

# #2 MyNetWork



## LET'S TALK BAGGAGE

Four young individuals say how they confronted their pain after living in dysfunction for years, and made peace with childhood trauma. **P.4&5**

# MyNetWork Show Biz

Elizabeth Ngigi

## Review

### THE KENYANIST WITH KAMAU WAIRURI

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ke/podcast/the-kenyanist/id1586131337>

The *Kenyanist* podcast takes a step back from the daily news cycle to delve deeply into the underlying issues that Kenyans debate and grapple with. Each episode features a guest expert who provides insightful analysis on pressing social and political matters, from governance to economic challenges. Kamau says his calm and inquisitive interviewing style allows his guests to unpack complex topics. What stands out about *The Kenyanist* is its ability to tackle divisive topics without sensationalism, encouraging a more reflective and constructive approach to Kenya's challenges.

## Hotspot

NBO  
17 - 27 OCTOBER

### NBO Film Fest

NBO Film Festival returns for its fifth edition, running from October 17-27 at its home base, Prestige Cinema on Ngong Road, with screenings in iconic venues across Nairobi, including the historic Kaloleni Social Hall in Eastlands, Docu-box at Shalom House, and Unseen Cinema in Kilimani. Over the 10-day celebration, 17 new feature films, 22 short films, and two Kenyan productions will be on display. The festival kicks off with the visually compelling documentary *The Battle for Laikipia*, exploring Kenya's land disputes, and closes with *Our Land, Our Freedom*, an insightful look into the nation's ongoing struggle for land rights.

David Junior Odera alias David Wonder traces his roots to humble beginnings in Nairobi's Eastlands neighbourhoods. His love for music was fostered in church, and his big break came in 2017 when he released the hit song *Ndogo Ndogo*, in collaboration with musician Kelvin Kioko alias Bahati.

Five years later, in 2022, David's journey took an unexpected turn when he fell seriously ill. This forced him to step away from the limelight and reevaluate his life goals. During this time, Wonder says he had to confront the harsh reality of his fading popularity, as the once-bustling phone calls from fans and industry friends fizzled out.

#### 1. How did growing up in Eastlands shape your music journey?

I was raised by staunch believers, so it wasn't difficult to settle on the genre of music to pursue. I started singing in church events. My mum was a very religious person, and it was a sin not to go to church in our home. The foundation of my music was laid in church and that has never changed.

I am the last born of a family of two. I have a big brother. I was born in Korogocho slums and my parents later moved to Kariobangi, then to Umoja. My mum was a tailor for the longest time and my dad was a businessman. I studied at Korogocho Primary, did my KCPE at City Primary School, then proceeded to Ruaraka High School in 2014. I scored a C plain but I feel like my parents did not believe in me.

