Kibung'a Market was both a privilege and a challenge. The market was a vibrant epicenter of activity, bustling with traders, shoppers, and various goods. This dynamic environment provided a rich tapestry of sights, sounds, and interactions that profoundly shaped my early understanding of the world.

My parents, despite not being affluent, created a nurturing and supportive environment for me and my siblings. They emphasized the values of hard work, integrity, and perseverance, which were fundamental in shaping my character. The lessons they imparted were not merely

theoretical but were woven into our daily lives, creating a strong foundation for my personal growth.

Community and Friendships

In the heart of Kibung'a Market, I was often regarded as a darling among my peers. My cheerful demeanor and friendly nature made me well-liked in the community. I had a knack for making friends easily, and I cherished the camaraderie of my childhood companions. Our neighborhood was a close-knit community where everyone knew each other, and these early friendships were a source of great joy and support.

Grazing Cattle and Adventures

One of the fondest memories from my childhood was the time spent grazing cattle with my friends. This activity was not just a daily chore but an adventure in itself. We would guide the herds of cattle to the lush pastures, sharing stories, laughter, and the simple pleasures of nature. These moments fostered a deep connection with both my peers and the natural world.

The journey to the grazing fields often included crossing the R Kathita River, a part of our routine that added an element of excitement to our daily lives. The river was a natural playground where we would swim across while the livestock quenched their thirst. The river's cool waters provided a refreshing escape from the heat and a chance to bond with friends. These

adventures were not only enjoyable but also strengthened our sense of camaraderie and teamwork.

Lessons Learned

These early experiences in Kibung'a Market were formative. The bustling market environment, combined with the close community bonds and the joys of childhood adventures, provided valuable lessons in resilience, friendship, and the simple pleasures of life. They instilled in me a deep appreciation for hard work and community spirit, which have guided me throughout my life.

As I reflect on these formative years, I am grateful for the rich experiences that shaped my early development. The lessons learned during this time continue to influence my approach to challenges and opportunities, reminding me of the importance of community, perseverance, and the joy of meaningful connections.

Family Influence

My family played a crucial role in my upbringing. My father, a pillar of strength and guidance, was instrumental in my early education. My mother, on the other hand, managed the household with remarkable resilience and care. The lessons I learned from them have remained with me throughout my life.

Part 2: Education

Early Education

My educational journey began at Gituri Primary School in 2003. The early years of schooling were filled with curiosity and excitement. Gituri Primary offered a solid foundation, and I completed my Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in 2011. It was a significant milestone, marking the end of a formative chapter in my life.

High School Years

In 2012, I enrolled at Tharaka Boys High School in Marimanti, eager to embrace the new academic challenges that lay ahead. My time at Tharaka Boys was marked by dedication and hard work. However, my academic journey faced an unexpected setback on August 13, 2013, when I lost my father.

Embracing New Interests

My time at Tharaka Boys High School marked a period of significant personal growth and exploration. It was during these years that I discovered and developed several passions that would become integral to my high school experience.

Passion for Badminton

One of the highlights of my high school years was falling in love with badminton. The sport quickly became a major part of my life, offering both a physical outlet and a sense of camaraderie with fellow students. I spent countless hours on the court, honing my skills and enjoying the thrill of competition. Badminton was more than just a game; it was a way for me to channel my energy, improve my focus, and build lasting friendships with teammates. I represented my school at the county level competitions.

Involvement in the Drama Club

In addition to my involvement in sports, I joined the Drama Club, where I discovered a new avenue for creative expression. Acting and participating in various productions allowed me to explore different aspects of myself and develop confidence in public speaking. The Drama Club was a vibrant and supportive environment where I could collaborate with others and showcase my talents, adding a rich layer of personal fulfillment to my high school experience.

Swimming in the R Kathita River

The R Kathita River, which had been a part of my childhood adventures, continued to hold a special place in my life during high school. The river was a cherished retreat where I would go swimming to relax and unwind. Its cool, clear waters provided a refreshing escape from the

demands of academic life and offered a sense of continuity from my earlier years. Swimming in the river was not only a pleasurable activity but also a way to stay connected with my roots and the natural world.

Balancing Academics and Extracurricular Activities

Balancing academics with these extracurricular pursuits was both challenging and rewarding. Engaging in badminton, drama, and swimming helped me develop a well-rounded personality, enhancing my ability to manage time and commitments effectively. These activities were instrumental in shaping my high school experience, providing a healthy balance between academic responsibilities and personal interests.

