MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONS

By

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Reg No: 20/U/4312/PS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my beautiful sister Michelle, my brother Marshal and to everyone who is going through something they cannot talk about.

DECLARATION

I, **KUKUNDAKWE MARIANNE** (MS), declare that this creative writing project entitled: "MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONS", is my original work and has not been submitted to any university or higher institution of learning for any form of academic award.

Signature:..... **Date**29th/01/26.....

KUKUNDAKWE MARIANNE

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APPROVAL

This work has been submitted to the Department of Literature with my approval.

Name:Eve Nabukya

Signature:.....

Date:29/01/2026

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Firstly, I want to thank the Almighty God who has enabled me complete this project. It has not been easy but through His grace I have made it.

I want to thank my mother for never giving up on me in whatever situation and loving me unconditionally, my dad for being a confidant and a friend and my sister Michelle for being one of the reasons I get out of bed everyday. Their love has helped me get through with this project.

I want to thank my lecturers especially Professor Aloysius Kwitonda* who has supported me with my project and also my supervisor, Dr. Okello Ogwang who has guided me and tutored me on this project.

I want to thank my late grandfather who always inspired me me to be great and be the best version of myself.

Most importantly, I thank myself for being strong and not giving up even when nothing made sense.

INTRODUCTION

My creative writing project is mixed genre whereby I have focused on two genres poetry and short stories. My project consists of twenty poems and six short stories which are majorly fiction based.

In my work, I have focused on mental health issues for example depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety and personality disorders which are common among people especially the youth today. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. It affects how we think feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices. In my work, I also focused on emotions like happiness, love, anger, sadness, loneliness. In my own words if I am to describe emotions, they are a conscious mental reaction, basically a state of feeling. Mental health and emotions are topics that have always been close to my heart. Having witnessed the struggles of loved ones who have grappled with mental health issues, I have come to realize the importance of addressing and understanding our emotions in order to maintain our overall well-being.

Throughout my life, I have also experienced my own share of emotional ups and downs, and I have learned that ignoring or suppressing my feelings only leads to more pain and suffering. By acknowledging and processing my emotions, I have been able to gain greater self-awareness, build stronger relationships, and lead a more fulfilling life.I feel many people are struggling with mental health issues in the setting that we live in today. In Uganda, most people see issues like depression, anxiety, ADHD and so many other issues as problems for the white community but what most people have failed to understand is that we are humans and as humans we have feelings and we go through very many different emotions whether negative or positive that we should normalize. Most of us go through mental health problems and we have no one to talk to, nowhere to express ourselves just because we are scared of how the world will see us. We are scared that no one will understand what we are going through. We are afraid of how the world will see us when they figure out that we are not “perfect”. But, I wanted to use my project to show everyone going through mental health issues that they are not alone and that someone out there feels for them and that there is someone out there going through something similar and that everyone goes through different emotions.

In writing my project on mental health and emotions, I hope to shed light on the complex and often misunderstood nature of our emotional experiences. I aim to explore the ways in which

our emotions can impact our mental health, and how we can cultivate healthy emotional habits to promote greater well-being.

Ultimately, I believe that by understanding and caring for our emotional selves, we can build resilience, foster connection, and lead more meaningful lives.

1. TONGUE TIED

I feel like I tire people out because
I'm too much.
I try to have soul conversations
Not just the small talk…
Small talk….
Every time I try small talk
I talk about stuff that either make me sound or look stupid.
I could easily bore you if you're not trying to talk about feelings
Or tell me if you ate for the 6th time today
Really,
I'm shocked at how fooled I was that I was a lead of words
Instead,
I get tongue tied
Worst of all,
My words leave my thoughts behind
Guess that's why
I'd rather listen.

2. A NOBODY?

In a world that bustles and hums,
Lives a girl who feels like a nobody.
She walks with her head bowed low,
Invisible to the world, she thinks.

Her heart is heavy with sorrow,
A burden too great for her shoulders.
She longs to be seen and heard,
To be more than just a face in the crowd.

But apparently, she feels overlooked,
Unimportant and unnoticed.
She wonders if she'll ever matter,
If she'll ever find her place in the world.