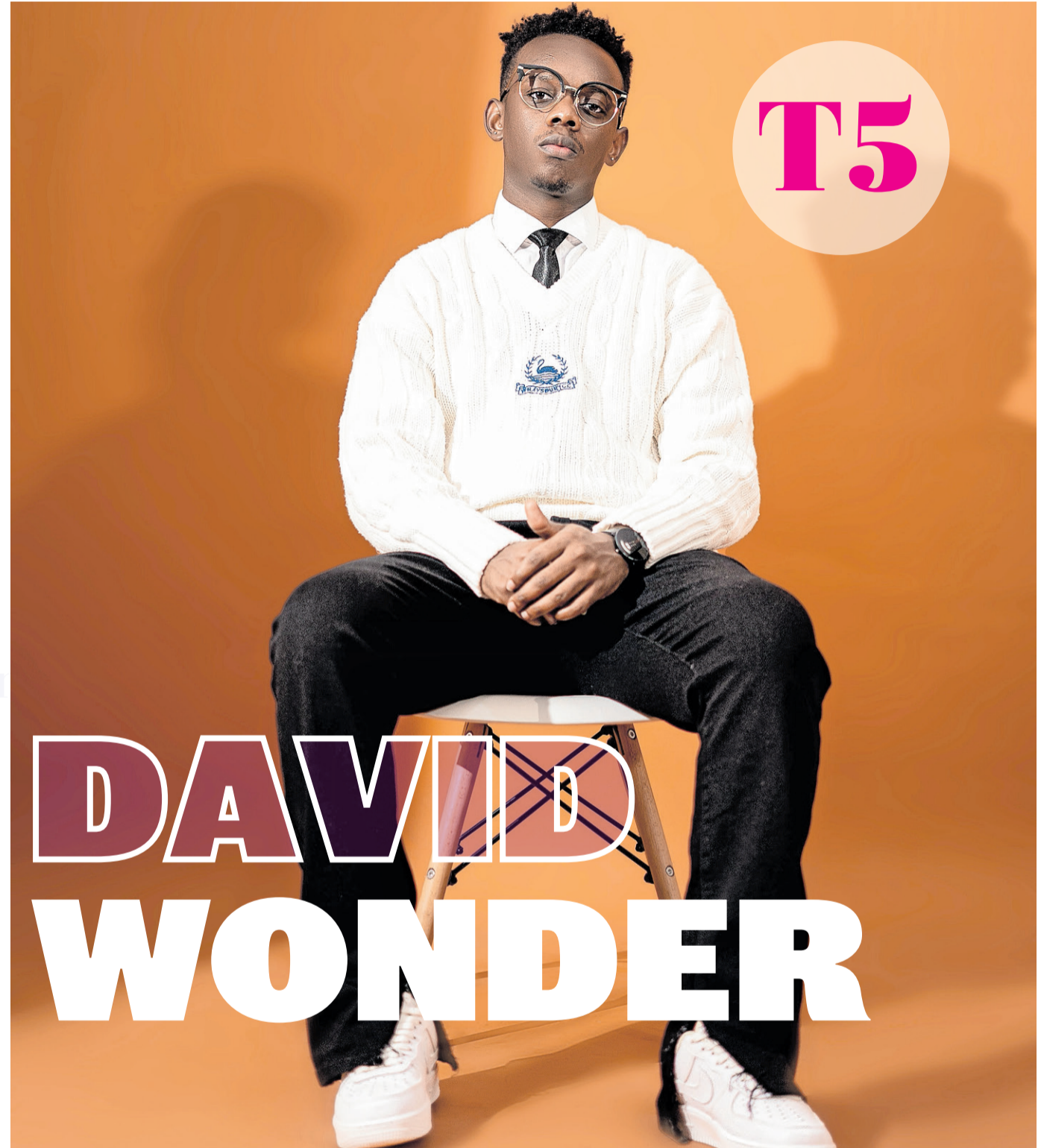
I came to realise that they were just waiting for me to finish high school and go upcountry. I remember a week after my last paper, I was hit in the face with the question, "So, are you coming upcountry or are you going to stay in Nairobi and start your own life?" I chose to stay in Nairobi. I moved in with friends but life was not easy, so eventually I joined my parents back in the village.

#### 2. What was your first major break in the gospel music industry?

I did not stay long in the village. I came back in 2015 and joined a praise and worship team with some friends. At the time, I was working at a salon, making people's nails. It was during that time that I met Bahati. He was a very big name by then and after one year of talking, he signed me under his label, Eastlands Most Beloved (EMB) Records. My first big break came in 2017 when I released *Ndogo Ndogo* in collaboration with Bahati. It was a life-changing moment for me, and the song opened many doors. Working with Bahati, who was already a big name, gave me exposure, and it helped people recognise my talent. That was the beginning of my journey in the limelight. That is when people got to know David Wonder.

