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# MAAUA

WHEN AFRICAN WOMEN RISE



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**ELIZABETH NASAKA**

Women are the bearers of lineage and play a crucial role in shaping society



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## Behind the scene

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WHEN AFRICAN WOMEN RISE *BioMagazine*

ELEVATION

WiSP



# ELIZABETH “LIZ” NASAKA



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**In the journey of life, we often face challenges that seem insurmountable, moments that test our strength and resilience. I want to remind you that within you lies an incredible power to overcome adversity. My life's story is a testament to the fact that with determination, faith, and the support of those around us, we can navigate the toughest paths and emerge stronger.**

# It's all about Liz!

Elizabeth “Liz” Nasaka's life story shines brightly in the intricate fabric of existence, portraying strength, transformation, and perseverance. Hailing from Uganda and growing up in Kenya, Elizabeth's journey embodies adaptability and the enduring strength of family ties. Her autobiography is not just a personal account but a wellspring of motivation, echoing universal themes of growth, identity, and purpose.

In recounting her life, Liz offers more than a mere life story; she presents a blueprint of strength, a life philosophy intertwining personal development with communal betterment. Her narrative serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring strength of the human spirit to confront adversity, embrace change, and carve a path of meaningful influence.

**Happy Reading!**



*Hazel*

Editor In Chief

**CO-FOUNDER  
UNITED VILLAGE GLOBAL**



**ELIZABETH  
NASAKA**

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I am the co-founder of United Village Global, a member-based organisation incorporated in Geneva, Switzerland. United Village Global is dedicated to help the youth see their future in the village. Our mission prompts the question: how can we build a better tomorrow? The answer lies in unity—by joining hands together.



# MY STORY RY

**I belong to the generation born in the late 80s, transitioning into the 90s, currently at the age of 34. Born on Friday the 18th of August 1989, at 11:45pm in central Uganda. As one of the last to straddle the line between the 80s and 90s, I often feel like I transition between two eras.**

My early years were spent in Uganda, but my family relocated to Kenya when I was young, settling in the mountainous region near Mount Kenya. My father found work on a farm run by Europeans engaged in agricultural production, leading to our relocation. All my schooling took place in Kenya, shaping much of my upbringing and experiences.

*hmm...*

# IT ALL STARTS HERE

Growing up, I was a reserved child and as my parent's last-born child and the only girl. I shared my formative years with my brother, forming the core of our small yet resilient family unit.

The move to Kenya was significant as it meant leaving behind our mother, who had departed for Germany, while my father sought better opportunities. With the rest of our family remaining in Uganda, the transition to Kenya marked a fresh start for us, forging a path of independence as we navigated a new environment together. My father's words echoed the importance of survival and adaptation, emphasising the need to integrate into the local culture and community for a smoother transition. His guidance instilled in me the skills to adapt early on, a lesson I carry with me to this day.

*I've been brought up by a single father, a man I deeply honour and cherish. Proudly, I consider myself a daddy's girl.*

Our move introduced us to a different tribe, culture, and way of life, presenting new challenges and opportunities for growth. In the absence of nannies, my father took on the role of caregiver, assuming responsibility for cooking, cleaning, and nurturing us as a single parent.

Overall, my upbringing was characterised by love, perseverance, adaptability, and the unwavering support of my family, laying the foundation for the person I am today.

# RAISING ELIZABETH

I've been brought up by a single father, a man I deeply honour and cherish. Proudly, I consider myself a daddy's girl. Growing up in the care of a single dad and alongside my brother, I found myself surrounded by a community of men and boys, shaping much of my early life experience. Despite the absence of a mother figure, our family unit was remarkably strong and cohesive.

My father imparted invaluable lessons to us, emphasising the importance of family bonds and open communication. In a new country and environment, we relied solely on each other, building a deep sense of unity and love. My dad was incredibly hands-on, engaging in every aspect of our upbringing. He cooked for us, shared stories, danced with us, and most importantly, prayed for us. Every fundamental aspect of our upbringing was carefully instilled within us by him.

Education held a special place in my father's heart, and he made sure to emphasise its significance from an early age. He firmly believed that education was the gateway to achieving one's dreams and aspirations. Despite our modest means, my dad ensured that we received the best in terms of values and life lessons, instilling in us a strong moral compass and a deep understanding of the world around us.

