

BACK ON MY FEET

The 'how to' manual for single parents

MUTHONI OMUKHANGO



Back On My Feet - The 'how to' manual for single parents
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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the fathers in my life - John, Kennedy,
Niyi, Vincent, Stanley and Patrick;

And to the great mothers with a tender heart that carries me
through life - Lucy, Prisca, Alda, Esther, Dolly, Anne, Maryanne
and Ruth;

And to three very special women in my recovery journey -
Christine, Kainos and Abiah.

Without these people, I would not have gotten back on my feet.
Thank you so much for your tender love and care!

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A Word From The
PUBLISHER
CLC Kenya

No matter how many times you trip them up,

God-loyal people don't stay down long;

Soon they're up on their feet.

Proverbs 24:16^{MSG}

FOREWORD

Tragedies and traumas present the enemy with the perfect tools for entrapment, having as it were many of his victims in an Alcatraz of sorrow. This hopelessness has led many to resign to mere survival, being reduced to zombies. The problem is compounded by the fact that these victims are parents, which means, the legacy of the enemy easily goes on to the next generation. Uninterrupted, this misfortune is normalized from one generation to another, leading such persons to conclude that such is their fate.

In this book, Muthoni Omukhango offers this much needed interruption by candidly considering the plight of single parenthood, while masterfully weaving personal experience with research and the encounters of others, in order to shine a light of hope. This work brings with it a beautiful blend of spiritual and psychosocial counsel, formidable keys in breaking free from the enemy's hold. The book is both a wide sweep and deep dive of the subject matter (single parenthood), while 'keeping it real' to ensure the content is not reduced to meaningless theoretical jargon.

Undoubtedly, this is a companion tool in navigating single parenthood and a sure reminder of God's promises to you – keys to silencing the enemy's selective reminders of mistakes of omission or commission. To this end, this book is recommended for all; victims, perpetrators, and the generalists, for in its pages are prescriptions that will be of benefit to the reader, directly or indirectly.

As you journey through the pages of this treatise, may you be lifted above the voices of condemnation, be loosed from the ties of the past, and be thrust into the glorious liberty reserved for you in Christ Jesus. As ably stated in this book, may you be infused with new life and enabled to journey towards the realization of your glorious God-ordained destiny.

Victory to all the readers! Shalom

Vincent Odhiambo

Author, The Sower's Parable

MY STORY - FANCY SPAULDING

At the mention of the term “single mother or dad”, most people see a mess. There is an image that the society has painted about single parents. I happened to experience the harsh judgement that comes with careless teenage sex firsthand. I became a single mother five days to my 19th birthday. I was shunned by family and friends. It was one of the most horrifying experiences I had as a teenager. I had no manual on how to raise a child. I was still young and naive. I still wanted to “enjoy” teenage sex for longer, but I couldn’t.

Fortunately, nature has a way of teaching us. What many people may think was a disadvantage, I took it as an opportunity to mature earlier and become a mother to my daughter. I had a choice to make; either continue licking my wounds and feeling sorry about myself or grow up and raise the baby I had brought to this world. I had no idea where to start but I knew somehow, I had to start somewhere. I had no college education, the only thing I knew how to do was house chores.

When my daughter was two years old, I moved from my then hometown Nakuru to the capital city Nairobi. I looked for a job as house help. God was watching over me because He connected

me with a very good family that had only one child. I did not care about any luxury or expensive cosmetics like girls of my age did. All that was stripped from me by being a single mother. My priority was making sure my child had clothing and food. I saved enough money for down payment to join a beauty college. I talked to my employers to allow me to attend the college as a part time student. The college was fifteen minutes away from my employer's home. God gave me favour with them, and they paid for the rest of my college - they were my guardian angels. When I was done with college, I got a job as a beautician and started earning enough to pay for a house-help to take care of my daughter while I was at work.

I was born and raised in a Roman Catholic family. I knew that there was something more out there in the spiritual realm for me. In 2009, I decided to join school of ministry where I first met the author of this book Muthoni Omukhango. We became friends and neighbours. We had a lot in common, and our daughters became friends. We had a weekly fellowship at her apartment.

I must say that living for God as a single mother was not a walk in the park. There were so many temptations to just want to give up on God and go back to carnal living. The lust of flesh does not leave you just because you are a born again Christian. It is a conscious decision you make every single day to do the right thing for your child.