#### 3. What challenges have you faced as a celebrity, and how do you cope with the pressures of fame?

When I fell sick, I had to step back for two years. During that time, reality hit me. Seeing things



# DAVID WONDER

from the outside made me realise that everyone wants something from you. Some have good intentions and others have bad ones. I remember having a conversation with a friend where I had to come to terms with my fate. One thing I have learned about life is that once you are no longer in the spotlight, the calls and texts stop coming.

Some of my close friends are still doing well, but whenever I reach out, they take days to respond. And I get it – they are busy, just like I was. To be honest, the bad outweighs the good when it comes to being a celebrity. There is a lot of isolation and disappointment. People don't always listen or remember you when you experience turbulence. It is a harsh reality, and I am not joking. Fame can end your sense of self, and the worst thing is having all the recognition but not being able to enjoy it. That is the hardest part – being up there but feeling invisible. I even struggled to

convince my own parents to believe in me at times. After an interview or a TV appearance, they would ask, "How much did they pay you?" They could not believe that sometimes, I was not being paid at all. They did not understand why I did it. It is hard when even those closest to you don't fully understand the challenges of celebrity life.

#### 4. How did your health challenges affect your career and personal life?

In April 2022, I was diagnosed with a condition called deep vein thrombosis (DVT) where a blood clot formed in my vein. It was an extremely painful process. I had to visit the doctors at least three times a week. Being unwell limits you in many ways, especially financially. And I can tell you, the treatments are not cheap. I have been on medication for two years now, not monthly, but every two weeks. It has not been easy, but I thank God for

seeing me through. This experience has changed me in so many ways. I am not the same person I was two or three years ago. I have had to adjust my lifestyle. For instance, I cannot even remember the last time I took an Uber. At this point, I don't even consider myself an artist anymore, and I am okay with that.

A few years ago, I would not have been able to admit this publicly, but now I am proud of myself for being honest. Any other person might have resorted to self-destructive behaviours like drugs or struggled with suicidal thoughts. Not that I haven't battled with depression, but I have learned to face it head-on. I have lost access to the lifestyle and connections I used to have. There were times when I had a number of people in high places, but I have learned that those contacts don't matter when you are going through tough times. When you are happy, everyone is

around, but when you are struggling, it is just you and your family. I considered moving to a smaller house many times, but I thank God I haven't had to. Things will get better, I believe that. Bahati was not really my friend – he was my boss, and I still respect him for that. I didn't expect him to come through for me, and that is okay. I have learned to rely on Jesus and my family above all else.

#### 5. What's next for David Wonder?

Right now, I am focused on regaining my health fully and getting back to music. I have also started learning music production, which is a new passion of mine. I believe that God has more in store for me, and I am excited to use my experiences to inspire others through both my music and personal stories. I am working on new projects, and I am eager to return to the industry with renewed perspective.



## People

# Thinking of taking up a sport? You can never go wrong with rugby...

## Q&A

BY TOTO AREGE

**C**ollins Amayo, 24, is a centre and winger for Mombasa RFC, a team in the second tier of the Kenya Rugby Union Championship.

In the 2022/23 rugby 15s season, his club won 31-16 against Jomo Kenyatta University (JKUAT Cougars) at RFUEA Grounds in Nairobi on April 15 to lift the title.

Amayo, a former Blakblad rugby player, holds a Bachelor's degree in Coastal and Marine Resource Management, having graduated in July this year from Kenyatta University in Nairobi.

He is currently seeking employment while dedicating his spare time to rugby.

### Take us through your rugby journey...

I was born and raised in a closely-knit family in Mombasa. I attended Sparki Primary School in Tudor, Mombasa, before joining Maseno School for my high school studies from 2015 to 2018. I later joined Kenyatta University in Nairobi in 2019 to study coastal and marine resources management. I am lucky I joined institutions that focused both on students' academic strengths, and other talents. I tried other disciplines, but nothing held my attention like the rugby ball. Before I joined high school, I did not know this game existed. In fact, I was only interested in joining the school football team since that was the only game I knew.