Impact of Loss

The passing of my father was a profound and painful experience. It significantly affected my studies, as I struggled to cope with the emotional and financial burdens that followed. Despite the adversity, I persevered and completed my Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in 2015, achieving a B- grade.

Overcoming Financial Constraints

Due to financial constraints, I was unable to join university immediately. In response, I decided to repeat Form 4 at Chogoria Boys High School in 2016. This decision was driven by my determination to improve my grades and secure a better future. My efforts bore fruit when I obtained a B grade, which opened new doors for my academic and professional aspirations.

Faith and Community

Throughout my high school years, I remained an active and dedicated member of the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church. My involvement in the church choir was not only a source of personal fulfillment but also a testament to my commitment to community and spiritual growth.

Conclusion

The high school years at Tharaka Boys High School were a time of self-discovery and growth. My love for badminton, involvement in the Drama Club, and continued enjoyment of swimming in the R Kathita River were not just hobbies but integral parts of my high school journey. These experiences contributed to my development as a person, helping me to cultivate discipline, creativity, and a sense of community. They also provided a foundation of resilience and adaptability that would serve me well in the years to come.

Part 3: Significant Life Events

The Loss of My Father

The death of my father remains one of the most significant events in my life. It was a period of deep sorrow and challenge, but it also taught me resilience and self-reliance. His memory continues to inspire me to strive for excellence and overcome obstacles.

The Journey to University

Overcoming Financial Barriers: After being placed by KUCCPS to study BSc IT at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology in May 2017, my journey to university was fraught with challenges. Due to financial constraints, I was forced to defer my admission until November

2020. This period of deferment was not idle; it was a time of intense preparation and resourcefulness, driven by my unwavering determination to pursue higher education.

Support from Relatives

During this challenging period, I was fortunate to receive support from my relatives, Andrew and Josephine. They generously raised funds that were instrumental in enabling me to join campus. Their support was a lifeline, providing not only the means to pay for tuition but also some financial relief for my day-to-day needs. Their kindness and sacrifice were deeply appreciated and played a crucial role in my academic journey.

Engaging in Various Jobs

To supplement the funds raised by Andrew and Josephine and to cover additional expenses, I took on several jobs. In Likoni, I became a milk delivery boy, cycling daily to deliver fresh milk. This job taught me the value of hard work and perseverance while providing a modest income that contributed to my university expenses.

In addition to milk delivery, I worked as a waiter, gaining experience in customer service and managing various tasks in a busy environment. I also participated in the Kazi Mtaani program, an initiative by then-President Uhuru Kenyatta aimed at providing employment opportunities during challenging economic times. This program offered temporary employment, allowing me to earn some extra income and contribute to my university fund.

Challenges During University

When I finally started at Dedan Kimathi University in November 2020, the financial challenges did not disappear. In my second-year second semester, I faced severe financial difficulties. I had to partially engage in construction work around the school during my internal attachment period. This work was physically demanding but necessary to make ends meet and support my studies.

In the first semester of my third year, the situation worsened. With mounting financial pressures and the decreasing ability of Andrew and Josephine to provide support, I took up a night guard position. Working nights allowed me to earn extra income to cover my upkeep, tuition fees, and support my younger brother, who had recently joined high school.

Family Struggles

My mother, who had always been my pillar of support, was struggling to manage our financial situation on her own. The combination of her limited resources and the diminished support from Andrew and Josephine made the situation particularly difficult. Despite these hardships, I remained focused on my academic goals, driven by a desire to succeed and a commitment to my family.

Conclusion

The journey to university was marked by significant obstacles and sacrifices. The support from my relatives, combined with my own efforts in various jobs, enabled me to navigate these

challenges and achieve my goal of higher education. Despite the financial struggles and the need to balance multiple responsibilities, I remained steadfast in my pursuit of academic excellence and personal growth. These experiences have not only shaped my character but have also reinforced my determination to overcome adversity and succeed in my chosen field.

Part 4: Social Life in Campus

Building Friendships and Connections

My time at Dedan Kimathi University was not just about academic pursuits; it was also a period rich with social experiences and meaningful connections. I was fortunate to make many friends among my coursemates, including notable individuals like Dalmas, Emanuel, Kennedy, Brian, Samuel Gitonga, and Samuel Wainana. These friendships were a vital part of my university experience, providing both support and companionship through the ups and downs of academic life.

Weekend Adventures and Bonding

To balance the pressures of classwork, my friends and I would often escape for weekend bike rides. These outings were more than just recreational activities; they were opportunities for relaxation, stress relief, and deeper bonding. Cycling through the scenic routes around the university offered a refreshing break from our studies and allowed us to strengthen our

friendships outside the classroom.