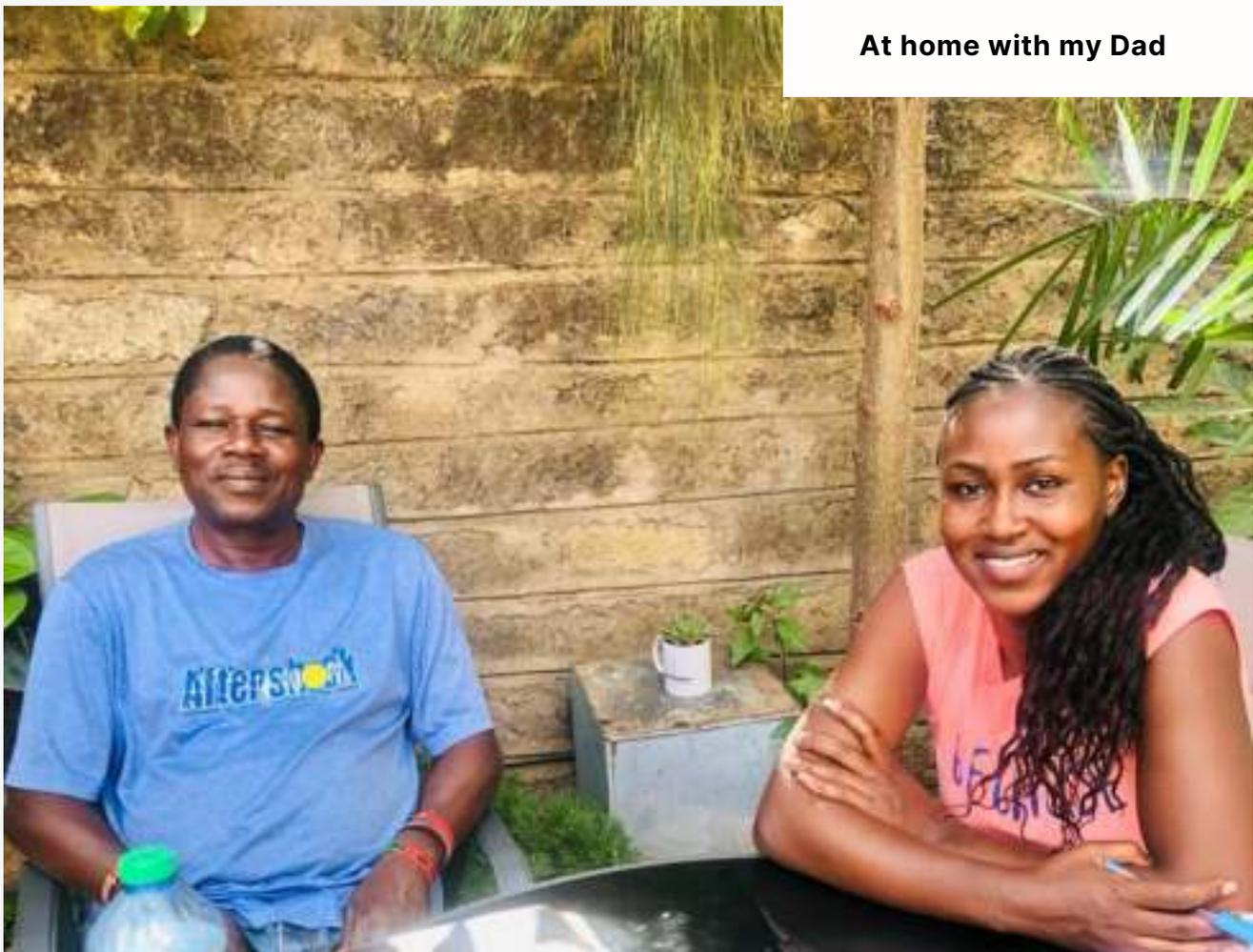


From left: Steve (my brother), Liz (4 years old) and my Dad (Tom)

# RAISING ELIZABETH

Our journey together spanned from primary school to high school and eventually to university, with my father guiding us every step of the way. However, when I was about to embark on my high school journey, around the age of 13 or 14, my dad remarried. This marked the first time we were introduced to a maternal figure in our lives. Given that my mother had relocated abroad when I was young, communication with her was limited to occasional postcards, as smartphones and instant messaging were not yet prevalent.

Overall, my upbringing under the guidance of my single father was filled with love, strength, and invaluable life lessons that continue to shape me into the person I am today.