I kept wondering, "How do you even play with an oval ball?" I grew curious and developed interest that led me to join the high school rugby team together with my friend Absalom Mugubi, who is currently my team mate at Mombasa. It wasn't until 2019, after high school, that I got an opportunity to represent Mombasa RFC in the Stanbic National Sevens Circuit in Kakamega, playing at Division Two level. This is a team that I joined in 2017, having been introduced to the game during school holidays by my friend Absalom.

However, even after signing up for rugby, I was met with demeaning remarks from classmates regarding my diminutive size. Many said that my physical attributes and stature were not good for the physical demands of the game, but that was not what I wanted to hear at that time.

I thank my parents who instilled discipline and never spared the rod. I am the third born in a family of five siblings. My two elder brothers and sister have been good role models to me. I would love to be the same to my two little sisters.

**Who inspired you to stay in the game?**  
My inspiration came from Bruce Odhiambo, now at Nondies RFC, and Walter Oteku, former Strathmore Leos player. Watching Odhiambo taking on big players gave me confidence that size didn't really matter. Oteku's gameplay was a constant reminder that I could grow to be like him if I put in the work. My highlight is winning the KUSA title and securing third place in the 2021 Kings of Rugby African University Games held in Uganda.

### Balancing academics and extracurricular activities is undoubtedly challenging, how do you manage your time?

I had challenges balancing the two in high school but when I joined university I realised that there is no shortcut or cheat code in navigating between two commitments, you just have to respect each activity. When you steal into your academic time during practice then just have to burn the midnight oil. When your academics eat into your rugby time, arrange for extra practice sessions. With this in mind, I am able to maintain a good balance.

### How was it growing up in Mombasa?

It was hard because my neighbourhood was a high-crime area filled with youth engaging in drugs and crime. There was a lot of peer pressure to join gang-related activities, but I stayed focused.

### Who inspires you?

If you would have asked me this question some years back, would have mentioned Collins Injera. But, I came to realise that for a role model I needed someone I shared the pitch with at some point in the game. Someone within my age bracket, someone whose progress I can



monitor and learn from his mistakes. Injera is no longer in the game but I still admire his success, something that makes me want to put on the Kenyan jersey at some point in my rugby career. I can't wait to feel the thrill of the big stage and share my rugby skills with the world, just as he did.

### What do you do just for you?

I enjoy reading and working out, especially in the morning. On intense and overwhelming days I go swimming. I am also a certified scuba diver.

**Tell me something I would be surprised to learn about rugby...**  
Rugby is unpredictable. The game can change in the blink of an eye. One must have the heart to push until the 80th minute of the game if you want to win. You can't cheat the system.

### What are your plans after graduation?

I am open to employment in fields related to my course work. I have made some applications and I pray I will get a good response soon. I still do some casual work as a pest controller here in Mombasa to earn an income.

### Does rugby pay?

I can't say that rugby has paid me and I don't know of players who live entirely on rugby allowances, but every club has its way of taking care of its players, sometimes by giving them jobs or by linking them to job opportunities.

**My neighbourhood was filled with youth engaging in drugs and crime. There was a lot of peer pressure to join gang-related activities, but I stayed focused,**

Collins Amayo



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## Movie Review

BY MICHAEL OCHIENG

### OUTER BANKS SEASON 4 Where to watch: Netflix

The fourth season of *Outer Banks* released on October 10, 2024 continues to deliver the high-octane adventure and drama that fans have come to love. This season, the Pogues are back with more treasure hunts, deeper character development, and unexpected twists that keep viewers on the edge of their seats.

Season Four wastes no time diving back into the action. The story picks up with the Pogues facing new challenges and adversaries as they continue their quest for legendary treasures. The pacing is brisk, ensuring that there's never

a dull moment. Each episode is packed with thrilling chases, intense confrontations, and moments of camaraderie that highlight the strong bonds between the characters.