Active Participation in Student Organizations

During my time at the university, I became an active member of the Murang'a Kimathi University Students Association (MKUSA). My involvement in the association was driven by a desire to contribute to the student community and engage in campus life beyond academics. My dedication and leadership skills were recognized when I was appointed Chief Whip for the academic year 2021/2022. This role involved representing student interests, organizing events, and facilitating communication between students and the administration, and moderation during weekly debates in SOB ROOM 11.

Fostering National Unity

Despite coming from Tharaka, my interactions with students from Murang'a and other regions were a testament to the power of national unity. The friendships and collaborations formed during this period were reflective of a broader sense of community and togetherness. Studying and working alongside students from diverse backgrounds underscored the importance of unity and mutual respect in fostering a harmonious and productive academic environment.

Engaging with Religion: DEKUSDA

Religion played a significant role in my social life at university. I was an active participant in church services organized by the Dedan Kimathi University Seventh-Day Adventist

(DEKUSDA) fellowship. Attending DEKUSDA services was more than a spiritual practice; it was an integral part of my social life. The church community provided a supportive environment where I could connect with fellow students who shared similar values and beliefs.

The DEKUSDA fellowship offered a range of activities and programs that enriched my campus experience. Through participation in church services, Bible studies, and community outreach initiatives, I was able to forge strong connections with others. The sense of belonging and spiritual growth I experienced through DEKUSDA was invaluable, offering both personal fulfillment and a supportive network.

The Impact of Social Life

My vibrant social life at university played a crucial role in my overall experience. It provided a balance to the rigors of academic work, offered emotional support during challenging times, and enriched my university journey with lasting friendships and leadership opportunities. Engaging with a diverse group of students and participating in campus activities helped me grow both personally and professionally, reinforcing the value of community and collaboration.

Conclusion

The social aspect of my university life was as integral as the academic component. Making lasting friendships, engaging in recreational activities, and taking on leadership roles within the Murang'a Kimathi University Students Association were all vital to my personal growth and

fulfillment. These experiences highlighted the importance of building strong connections, embracing diversity, and contributing to the collective well-being of the student community. Through these interactions, I experienced firsthand the impact of national unity and the power of a supportive, engaged student body.

Part 5: Life Philosophy and Values

Core Beliefs and Influences

Throughout my life, certain core philosophies and values have guided me, shaping my approach to challenges and opportunities. Central to my personal philosophy is the belief in pursuing one's dreams with unwavering determination, a concept that resonates deeply with me. This philosophy is inspired by Paulo Coelho's renowned book, **The Alchemist**.

The Influence of **The Alchemist**

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho has had a profound impact on my life philosophy. The book's central message revolves around following one's "Personal Legend" or true purpose in life. The protagonist's journey towards his dreams, despite numerous obstacles, has taught me the importance of perseverance, faith, and listening to one's heart.

One of the key takeaways from *The Alchemist* is the idea that the journey toward achieving one's dreams is just as valuable as the destination itself. This perspective has influenced me to embrace every step of my journey, valuing both the successes and the challenges. The book encourages readers to recognize and pursue their passions, while also understanding that the journey is a process of growth and self-discovery.

Embracing Dreams and Overcoming Challenges

Inspired by Coelho's teachings, I have embraced the philosophy of pursuing my dreams with persistence. This belief has been crucial during times of adversity, such as the financial constraints and personal losses I faced during my academic journey. The lessons from *The Alchemist* have guided me to view these challenges as part of a larger process, essential for personal growth and eventual success.

Values of Integrity and Resilience

The Alchemist also highlights the importance of integrity and resilience. These values are integral to my life philosophy. I strive to act with honesty and sincerity, remaining true to my principles even in the face of difficulties. Resilience has been a defining trait in my life, helping me navigate through hardships and remain focused on my goals.

The Role of Faith and Intuition

Another key element from the book is the role of faith and intuition. Coelho's protagonist learns to trust his intuition and believe in the signs that guide him. Similarly, I have learned to trust my inner voice and remain open to the guidance that life presents. This faith in my instincts and in the journey itself has been crucial in making decisions and navigating complex situations.

Community and Connection

Additionally, the book emphasizes the interconnectedness of all things and the value of forming meaningful connections. This philosophy has influenced my approach to relationships and community involvement. I believe in contributing positively to my community and fostering genuine connections with others, recognizing that these relationships enrich my life and contribute to a larger sense of purpose.