**At home with my Dad**

# STRATEGIST AT HEART

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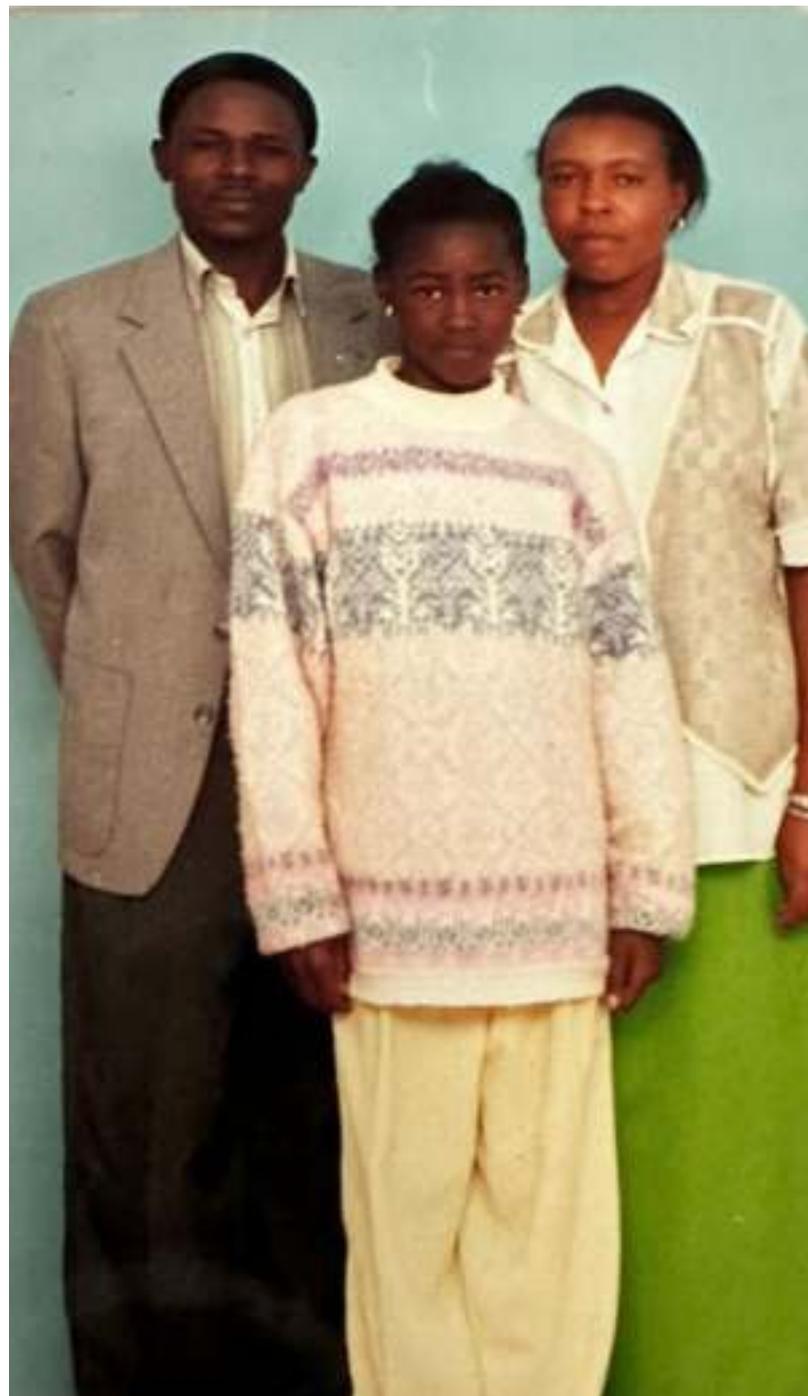
# THE MOTHER THAT RAISED ME

After my dad remarried, he married a wonderful Kenyan woman who became the mother figure in our lives, and that's when my sister was born. I must have been around 15 years old at the time. It was a joyous moment for me to finally have a woman in our household, as it was something I had never experienced before. My dad, who had not been inclined towards remarriage, introduced this amazing woman into our lives, sharing with her how he had raised us.

She quickly grew to love us, appreciating our disciplined nature. I recall instances where, even when dining out, we would diligently clear the table and take the plates to the kitchen, a habit ingrained in us by our father. He would even instruct waiters not to interfere with our task. Sadly, her time with us was cut short, as she passed away after being with us for only eight years.

During her time with us, I was away at boarding school for most of the time, so I didn't have as much interaction with her as I would have liked. However, I remember her fondly as a remarkable woman who brought happiness into our lives until her untimely departure.