One of the standout aspects of this season is the maturation of the characters. The Pogues, led by John B, show significant growth as they navigate the complexities of their relationships and the dangers that come with their treasure-hunting lifestyle. The writers have done an excellent job of deepening the characters' backstories, particularly JJ, whose past is explored in more detail. This adds a layer of emotional depth to the series, making the characters more relatable and their struggles more poignant.

The themes of loyalty, friendship, and resilience are more pronounced in this season. The Pogues' unwavering loyalty to each other is tested repeatedly, and their ability to overcome adversity together is inspiring. The tone of the series remains adventurous and thrilling, with a hint of supernatural elements that add an intriguing twist to the narrative.

Visually, *Outer Banks* continues to impress with its stunning cinematography and picturesque settings. The direction by Jonas Pate and Erica Dunton ensures that each scene is visually engaging and contributes to the overall storytelling. The action sequences are particularly well-executed, providing a sense of urgency and excitement that



keeps viewers hooked.

Critics have generally praised Season Four for its ability to maintain the series' momentum while introducing fresh elements. The chemistry between

the cast members, especially the Pogues, is highlighted as a key strength. Reviews from sources like Rotten Tomatoes and Screen Rant commend the show for its thrilling treasure hunts and character dynamics.



# How we confronted our emotional baggage

Many carry their pain like armour, lashing out with insults, outbursts of anger, or even physical violence. Others become passive and build walls around themselves. One expert says baggage from sexual abuse, emotional neglect, and spiritual abuse is particularly challenging for couples to navigate

BY THOMAS BOSIRE

**W**e all carry invisible suitcases bursting at the seams with baggage. They weigh us down and torment us emotionally even as we try to distract ourselves with vices and activities such as work.

In the dark closets of our relationships, abandonment issues play hide-and-seek while childhood traumas masquerade as adulting nuances—A load of insecurity issues carried inside a tote bag of ‘daddy issues’, and a clutch of ‘commitment phobia’.

Studies suggest we do not just collect baggage, we also subconsciously seek out partners whose burdens mirror our own.

**MARION ABUYA,**

*a 29-year-old lawyer, posits that trauma is often at the root of relationship baggage. She notes a recurring theme: The absence of father figures.*

“An increasing number of men have fathers who are physically present but emotionally absent,” she explains. “Such men often struggle with emotional vulnerability when they enter romantic relationships.”

Marion’s own journey through relationships has been marked by deep-seated trust issues.

“I had a lot of mistrust. I couldn’t trust easily,” she admits. This mistrust manifested as a persistent fear of abandonment, leading her to hold back emotionally even when her partners gave her no reason to distrust them.

“I was going into relationships with the mentality that eventually, my partner would leave me. I couldn’t trust them, and this made it very hard for me to stay committed in the relationships,” she offers.

Marion believes that this behavior stems from her childhood. She lived with both her parents, but she lacked an emotional connection with her father and mother for most of her life.

“Both my parents were always away at work, so I missed that emotional touch,” she recalls.

After taking a break from dating for nearly three years, Marion has now decided to address the issues.

“I had to work through my insecurities,”

she says. This process involved reconnecting with her parents, putting more effort in growing in her career, and learning to clearly communicate her needs and boundaries in relationships.

Marion’s turning point came after a particularly difficult breakup.

“After we parted ways, I realised I was sabotaging my relationships before they had a chance to develop,” she explains. “I sought counselling and began journaling to understand my patterns. It was during this process that I recognised how my childhood experiences were influencing my adult relationships.”

**PETER OTIENO,**

*a 40-year-old civil engineer, has been in five different relationships and they all have a pattern that might read like an excerpt from one of Lemony Snicket’s bestsellers.*

His most recent ex-partner, a 30-year-old woman, had been sexually abused and faced dismissal when reporting it to her mother. This unresolved trauma manifested in unexpected ways.

“I noticed that she always had to be held like a baby in order to fall asleep,” Peter explains. “It was as if she was seeking the comfort and safety she never received as a child.”