She dreams of being a somebody,
Of making a difference, big or small.
She wants to leave a mark on the world,
To be remembered long after she is gone.

But for now, she feels like a nobody,
Lost and alone in the sea of humanity.
She yearns for connection and belonging,
To feel like she truly matters.

And so she sets out on a journey,
To find her place in the world.
She meets new people and has new experiences,
Slowly discovering who she truly is.

And as she grows and learns,
She begins to see herself in her new light.
She realizes that she is not a nobody,
But a unique and valuable individual.

She learns to love and accept herself,
Flaws and all. She learns to stand tall,
With her head held high and her heart full of love. She learns to be her own somebody.

And in the end, she finds her place,
In the world and in her own heart.
She is no longer a nobody,
But a somebody, loved and cherished.

3. *AFTERMATH OF EMOTIONAL TRAUMA*

I lack empathy,
Emotional availability
And mental stability.
I don’t feel things deeply
I don’t fall in love easily
I don’t feel sympathetic
For people going through a lot.
I don’t cry at funerals
I am not a good listener
And definitely not a talker.
I don’t miss people when they leave
And I don’t mourn them.
I am what society taught me to be.

4. I THINK

I think of how life would be without me.
I think of the ones who love me
And how they would suffer endlessly.

I think if I left today,
I wouldn't enjoy all that I love.
I won't hug my favorite people,
I won't sing my favorite songs
And look my siblings in the eyes
When giving life changing advice.

I grasp the flesh of my skin
Hoping to feel alive
And ache to find fulfillment within
The four walls I am constantly between,
And it feels impossible.

I feel too deep,
Think too deep
I am too deep in this hole
I cannot crawl my way out of.
I think and get lost
Between my reality and my dreams
But am I wrong or fantasizing about
The darkness?
I just sit here with myself and
I think.

5. LOVE/Love.

Love…
Oh love!
Such a beautiful thing.
In all its glory, all its magnificence
All it's power
Love…
The ultimate feeling.

Love…
The mess and the mellow
The pain and the craftiness,
It's hard.
Amusing.
Painful.
Real.

When I think of love,
I think of how I met love.
Or maybe,
How love met me.

I want to fall in love in one day
As if you could know enough to fall in love in a day.
Or maybe, that's the problem.
I want to 'fall'.

I've read poems about how we should grow in love or rise in love.
I've heard songs about having to build love, defend love, fight for love…
Everyone has their thoughts
Of what it needs to look like
And what it needs to be.

6. PRETENSE

I know you're tired

Of pretending you're okay.
Of saying there's nothing wrong when there is.
Of having to lie to people about what is going on
Of pretending to be strong and happy
When all you want to do is cry.

You wish you could just let everyone know what is wrong
So they can let you be
But you know that is impossible.
You're tired of living another day
Pretending,
That you're not tired at all.

7. WHAT AM I TO BELIEVE?

I am told life
Isn't easy
But they never told me
It would be this hard.
How do I even start living
When all I know is surviving.

But what I know,
One day,
After all the pain,
There will be peace.
And once I get there,
I will know.
And everything will become
Just a bit easier.

8. RUTH

In the shadows of a world unkind,
Lives a girl named Ruth, bitter and confined.
Her heart aches with anger and pain,
Forced by the world to wear a bitter chain.

Ruth's eyes hold a fire, burning bright,
A reflection of her inner fight.
She carries the weight of a thousand sorrows,
Each one shaping her tomorrows.

The world has been cruel, unkind to her,
Leaving scars that constantly stir.
She's been pushed down, time and again,
Forced to wear a mask of disdain.

Bitterness flows through her veins,
A poison that numbs her pains.
She lashes out at the world around,
Her anger a deafening sound.

But deep within her hardened shell,
Lies a heart that knows all too well,
The ache of loneliness and despair,
The longing for someone to care.

Ruth's spirit, though battered and worn,
Still holds a flicker, not yet torn.
She yearns for a glimmer of light,
To guide her through the darkest night.

Despite the bitterness that clouds her view,
There's a spark of hope, pure and true.
For deep down, Ruth longs to be free,
From the chains of anger that bind her, you see.