Following her passing, I took on the responsibility of caring for my younger sister. I approached my dad and expressed my desire to raise her in the same manner that he had raised us, acknowledging his exceptional parenting. Since then, I have been her guardian and have continued to live with her, cherishing the memory of the wonderful woman who briefly became our mother.



**My Dad, my late step Mom and me.**





My little sister and I



# THE MOTHER THAT GAVE BIRTH TO ME



With my mother relocating to Germany, she left us in the care of my father. Although he fulfilled both parental roles admirably, I recognised the need to seek knowledge beyond what he could provide.

Returning to the topic of my biological mother, it's quite intriguing. I recall glimpsing her presence only once when she visited us, so I didn't really have a relationship with her. She departed when I was merely two years old, leaving me to be raised by my father and brother. However, as time passed and I matured, especially after becoming a mother myself, I felt compelled to reach out to my mother to cultivate a connection.

Initially, I harboured many questions about her absence during my upbringing. All I knew was that she had relocated to Germany and remarried. Through our efforts, we have been able to work on our relationship. She has been instrumental in guiding me through various aspects of life, particularly marriage and motherhood. Interestingly, she takes pride in the fact that she left me in the care of my father, recognising the exceptional job he did in raising us.

Reflecting on my teenage years, I recall the challenges of navigating certain milestones, such as experiencing my first menstrual cycle. It was particularly daunting as my primary caregiver was my father. Communicating such matters to him felt somewhat taboo, despite his close involvement in my upbringing. Although he fulfilled both parental roles admirably, I recognised the need to seek knowledge beyond what he could provide.



# HOW I CHOOSE MY CAREER PATH

My journey towards my career path has been a series of twists and turns, marked by determination, resilience, and a firm resolve to carve out my own destiny. It all began with my educational pursuits, which were driven by both necessity and passion.

Starting from my early schooling at Bingwa Primary School in Nanyuki, located at the equator in the village, to an all-girls boarding high school in urban Nanyuki, my academic journey took shape. Following high school, I embarked on my tertiary education at Kenya Polytechnic College in Nairobi. This marked my first foray into city life, an experience that broadened my horizons significantly. Despite financial constraints, I pursued a two-year diploma programme, hoping to delve into the realm of hotel management, a field influenced by my father's culinary expertise and background in the hospitality industry.

However, after a year of studying Hotel management, I realised that this career path didn't align with my aspirations and character. I had always been a strategic thinker, observing and analysing situations before making decisions. Recognising the need for a change, I transitioned to Business Administration, driven by a burning desire to pursue a more fitting career path.

During this time, my family faced numerous challenges, including financial hardships and my stepmother falling ill, which further complicated matters. These circumstances led me to take a brief hiatus from my studies at the polytechnic, but I refused to succumb to despair. With my father's teachings echoing in my mind, I resolved to navigate through life's trials with dignity and perseverance.





Determined to chart a new course, I embarked on a relentless job hunt in Nairobi, determined to secure employment despite the odds stacked against me. It was during one of these encounters, at Kipepeo Hotel, that I employed a bold strategy to secure a job opportunity. With unwavering confidence and a touch of ingenuity, I managed to impress the manager and secure a position, marking the beginning of my professional journey.

With stable employment, I resumed my academic pursuits, eventually earning a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Kenya Methodist University and later specialising in Leadership and Strategic Management through a master's programme at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Fuelled by ambition and a thirst for knowledge, I continued to ascend the corporate ladder, gaining invaluable experience across various organisations.

Today, as a co-founder of United Village Global, a non-profit organisation with a global outreach, and having held prominent roles in esteemed organisations such as Africa Economic Summit Group as a board member, Agilitee East Africa and CM Advocates LLP, I stand as a testament to the power of resilience and determination in the face of adversity. My journey serves as a testament to the importance of perseverance, adaptability, and unwavering faith in one's abilities to overcome life's challenges and achieve success.



# OUR ROLE AS WOMEN IN CREATING SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY

When we talk about inhibiting factors, one major aspect is the entrenched societal beliefs about where women belong. I firmly believe that women belong everywhere, not confined to any particular role or place. However, societal norms often dictate otherwise, positioning women in certain roles or places. This mindset is a significant barrier to progress. That's why we hear slogans like "women empowerment" – it's about challenging these limiting beliefs and paving a way for change for future generations.