Her trauma was further compounded by early childhood experiences. When she was eight years old, the woman’s mother fell ill, and couldn’t take care of her. She was separated from her mum for three years. Because of this, she developed attachment issues that persisted into adulthood.

“She had an intense fear of abandonment,” Peter notes. “Any hint of me leaving, even just for work, would trigger anxiety attacks.”

While reflecting on his ex-partner’s struggles, Peter is quick to point out his own issues.

“Relationships with people who carry unresolved trauma are often plagued by miscommunication and misunderstanding,” he says. “One of the hardest parts is that while people might be aware of their own trauma, putting in the work to overcome it or learning how to handle triggers in a healthy way can seem like an insurmountable task.”

Peter’s baggage stems from his childhood

as the firstborn.

His sister was born just a year after him, and that shift in attention continues to influence his adult relationships. Because of the perceived abandonment he felt as a child, he hates feeling ignored or receiving divided attention.

This manifests through what he describes as being quick to anger, prone to emotional outbursts, and even verbally abusive.

“I sometimes deliberately say hurtful words to others, even if I love them. When-

ever I do this, my aim is to ensure that even if my partner decides to date another man, it will take her a long time to trust again. I am not proud of this behaviour, but recognising it was the first step towards change,” he admits.

Peter’s journey towards self-awareness has been complex. He now recognises the “hero complex” he developed.

“I used to stay in relationships with women not because I genuinely loved and appreciated them, but because I hoped to save them. I thought I could fix their issues,





**CAROLINE GACHERI,**  
*a 29-year-old clinical psychologist and mother of one, met her first love in 2018.*

Fresh out of university with a new job at a hospital in Mombasa, she fell head over heels for a high school teacher. What began as a whirlwind romance, however, soon unravelled into a cautionary tale about the baggage we bring into relationships.

"I didn't even know what happens in relationships. All I knew was that once you complete school, you get a job, find a partner, and get married."

This idealistic perspective, shaped by her upbringing in a loving, church-going family, left her unprepared for the complexities of adult relationships.

Within months, Caroline found herself uprooting her life, leaving her job, and moving to Busia to be with her partner. The red flags were there, but love had tinted her glasses. It wasn't until she became pregnant that the cracks in their relationship began to show.

"He started showing his true colours," she says. Through our conversations, I learned about his behaviours, I learned about his childhood traumas. He grew up in a household where alcohol abuse was common, and he witnessed domestic violence. These experiences shaped his views on relationships and trust."

The baggage manifested in various ways – infidelity, verbal abuse, and a belief that no woman could ever understand him.

"He would frequently say that he had never felt loved by anybody, not his parents, not even his stepbrothers or sisters, because he was born out of wedlock," Caroline explains.

The relationship lasted nearly three years before Caroline found the strength to walk away. It has been three years now, and she says she is still healing and working on herself before considering another relationship.

Smarting from her first actual relationship, 20-year-old Abby Njoroge shares that as a plus-size woman, she grapples with insecurities about her appearance.

Another baggage she believes she carries is the class difference. She is from a middle-class family, while his 25-year-old boyfriend is from a slightly well-off family.

"I used to also

compare myself to him a lot. I used to wonder the kind of ex-lovers he's had and judged myself by how his female friends look like," Abby admits.

"My dad is an alcoholic and was also violent to my mum. I grew up believing that all men are monsters, and this made it very hard for me to engage romantically."

Abby's boyfriend has his own baggage. He comes from what she describes as a "dysfunctional family" where his father was unfaithful.

"My partner is very clingy and controlling. He always wants to know where I am and what I'm doing," Abby explains. This behaviour prompted them to seek therapy, although they took just a few sessions due to financial constraints.

**He would frequently say that he had never been loved by anybody, not his parents, not even his stepbrothers or sisters, because he was born out of wedlock,**

Caroline



Six months into their relationship, despite the challenges, Abby has seen some progress.