So let us not judge her harshly,
For the world has shaped her, quite starkly.
Instead, let's offer a hand of grace,
And help Ruth find a gentler place.

For in the depths of her bitter soul,
Lies a girl named Ruth, seeking to be whole.

9. FAREWELL

You left so soon
I didn't get to say goodbye.
I know you watch me from above
And see me cry.
I am sorry…
I try my level best to be strong
But it's hard,
Knowing you are forever gone.

10. I AM ENOUGH

It’s okay
And necessary to acknowledge that the people
You love have hurt you.
In one way or another.

Knowing your truths doesn’t take away from the love you may share.
But just like splinters in skin, it’s uncomfortable to act like the pain isn’t real.
How you feel is just how you feel
Ask your questions
It’s never a big deal.

11. TO BE YOUNG AGAIN.

In the quiet whispers of the nights glow,
There's a girl who longs for days ago.
Her heart aches for the innocence lost,
For the carefree days, at any cost.

She dreams of laughter and playful glee,
Of running wild and feeling free.
Her eyes hold a wistful, nostalgic gleam,
Yearning for the past, like a distant dream.

To be a child again, oh what bliss,
To feel the world through eyes of purest kiss.
No worries, no burdens, just joy and play,
In a world where time gently sways.

She wishes to dance in fields of green,
To chase butterflies, so serene.
To embrace each moment with wonder and delight,
And bask in the warmth of childhood's light.

Though time may march on, relentless and fast,
In her heart, the memories of childhood will last.
For the girl who wishes to be young once more,
Treasures the innocence she held before.

12. HEAVY IS THE TONGUE

Silence is one thing I have forcibly learnt,
The art of holding my tongue.
Long enough for a fool to believe he got away
Or long enough for it to be believable that I have nothing to say.
Damned if the words leap before I filter them,
Damned if I say anything at all.
Damned anyway!

13. THEN

They loved me more.
Only when my brokenness didn’t scare them away
And my scars didn’t turn them off.
When
I only had negatives to say for myself.

But,
They picked up the slack,
Saw me
When I couldn’t see myself.
They loved me more than I could love me at that time.
They loved me more, then.

14. ADHD

ADHD, a dance in his mind,
A symphony of thoughts, wild and unconfined.
A whirlwind of energy, a force to be reckoned,
A boy with a spirit, unbroken.

His thoughts, a kaleidoscope of color,
A canvas of ideas, a true honor.
At times, it may feel like a storm,
A battle within, a constant norm.

But he won't let it define him, no way,
He'll embrace his mind, in his own unique way.
For he's a warrior, brave and bold,
With a spirit that can't be controlled.

He finds solace in the great outdoors,
Where he can ride, and explore.
The wind, the sun, the earth beneath his feet,
Nature's rhythm, a comforting beat.

A boy with a heart that beats fast,
Living with ADHD, a part of his past.
A dance, a symphony, a whirlwind, a storm,
A boy with a spirit, forever warm.

15. HURT-BROKEN

In the garden of her heart, a fragile glass bird once soared,
Its wings of trust shattered, dreams scattered and ignored.
She held it close, believing it would never fall,
Yet it slipped from her grasp, leaving her to recall.

Each shard a memory of a love now lost,
Each crack a reminder of the emotional cost.
The bird lay broken, its song silenced by deceit,
Her heart aching, her spirit incomplete.

But in the ruins, a seed of resilience takes root,
A symbol of strength amidst the pain that took its loot.
She tends to it with care, nurturing hope anew,
Knowing that healing begins with what's true.

For within her shattered heart lies a flame,
A light that refuses to be tamed.
The broken bird, a symbol of her past,
The seed, a promise that love will last.

She tends to her garden, with patience and grace,
Embracing the scars, finding solace in the space.
From the fragments of her broken trust,
She'll rise like a phoenix, from ashes to dust.

16. DOUBLE LIFE

In a town where everyone knew his name,
But few truly saw the boy within,
He lived a life of quiet shame
And wore a mask to hide his sin.
A clever boy, with a curious mind,
He yearned for freedom to explore,
But his elders were all blind
To the dreams and desires he held in store.