Women are the bearers of lineage and play a crucial role in shaping society. It's essential to break free from the confines of traditional roles and recognise the inherent capabilities of women as creators and decision-makers. We need women at the forefront of every sphere, whether it's at home, in offices, or in governance. It's almost innate, like a natural gift, to guide society in the right direction.

Women are the custodians of culture and the key to its preservation and evolution. Personally, I've faced the decision to break away from traditional patterns, opting to stay and make a difference despite the odds. Surrounding oneself with supportive individuals and maintaining a clear vision for change is crucial in this journey.



Michelle Obama

Getty Images

I've drawn inspiration from figures like Michelle Obama, whose journey reflects resilience and determination in the face of adversity.

Maintaining one's identity and purpose amidst societal expectations is vital. I've drawn inspiration from figures like Michelle Obama, whose journey reflects resilience and determination in the face of adversity. When women lead, nations prosper. That's why it's imperative to have women involved in decision-making processes at all levels.

Our work at United Village Global, is about bridging gaps and cultivating sustainable prosperity. By leveraging local resources and empowering communities, we can create a better future for generations to come. Our approach involves establishing vocational centres, empowering youths



United Village Global (UVG) Co-Founders  
Elizabeth Nasaka and Rune Kongshaug.

Recently, United Village Global (UVG) embarked on a transformative journey with the launch of the Women In Sustainable Prosperity (WiSP) project, a beacon of hope and innovation in the quest for a sustainable future. WiSP stands as a testament to the power of female stewardship, particularly from those hailing from marginalised communities, and their pivotal role in sustainability and prosperity.

Co-Founded by Elizabeth Nasaka and Rune Kongshaug, the formulation was in recognition of women's unparalleled contributions to sustainable economic development. By advancing an environment where women can thrive, UVG aims to uphold its foundational principles: "Stabilize, Grow, and Prosper". The project spotlights women who have turned adversities into opportunities, establishing opportunities that not only secure their livelihoods but also energise local economies. With a proven track record of success, these stewards are poised to scale their ventures, creating waves of positive change that ripple through communities and transcend generations.

# WOMEN IN SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY



Within United Village Global, we have a programme called the Women in Sustainable Prosperity (WiSP). WiSP celebrates the narratives of women: those who have paved the way and those who are yet to emerge. It focuses on stories that are not only told but also sell and build, creating a community of women who are powerful, bold, gentle, and loving. These women bravely share their journeys, highlighting their triumphs over adversity, ongoing impact, and the legacies they aspire to pass down through six generations.

Our journey extends beyond the present, inviting women worldwide to participate in this global movement. With open arms, we welcome all to join us in advancing stability, growth, and collective prosperity.

SCAN ME



## KEEPING THE BALANCE WAS HARD

You see, I've always been one to keep moving, never just settling in one place. I delved into entrepreneurship, establishing both a children's store and a greengrocer business, concurrently, pursuing my master's degree in strategic management at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

Juggling the responsibilities of motherhood, entrepreneurship, and academia was no easy feat. As my family grew, so did my obligations. Our living situation improved, necessitating a move to a larger home. Despite the demands, I persisted, determined to excel in all facets of my life.

Balancing these roles was undeniably tough, especially in the early stages. I faced difficult decisions, opting to adhere to societal norms even when I yearned for more. Yet, I remained resolute, holding onto hope for a brighter future.

Each day presented new challenges and opportunities for growth. I immersed myself in hands-on learning, managing my businesses while honing my research and training skills. Despite encountering setbacks, I persevered, refusing to succumb to adversity.

My journey taught me the value of resilience and determination. Even when circumstances seemed bleak, I forged ahead, driven by a desire to succeed. I embraced every opportunity to expand my knowledge and expertise, leveraging my experiences to effect positive change.

While the road was arduous, I never wavered in my commitment to personal and professional development. Through dedication and perseverance, I navigated the complexities of entrepreneurship and academia, emerging stronger and more resilient than ever before.



**My journey through the darkness involved grappling with the stark reality of my present self-compared to the vision of who I aspired to be. There were moments when the weight of existence felt unbearable, pushing me to the brink of contemplating the unthinkable - ending my own life. Although I never took that final step, the mere consideration of such a drastic action underscored the depth of my despair.**

# THE DARK SIDE

Feeling overwhelmed by the relentless challenges of life, I found myself teetering on the edge of hopelessness. It seemed as though every day was an uphill battle, with no respite in sight. The absence of viable outlets compounded my sense of isolation and despair, leaving me adrift in a sea of darkness.