"Our relationship is still a bit rocky, but things are much better than before," she says. "We are learning to communicate better and respect each other's boundaries. For example, he is working on his trust issues, and I am learning to be more open about my feelings."

However, she's uncertain about the future, admitting, "I'm not sure if this relationship will last a year if I don't fully work on myself. I need to address my own insecurities and learn to trust."

Caroline Gacheri is a clinical psychologist based in Nairobi. PHOTO | POOL



Marion Abuya is a lawyer based in Nairobi. PHOTO | POOL

but in reality, I was just avoiding my own challenges," he reflects.

Peter has made a conscious decision to prioritise his own healing.

"I've decided to work on myself, and therapy is one of the key tools I'm using," he states.

He has currently abstained from dating and has even limited his friendships with women, recognising the need to break away from the cycle of unhealthy relationships.



Ernest Wamboye is a relationships expert, author and the man behind the award winning blog, *Penstrokes*. PHOTO | POOL

**COMMON SIGNS OF BAGGAGE**

Ernest Wamboye, a relationships expert and founder of the Relationship Centre Limited, offers insights into how baggage manifests in relationships.

"Common signs of baggage include aggression, passivity, and passive-aggressiveness. Some people carry their pain like armour, lashing out with insults, frequent outbursts of anger, or even physical violence. Others become passive and build walls around themselves.

"They display nonchalance and have low emotional intelligence. Then there are those who are masters of passive-aggression. They simply ignore relational problems hoping that they will resolve on their own. In such cases, the individuals' unresolved issues play out in subtle, often confusing ways."

Wamboye says baggage from sexual abuse, emotional neglect, and spiritual abuse is particularly challenging for couples to navigate together.

"Sexual abuse takes very long to overcome because it traverses the body, soul, and spirit."

The relationships expert emphasises the importance of support, but warns, "You cannot be your partner's lover and therapist at the same time."

He advocates for seeking professional help, recognising that some burdens are too heavy to carry alone or even as a couple. "Third-party experts must be consulted," he insists.

"Develop communities to keep the marriage or relationship accountable, such as couple groups. Commit to regular check-in meetings with your spouse where matters are discussed and resolved. Take time off from relationships and do a self-audit," he advises. "You cannot audit yourself well when you have relational duties."

When it comes to fostering a more positive outlook with a partner, Wamboye emphasises the importance of self-awareness and proactive steps towards personal growth.

"You can never go wrong with personal therapy. Professional guidance can be instrumental in breaking negative patterns."



# Near-death experience that sparked my love for swimming

## Q&A



Jeff Muthuri does the 100m breaststroke at the Kiambu County Aquatics Association (KCAA) Intercounty championships held at Wood Creek School in May, 2024. PHOTO | POOL

## In Brief

■ Jeff Muthuri, 24, is pursuing a Bachelor of Science (Civil Engineering) degree at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)

■ The last-born in a family of two began swimming in primary school. He swam for Mang'u up to the Central Region finals

■ Jeff has represented JKUAT as well as Genesis Swim Club in competitions

■ His achievements include being named MVP multiple times in Kenya Universities Sports Association (KUSA) swimming championships

## Consistent Jeff began swimming in primary school, and represented Mang'u High in the regional finals

**Y**ou are in your fifth and final year at Jkuat, how do you juggle academics and swimming?

It is difficult but necessary since swimming is therapeutic to me. It helps me cope with the stress from my course. I normally train from 4pm to 6pm to relax my brain after studying all day, which is quite refreshing.

### What inspired you to take up swimming?

My late father Jediel Muthuri. He took me to swimming practice at Greta University pool from when I was in Class One. He used to take me on Saturdays and Sundays and that really motivated me to learn swimming despite my phobia of water from a near-death experience, which I experienced when I was a toddler.