So he created an alter ego,
A boy who dared to break the rules,
A rebel spirit, wild and free,
Who lived life on his own terms, without fools.
This secret life he led with pride,
A world where he was truly king,
A place to hide his deepest side,
And let his imagination take wing.

But living two lives is never easy,
And the burden grew heavier each day,
For how could he be truly free
When he had to hide his true self away?
The people saw only what they wanted,
A quiet boy who knew his place,
But beneath the surface, he was haunted,
By the fear of being found out and disgraced.

One day, he decided he had had enough,
Of living a lie and wearing a mask,
He would reveal his true self to the world,
And let his true colors shine at last.
But as he stood on the brink of truth,

He realized something profound,
That the love and acceptance he sought,
Could not be found by making a sound.
For true freedom comes from within,
From accepting oneself, flaws and all,
And living a life that's true to oneself,
Is the greatest gift of all.

So he let go of his alter ego,
And embraced his true self with pride,
And though the townsfolk may not understand,
He knows that he's finally come alive.
For in the end, it's not about what others see,
But about being true to oneself,
And living a life that's authentic and free,
Is the greatest gift of all, to one's own self.

17. FAT IS WHAT THEY CALLED ME.

‘You’re so fat’
‘You should reduce that weight’
‘Oh my, your tummy’
I don’t care
I tell myself.

But then
I tried
I tried
Heaven knows I tried
To sweat out the ‘fat’
Always hoping they would like my new costume.

18. DRUGS

I have to go a couple of days without
To remind myself I can exist sober.
Yet…..
The sober moments are really the most
Painful.

19. STILL

In the midst of my mental turmoil
I will be still.
When the four walls are caving in
I will be still.
When there’s nothing left but will
I will still be still.

20. HEARTBREAK

Being heartbroken is like drowning
In a sea of tears and pain
You’re sinking
You dive deeper into despair
And never want to go back to the surface.

21. GRANDFATHER DEAREST.

Tumi, is a young little girl who loves her grandfather so dearly. Tumi only gets to spend time with her grandpa during Christmas as this is the only time she gets to go to the village. This became a routine in her family and to her it isn't really Christmas without going to the village. While in the village, she follows him around all day as he goes to the coffee plantation, the shops or even when he is merely sitting in the living room with his cats. He always has stories to tell whether it is about his life in the army or his life as a child. He tells her of all the bushes they had to walk through as they were in the liberation struggle and everything they went through during the war. According to Tumi, her grandfather is the most amazing person she has ever seen.

Years go by, Tumi still goes to the village every Christmas and it's still her favorite time of the year. She is getting older and so is her grandfather. At eighty years, Tumi's grandfather still looked strong and he could do things like go to the coffee plantation to pick coffee like did when he was younger. He had the energy of a donkey at his old age. He always promised Tumi the world, he always told her that she would never lack anything as long as he lives. Tumi is one lucky girl.

Years go by again and Tumi's grandfather is getting weak but he is still holding on. Tumi's grandfather's health deteriorates and he is in and out of hospital but he stays strong so that Tumi gets to see him for atleast another year.Tumi can see the pain he is going through but he is holding on for her sake. The year 2021, Tumi gets to go for Christmas, gets to talk and hug her grandpa and he still has the same old jokes for her. Little did she know that that was the last Christmas she would get to see him. Tumi says goodbye but that goodbye hurt more than anything. Not even two months into the year, Tumi receives the devastating news that her grandfather has passed away. "It's a lie," Tumi tells herself. His death hurt Tumi more than anything. She didn't get to say her final goodbye or listen to his voice atleast one more time.

Years go by and Tumi, now a young woman with a heart full of memories and a soul burdened by loss, has finally found the strength to move forward from the profound grief that had engulfed her since the passing of her beloved grandfather. The pain of his absence had been a heavy weight on her shoulders, but with each passing day, she begins to embrace the light that shone through the cracks of her sorrow.