Conclusion

My life philosophy and values, deeply influenced by Paulo Coelho's **The Alchemist**, revolve around pursuing dreams with persistence, maintaining integrity, and embracing the journey of self-discovery. The lessons from the book have guided me in overcoming challenges, trusting my intuition, and valuing the connections I make along the way. These principles continue to shape my approach to life, driving me to live with purpose and resilience.

Part 6 : Professional Development

Discovery of Passions

While I was enrolled in my second year at Dedan Kimathi University, I embarked on an internal attachment period that would profoundly shape my career trajectory. It was during this period that I discovered my passion for web design and graphic design.

Skill Development

The internal attachment provided me with hands-on experience in the field, allowing me to explore various aspects of web (full stack) and graphic design. I immersed myself in learning new tools and techniques, gaining valuable skills that would become a cornerstone of my professional development.

Content writing involved crafting engaging and informative material tailored to specific audiences, honing my ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively. In digital marketing , I learned to leverage various online platforms and strategies to enhance brand visibility and drive engagement, employing techniques such as SEO, social media marketing, and email campaigns. My exposure to basic data entry provided me with a strong foundation in managing and organizing information accurately, ensuring data integrity and efficiency. Lastly, my foray into software development introduced me to coding languages and software engineering principles, enabling me to contribute to building and maintaining applications and understanding the technical aspects of digital projects.

Future Aspirations

As I approach the final stages of my academic journey, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. My experiences and skills in web and graphic design have fueled my ambition to pursue a career in this dynamic field. I am eager to contribute to innovative projects and make a meaningful impact in the tech and design industries.

Graduation and Beyond

I am set to graduate in December 2024, marking the culmination of years of hard work and perseverance. As I look forward to this milestone, I am filled with optimism about the future and the potential to leverage my skills and experiences to achieve my professional goals.

****My Ultimate Vision****

My ultimate goal is to create a sanctuary that embodies my passions and dreams—a sprawling ranch where I can fully immerse myself in the pursuits that bring me joy and fulfillment. At the heart of this vision is a vast ranch, bustling with a thriving herd of cattle. I envision the ranch as a place where I can engage in the rewarding work of cattle management, enjoying the satisfaction that comes from nurturing and overseeing these majestic animals.

Adjacent to the cattle operation, I dream of cultivating a lush vineyard dedicated to crafting exceptional wines. The vineyard will be a testament to my appreciation for viticulture, offering an opportunity to explore the art and science of winemaking. I imagine walking through rows of carefully tended grapevines, eagerly anticipating the harvest and the creation of wines that reflect the unique character of the land.

The ranch will also feature a well-equipped barn, home to a collection of horses. This barn will be a hub of activity, where I can indulge in my passion for equestrian pursuits. I envision the barn as a place of connection with these magnificent animals, where both training and leisure time are spent in harmony with the horses.

To complement this idyllic setting, I plan to have a Ford Raptor, a rugged vehicle that will enable me to explore the expansive landscapes of my ranch and beyond. Whether navigating the trails of the ranch or embarking on adventurous excursions, the Ford Raptor will be my trusted companion in discovering new horizons and embracing the spirit of adventure.

In essence, my vision encompasses a harmonious blend of agriculture, winemaking, equestrian life, and adventure, all within the embrace of a single, cohesive sanctuary. This dream reflects not only my personal interests but also my commitment to creating a space where I can fully enjoy and celebrate the diverse aspects of my life.

Signing Off

My autobiography is a reflection of my journey, one marked by resilience, faith, and personal growth. I begin by recounting my early days in Kibung'a Market, where my experiences shaped the foundation of who I am today. Growing up in Kibung'a Market, I faced a vibrant yet

challenging environment. These early years were pivotal in teaching me valuable lessons about perseverance and determination.

As I transitioned from Kibung'a Market to Dedan Kimathi University, I reached a significant milestone in my academic and personal life. The anticipation of graduating from Dedan Kimathi University is not just about completing my studies; it represents the culmination of years of hard work and personal development. My time at the university has been a period of immense learning and growth, filled with both challenges and achievements that have significantly shaped my character.

Throughout my journey, resilience and faith have been my guiding principles. Overcoming obstacles and pushing through difficulties have been central to my progress. My faith, whether spiritual or personal, has been a source of strength and motivation, helping me stay focused and determined in the face of adversity.

This journey has been transformative. The experiences I've had have contributed to my growth and have helped me develop a clearer understanding of who I am and what I aspire to achieve.

I've learned valuable lessons that have shaped my aspirations and have given me a sense of purpose.

As I look towards the future, I am committed to carrying forward the lessons I've learned and the aspirations I've developed. My journey so far has equipped me with the strength and direction to face new challenges and pursue future endeavors with confidence and clarity.