Yet, even in the darkest moments, a glimmer of hope flickered faintly, reminding me of the importance of resilience and perseverance. I realised that hope was not just a fleeting emotion but a guiding principle that could illuminate even the bleakest of paths. My love for sunsets emanates from this narrative...oh am a lover for sunsets

Drawing from my own experiences of despair and near-defeat, I have embraced the role of an inspirational leader, using my journey as a beacon of hope for others. Through sharing my story and offering words of encouragement, I strive to instil faith and resilience in those who may be navigating similar challenges.

So, despite the shadows that once threatened to consume me, I stand as a testament to the power of hope and perseverance. My journey may have been marked by darkness, but it has also been illuminated by the light of faith and the promise of prosperity.



Despite the shadows that once threatened to consume me, I stand as a testament to the power of hope and perseverance. My journey may have been marked by darkness, but it has also been illuminated by the light of faith and the promise of prosperity.

*My*  
**STRENGTH**

**STR  
ATE  
GIST**



As someone who observes and listens attentively to the world around me, I firmly believe in the importance of balance in life. This belief stems from my upbringing, where I witnessed my father's devout practices of prayer, fasting, and seeking guidance from a higher power, whom I refer to as God.

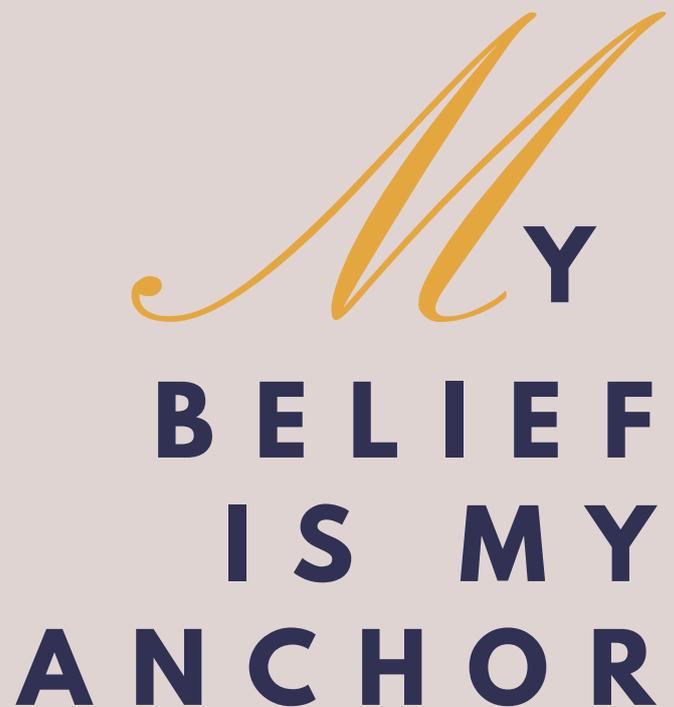
To me, a balanced life encompasses stability in three key aspects: physical, mental, and spiritual. Physically, it's crucial not to neglect our bodies, as they are the vessels through which we experience life's journey. Just as we ensure our laptops stay charged, we must also prioritise our physical well-being.

Mentally, maintaining stability is essential for navigating life's challenges with clarity and resilience. Cultivating a strong mindset enables us to overcome obstacles and pursue our goals with determination.

However, I believe true balance cannot be achieved without nurturing our spiritual selves. Acknowledging the presence of a higher power that governs both humanity and the universe adds depth and meaning to our existence. As a Christian, I find solace and strength in my relationship with God, engaging in heartfelt conversations and seeking guidance in times of uncertainty.

This spiritual dimension has profoundly influenced my life and shaped my identity. It serves as a guiding force, providing clarity and purpose as I navigate through life's complexities.

In essence, a balanced life encompasses harmony across physical, mental, and spiritual realms. I've learned that spiritual conviction acts as a powerful source of support, akin to a fire that fuels our journey, whether in times of darkness or light. It is this spiritual foundation that underpins true prosperity and resilience in all aspects of life.



MY  
BELIEF  
IS MY  
ANCHOR



*A*  
**MESSAGE  
TO THE  
FUTURE  
ME**

Embrace every experience, whether good or bad, as an opportunity for growth and learning. Remember, it's not the hardships that define us, but how we respond to them. Keep pushing forward, stay true to your values, and believe in your capacity to make a difference.