As the seasons changed and time marched on, Tumi finds solace in the memories of her grandfather's love and wisdom. She remembers his comforting presence, his reassuring words, and the way he had always believed in her dreams. His spirit lived on in the gentle breeze that rustled through the trees and the warmth of the sun that kissed her skin. Tumi immersed herself in the things that brought her joy and fulfillment. She poured her heart into her studies, just as her grandfather had always encouraged her to do. With determination and perseverance, she pursued her dreams of furthering her education, honoring the promise he had made to her before he left this world.Through the support of her family and friends, Tumi finds the courage to confront her grief and transform it into a source of strength. She sought comfort in the stories and lessons her grandfather had shared with her, drawing inspiration from his resilience and unwavering love.

As Tumi navigates the complexities of life without her grandfather by her side, she has discovered a newfound sense of purpose and resilience within herself. She realized that his legacy was not just in the memories they had shared but in the values and virtues he had instilled in her.

With each step she takes on her journey of healing, Tumi feels her grandfather's presence guiding her, his spirit whispering words of encouragement and love. She finds peace in the knowledge that he is watching over her, proud of the woman she is becoming.
As the days turn into weeks and the weeks into months, Tumi's heart begins to heal, slowly but surely. She learns to cherish the memories of her grandfather not with tears of sorrow but with smiles of gratitude for the time they had shared.

In the quiet moments of reflection, Tumi feels a sense of peace wash over her, a gentle reminder that love transcends time and space. She knows that her grandfather's love will always be with her, a beacon of light in the darkness, a source of strength in times of doubt.

And so, Tumi embraces the future with open arms, carrying her grandfather's love in her heart wherever she goes. She had found the courage to let go of the pain of loss and embrace the beauty of life once more, knowing that her grandfather's spirit will always be by her side, guiding her on her journey.

22. IS IT THE DARK I AM AFRAID OF?

Tap. Tap. Tap. Those are the sounds I hear as I am alone in the house. A cold chilly evening I find myself alone at home which is very surprising because our house was always very full. Umeme had done it again and there was no power. It's around 7:30 pm and it's pitch black. My mind then starts to reminisce about all the horror movies i would watch and the scarystories we would tell ourselves as kids. I imagined all the demons watching my every move. "Waaaa, it's all in your head." I tell my thirteen year old self. I went sat outside waiting patiently for the maid to get back with my siblings so at least I don't feel alone in the dark. Finally, I hear the gate open and I feel a sense of relief. I let out a huge sigh knowing that I wa alone anymore. Being the oldest, I always found it weird to be seen as weak or even vulnerable as one would put it. I would always tell my siblings that the dark isn't scary, that it was just all in our heads but yet I was totally afraid. The biggest punishment one could give me at the time was to tell me to get up and go light a candle. As in, how could I even start? I imagined that if I stood up the ghosts in the dark would follow me or even grab me if I went to the kitchen to get a matchbox. Nothing good lies in the dark. I would sing gospel songs to at least confuse the "enemy" but there is a way sound travels more clearly in the dark and trust me when I said I could even hear the slightest movement. The mere thought of being alone is what made everything worse. Little did I know, I was not afraid of the dark, I was just afraid of being alone. That was my biggest fear. The dark can never harm me, those so called demons couldn't get to me, I was just a child with trauma that I didn't even know I had. I was going through pain emotionally and psychologically.

Now, I sit outside in the pitch-black evening, I not helping it but feeling a sense of nostalgia wash over me. I remember all the times as a child when I would huddle under the covers, convinced that there were monsters lurking in the shadows. I remember the way my heart would race and my breath would catch in my throat as I listened to the creaks and groans of the old house settling. But as I sit here, I realize that the fear I had felt as a child was not really about the dark. It was about the unknown, the uncertainty of what might be lurking in the shadows. And as I grew older, I learnt that the world was full of unknowns, full of uncertainty. But I also learnt that I was stronger than I ever thought possible.

And as I grew up, I faced many challenges and obstacles. I experienced loss and heartbreak, but I also experienced love and joy. I learned that life was not always easy, but it was always worth living. And I realized that the fear I had felt as a child was just a small part of who I was.