There are many nights I went to bed alone and I had very strong desires to have a man by my side. It is in those nights that I

learnt that God will allow temptations to come our way even as Christians, not because He wants us to fail but I strongly believe it is for these three reasons:

1. He wants to take what is not of Him out of your life.
2. He wants to instill some good values in you.
3. He wants to show the devil that His children are stronger than he thinks. Just like he allowed the devil to try Job in the book of *Job 1:8 The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered and reflected on My servant Job? For there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God [with reverence] and abstains from and turns away from evil [because he honors God]."*

I was not holier than every single mother that I knew, but one thing I know, I got to a point where I totally depended on God to send me the right man. Not just a man that could be a good husband to me but one that was ready to be a father to my daughter. One thing I remember from my many conversations with God, He told me He needed me to be ready in every single way - to think like a family woman and also to act like one. He was not going to bring me the man I desired when I had not readied myself. As crazy as it sounds, marriage is quid pro quo! It is 100/100. I had to be the woman any single man would desire to marry.

I met my husband through a mutual friend. The moment I saw him, I knew he was the one for me. It took us five years of long-

distance courtship, with a lot of God's grace. We eventually got married on the 6th year. We have two children together; and he adopted my daughter and loves her just as his own.

The content in this book speaks so much to my life and is so relatable to the lives of so many other single mothers and fathers. No matter where you are today, a newly single parent, or a single parent for many years, just know that there is a place for you in your Father's house. If you desire to meet a man someday, don't despair, there is one out there being prepared for you. However, you need to be ready and do your part in readiness.

Today not only am I happily married, but at the timing of writing this book, I am also in third year of a 4-year program to become a Registered Nurse. I have always wanted to be a nurse since my childhood. In His timing, He makes all things beautiful. Your today may seem too dark to be illuminated, you may feel too broken to get up on your feet again, but I am a living testimony, you are going through what you are going through to become someone else's platform tomorrow.

Fancy B. Spaulding

USA. Dixfield ME

INTRODUCTION

Finding myself on my own as a single mom was not an easy transition; it didn't matter the circumstances behind my status or what hardships or mistakes led me to my position in life. In many circumstances, life bogs down single dads and moms as they work hard to manage this (single parent) position while trying to make ends meet.

Fortunately, God does not give up on us because He has identified us as His own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything He has promised us.

It is He who has also put His seal on us [that is, He has appropriated us and certified us as His] and has given us the [Holy] Spirit in our hearts as a pledge [like a security deposit to guarantee the fulfillment of His promise of eternal life].

2 Corinthians 1:22

This means that God is watching upon us in every situation, the promises are real and He has to fulfil them because He has placed

His Word above His name. I held to this Word through the dark seasons of my life until I came out on the other side of the tunnel.

God, in His manifold wisdom has made provision for every aspect of our lives. One of my favourite reassurance of God's interest in my life is in Psalms 37:24. This verse says that when I fall, I will not be hurled down, because the Lord is the one who holds my hand and sustains me. God's promise is that He directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of our lives. Though we stumble, we will never fall, for the Lord holds us by the hand. Even though we fall seven times, we will get right up!

As you read through this book, I do not know how many times you have fallen or how much you are struggling right now, the promise is that God is right there with you, holding your hand and ensuring that you get right up! My desire is that you will get a few tools to help on your journey to the other side and by God's help, you will be more than fine. You will be victorious.

It's been almost two decades since I experienced this type of darkness and confusion in life. Over the last many years, I have witnessed God's faithfulness towards my full restoration. I have had many battles and won by God's grace. I know that you too, can and will win the battle this season. God has already put everything you need for this season - resources, knowledge, relationships and godly people to walk with you through the dark tunnel to the other side. That's God's part.

Your part in this journey is to trust in Him and in the ways He has for you. You also must obey His instructions and follow in

His leading. His instructions are not grievous, they are for your good and will bring prosperity to you, your children and future spouse (when you marry or remarry). My prayer for you is that you may allow God's commands and will to restrain you towards righteousness.

If you have this hope confidently placed in God, you will purify yourself, just as He is pure, holy, undefiled and guiltless.

1 John 3:3

You can read this book cover to cover or just pick any topic that seems relevant to your current situation. May God multiply the wisdom in this book and make it implementable for you. And when you have finally overcome, remember to reach out to another sister or brother in their dark days, help them find the light of the Word of God and let's illuminate the world!

Muthoni Omukhango
Minister, Christian Literature Communications Kenya
Co-founder, Almond Rod

CHAPTER ONE

HOW DID I GET HERE?