Now, as I sit in the dark, I feel a sense of peace wash over me. I know that there is nothing to be afraid of. The demons that had once haunted me were nothing more than figments of my imagination. I am no longer the scared little girl who couldn't bring herself to light a candle. I am a strong, confident woman who had faced her fears and come out victorious. As I sit there, I thought about my siblings, who are still young and full of fear. I think about how I had once been like them, convinced that the dark was out to get me. But I also know that they will grow up, just as I had. They will have to face their own fears and challenges, and they will come out stronger on the other side. And so, I sit in the dark, feeling a sense of peace and contentment. I know that I had come a long way from the scared little girl I had once been. I had faced my fears and conquered them. And now, I was ready to face whatever the future held. As I sit here, I hear the sound of footsteps approaching. It is my little sister, who has come to join me in the dark. And as I look into her eyes, I see a reflection of my own fear and uncertainty. But I also see a spark of courage, a determination to face her fears head-on. And so, I take her hand and we sit together in the dark, singing gospel songs and telling stories. And as we sit here, I know that she will be okay. She will face her fears and come out stronger on the other side. Just as I had.

And so, as I sit here in the dark, I feel a sense of gratitude wash over me. I am grateful for the lessons I have learnt, for the strength I have found within myself. And I am grateful for the opportunity to share that strength with my siblings, to help them face their own fears and challenges.

As I sit here, I now know that the dark was not something to be feared. It is simply a part of life, a part of the unknown. And I am ready to face it, with courage and confidence.
And so, as the night wears on, I sit here in the dark, feeling a sense of peace and contentment. I know that I was not alone, that I had my siblings by my side. And I know that together, we can face anything that comes our way.

23. LOST OR FOUND

Not again! I tell myself. I lost myself again sometime i early January. Happy and anxious at the same time…new year, new beginnings I tell myself. Another year to trick myself into believing that I am running out of time. Basically it's like my life is this one big puzzle I am trying to solve but I keep loosing all the pieces right before I can connect them. Ten days into January, my birthday, hmmmm. I am supposed to be happy but no. My thoughts are getting the best of me. What if? How? Why? When? Where? Questions I ask myself. I am lost in my own mind. Regardless, I wake up, put on a big smile and show up. All will be okay, I tell myself.

February! Oh February! A lucky girl, overwhelmed but not surprised. I have lost myself again. "Oh boy" I tell myself, "this cannot be happening." Am I calibrated for a life without endless self questioning and doubt? The answer, I don't know and I hate that that is the only answer I am ever sure of. I wake up everyday, go with the flow but the long nights keep me wishing, hoping and silently praying for this to end. The month goes by and I am in a much better place than it started. It is what it is, I tell myself.

As the days turned into weeks, I found myself still struggling to find my footing. March arrived with a sense of uncertainty, and I could feel myself slipping further and further away from who I truly was. I was constantly questioning my decisions, my relationships, and my purpose in life. I was so consumed by my thoughts that I found it difficult to focus on anything else. As March dragged on, the constant questioning and self-doubt began to take a toll on me. I found myself exhausted, both physically and mentally. My relationships with friends and family suffered as i struggled to connect with them, my thoughts always somewhere else. I knew i needed to make a change, but i didn't know where to start.

One day, as i was walking through campus, I saw a sign for a meditation class. I had always been interested in meditation, but had never taken the time to try it. I decided to give it a shot. The first class was difficult. My mind was racing, and I found it hard to focus on my breathing. But the instructor was patient, and encouraged me to keep trying. Slowly, over the course of several classes, i began to see a change. I felt more centered, more present in my own life. I still had questions and doubts, but they didn't consume me the way they had before.

By the time April rolled around, I felt like a new person. I had lost myself several times throughout the year, but I had also found myself again. I had learned to let go of my fears and doubts and to embrace the present moment. I had learned to trust myself and to have faith in

my ability to navigate the ups and downs of life. I felt a new sense of hope. I was still struggling, but i was no longer alone. I had a community of fellow meditators, and a practice that helped me stay grounded. I still had days where i felt lost, but I was learning to accept those days as part of the journey.

As the month of April came to a close, i realized that i was still a work in progress. I still had questions and doubts, but i was learning to live with them. I was learning to accept myself, flaws and all. I was learning to be present in my own life, and to find joy in the simple things. I knew that the journey was far from over, but i was no longer afraid. I was ready to face whatever came my way, with an open heart and a clear mind. I was no longer lost in my own mind, but rather, i was finally finding myself.

Today! I lost myself sometime today. All I did was dress nice and go out to “play”. All I want is to feel the sun on my face and the sweet breeze of Kampala. I am not sleep deprived, why, well sleep has been my escape the past few days when I felt overwhelmed. I wish I was a kid, intrusive but innocent. A child whose only worry is where is mum or where is dad? I am hungry. I need to play. Just comfortable.

But as the day ends I remind myself of how far I have come and though I don’t look forward to tomorrow I will definitely try and see the silver lining. And as I look back on the past few months, I realize that I had been so focused on finding myself that I had forgotten to enjoy the journey. Life is full of twists and turns, and sometimes we lose our way. But that's okay, because as long as we keep moving forward, we will always find our way back to ourselves.
And so, as I stand on the balcony of my hostel, feeling the sun on my face and the sweet breeze of Kampala, I know that I am exactly where I am meant to be. I had lost myself several times throughout the year, but I had also found myself again. And I know that no matter what the future holds, I am ready to face it with courage and grace.

24. THE FATHER'S TRIAL

In the bustling city of Gikunga, Meru, a devoted father and dedicated employee, found himself facing a sudden and unexpected turn of events. It all began when the company he had faithfully served for over a decade announced massive layoffs due to financial difficulties. Meru, a middle-aged man with a gentle demeanor and a heart full of love for his family, was among those unfortunate souls who received the dreaded pink slip.

As the days turned into weeks and the weeks into months, Meru's world began to crumble around him. His wife, once his pillar of support, seemed distant and cold, unable to cope with the sudden change in their circumstances. The once vibrant social circle that he and his wife had cultivated over the years slowly faded away, leaving Meru feeling isolated and alone.

A Beacon of Hope

In the midst of his despair, Meru turned to the one constant in his life - his faith. Seeking solace in the quiet sanctuary of his local church, he poured out his heart to God, hoping for a miracle to alleviate his pain and suffering. With each prayer whispered in the dimly lit chapel, Meru found a glimmer of hope amidst the darkness that threatened to consume him.

Days turned into nights, and nights into weeks as Meru embarked on a journey of self-discovery and redemption. Through the pages of his Bible and the guidance of his faith, he found the strength to face each new day with renewed determination and unwavering faith. Slowly but steadily, he began to rebuild his shattered life, one piece at a time.

A New Dawn

As the seasons changed and the city of Gikunga bloomed with the promise of a new beginning, Meru emerged from the shadows of his past, a changed man. His trials and tribulations had not broken him but had forged him into a stronger, more resilient individual. With a newfound sense of purpose and a heart filled with gratitude, Meru embraced the future with open arms, knowing that no matter what challenges lay ahead, he would face them with unwavering faith and unshakeable resolve.

In the end, Meru's journey from despair to redemption served as a testament to the power of faith, love, and perseverance in the face of adversity. And as he stood on the threshold of a new chapter in his life, he knew that no matter what trials may come his way, he would always have the unwavering support of a higher power guiding him through the darkest of times.

25. The Weight of Darkness

In the quiet solitude of his room, Mark sat with his thoughts, feeling the heavy weight of despair pressing down on him. The darkness seemed to seep into every corner of his being, suffocating him with its relentless grip. He had reached a point where the idea of ending it all had become a constant companion, whispering seductively in his ear. "I wanted to kill myself, but I couldn't get myself to do it," Mark whispered to the empty room, his voice barely a breath against the silence. The thought of leaving behind his loved ones, of causing them pain and grief, held him back like an invisible chain.

Tears welled up in his eyes as he struggled with the conflicting emotions raging within him. Was it selfish to want to escape the unbearable pain that gnawed at his soul? Was it selfish to crave the peace that death promised?

In the midst of his turmoil, a faint glimmer of hope flickered within him. With trembling hands, he reached for the old, worn Bible on his bedside table. Opening it to a random page, his eyes fell on a verse that seemed to speak directly to his troubled heart. "I resorted to prayer and staying positive," Mark murmured, his voice gaining strength with each word. Clutching the Bible to his chest, he bowed his head in fervent prayer, pouring out his anguish and despair to a higher power.

Days turned into weeks, and Mark found solace in the routine of prayer and positive affirmations. Slowly, ever so slowly, the darkness began to recede, like the first light of dawn breaking through the night sky.
Through the support of friends and the guidance of his faith, Mark started to see a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Each day became a battle, but also a victory as he fought against the shadows that threatened to engulf him.

As time passed, Mark discovered a strength within himself that he never knew existed. The journey was long and arduous, filled with setbacks and doubts, but he persevered, clinging to the belief that there was a purpose to his pain. And one day, as he stood on the brink of a new dawn, with the sun painting the sky in hues of gold and pink, Mark realized that he had found a reason to live. The darkness that once consumed him had been transformed into a beacon of light, guiding him towards a future filled with hope and possibility.

26. MAYA'S LEAP OF FAITH: Putting herself first.

Once upon a time, somewhere in a certain town in the outskirts of Kampala, lived a young woman named Maya. She was the eldest of two children born to divorced parents. Her mother, a successful lawyer, and her father, a renowned artist, had separated when she was just a toddler. Maya's life had always been about putting others first. Her mother's demanding career meant that Maya had to take care of her younger brother, Jack, and manage the household chores. Her father, who lived in a different city, would often call her to ask for help with his errands and appointments. Maya never said no, always putting her family's needs before her own.

Maya's parents had always told her that being the eldest meant that she had to be responsible and take care of her younger brother. She had grown up believing that her needs and desires were not as important as those of her family.

As Maya grew older, she began to feel the weight of her responsibilities. She was working as a paralegal at her mother's law firm, taking care of Jack, and helping her father with his errands. She barely had any time for herself, and when she did, she would feel guilty for not doing enough for her family.

One day, while running errands for her father, Maya passed by a bookstore. A book in the window caught her eye - "The Power of Putting Yourself First". She felt a strange pull towards the book and decided to buy it. As she read the book, Maya began to realize that she had been neglecting her own needs and desires. She had been living her life for others, and it was time for her to start living for herself. She decided to take a leap of faith and start putting herself first.

Maya started by setting aside time for herself every day. She would wake up early and go for a walk, read a book, or simply sit in silence. She also started saying no to her family's demands when she needed to. It was not easy, but Maya knew that she had to prioritize her own well-being. As Maya began to prioritize herself, she noticed a change in her life. She felt happier, more fulfilled, and more energized. She was able to perform better at work, and she was able to be a better sister and daughter.

Maya's family noticed the change in her as well. Her mother, who had always been so focused on her career, started to spend more time with Maya and Jack. Her father, who had always been

so dependent on Maya, started to take care of his own errands. Maya's transformation also inspired her younger brother, Jack. He saw how Maya was taking care of herself and how it was benefiting her and their family. He started to take more responsibility for his own life, and he and Maya grew closer as siblings.
As Maya continued to put herself first, she realized that life was short. She wanted to enjoy every moment, to travel, to try new things, and to be present in her own life. She knew that she would always be there for her family, but she also knew that she needed to prioritize her own needs and desires.

Maya had finally realized that it was important to put herself first. While it may seem selfish, it is actually the opposite. When we take care of ourselves, we are better able to take care of those around us. We are happier, more fulfilled, and more energized. We are able to live our lives to the fullest, enjoying every moment.

Maya had also realized that it is never too late to start putting herself first. Whether she was young or old, whether she has a family or not, we all deserve to prioritize our own well-being. It may be difficult at first, but the rewards are worth it.

So, Maya decided to write a book to inspire others who were going through the same situation like she did. A book like the one she read from the book store years back. A book that would help those who were feeling overwhelmed, those who felt like they were neglecting their own needs and desires, she wanted to inspire like she was inspired. “Set aside time for yourself, say no when you need to, and prioritize your own well-being. You deserve it.” Those were the words Maya used as the conclusion of her book.