### Tell us about this near-death experience...

I was playing in the kitchen and back then we used to have these 20-kilogramme buckets for cooking oil. One was filled with water, so as I was playing I tripped and fell head first into the bucket.

When my caregiver realised that I was in the bucket, she started screaming and I was pulled out. My body had turned blue due to oxygen deprivation and I was rushed to hospital. I'm told that I was resuscitated, although I can't remember the incident well.

### Who is your role model in sport?

American Michael Phelps. He was the greatest swimmer of all time, a multiple Olympic champion and also world record holder. He's my role model because he rose to the top of the sport yet he once suffered from depression and was charged with driving while drunk. He fought through all that and still rose to the top. I admire his resilience.

### What do you like most about swimming?

It helps me tune the world out. It is very therapeutic. What I don't like about swimming is the constant dry skin from chlorine exposure.

### Tell us about the challenges you have faced in your swimming journey so far...

I had a shoulder injury in 2022 while taking part in a triathlon competition in Kilifi County. I strained my shoulder and also my left hip and was advised not to swim competitively for six months. Thankfully, I got two good physiotherapists who patched me up well. We did multiple sessions with them and I went back to swimming in four months.

### How has your family supported your swimming journey?

My parents have supported me a lot, especially my mother Josephine Muthoni. She used to come for swimming galas and tournaments, and always prays for me. She also pays for my participation fees during competitions and ensures I have the right swimwear, and nutrition. My mother was a volleyball player and my father used to play football in high school. I guess that's where I got my athleticism from.

### Give us one piece of advice from your parents that you always cherish...

My father used to advise me not to be a quitter regardless of how difficult the situation is. He used to tell me to just keep pushing through till I attain what I want.

### How has swimming shaped your life?

Swimming has taught me to be disciplined, and to always do what's required of me whether I feel like doing it or not. Additionally, swimming has helped me maintain perfect health because I rarely get sick. Swimming has been good for both my physical and mental health. It is very therapeutic and helps me stay in shape.

### How is your training schedule?

I wake up at 6am. I have breakfast, go to the gym for two hours, do schoolwork whether online classes or physical, and then finish any pending assignments.

## It takes late nights, morning workouts, and going to the pool even if you're tired,

Jeff Muthuri



ish any pending assignments. At around 4pm, I go for swimming practice. We normally have three sessions – warm up, main set and then the cool down. I am an individual medley (IM) person, so I normally do either butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke or freestyle sets.

### Do you have any memorable moments in swimming?

My best moment in the sport was during an invitational championship at MPesa Foundation Academy in Thika in March this year. I recorded a 30 seconds, 50 microseconds in 50m Fly, and I won that race against one of my fiercest competitors, Ronnie Roberts (30.51sec). We've been swimming against each other since high school, so it was sweet victory.

My worst moment was at a gala in Woodcreek in Kiambu in April this year. I think I was doing the 200m backstroke and I stopped at the 150m mark thinking that I'd finished the race. I lost yet I was in the leading pack.

### How did Covid-19 affect your swimming career?

I am an outdoor person so when everything was shut down, including public swimming pools, it took a toll on me men-

tally. I was forced to stay in the house, but I began doing physical conditioning training, which helped me. I also took up cycling, but not being able to swim was a very big blow.

### What is your big dream in swimming?

Of course I dream of participating in the Olympics one day, and I believe I am on the right track. One thing I've added to my routine to help me realise this goal is the gym. I do a lot of strength training and conditioning. I hope this will help me improve my capabilities so that I can get selected to the national team.

### In your view, what does it take to be a great swimmer?

It takes a lot of discipline, hard work and commitment to improve and master your craft and technique. It takes a lot of sacrifice – late nights, early morning workouts, and going to the pool even if you're tired. It takes a lot of mental strength but once you master that, everything will work out perfectly.

### Apart from swimming, what else do you do in your life?

Travelling, engaging with nature and walking are my hobbies.

### What advice would you give to a person who wants to take up swimming?

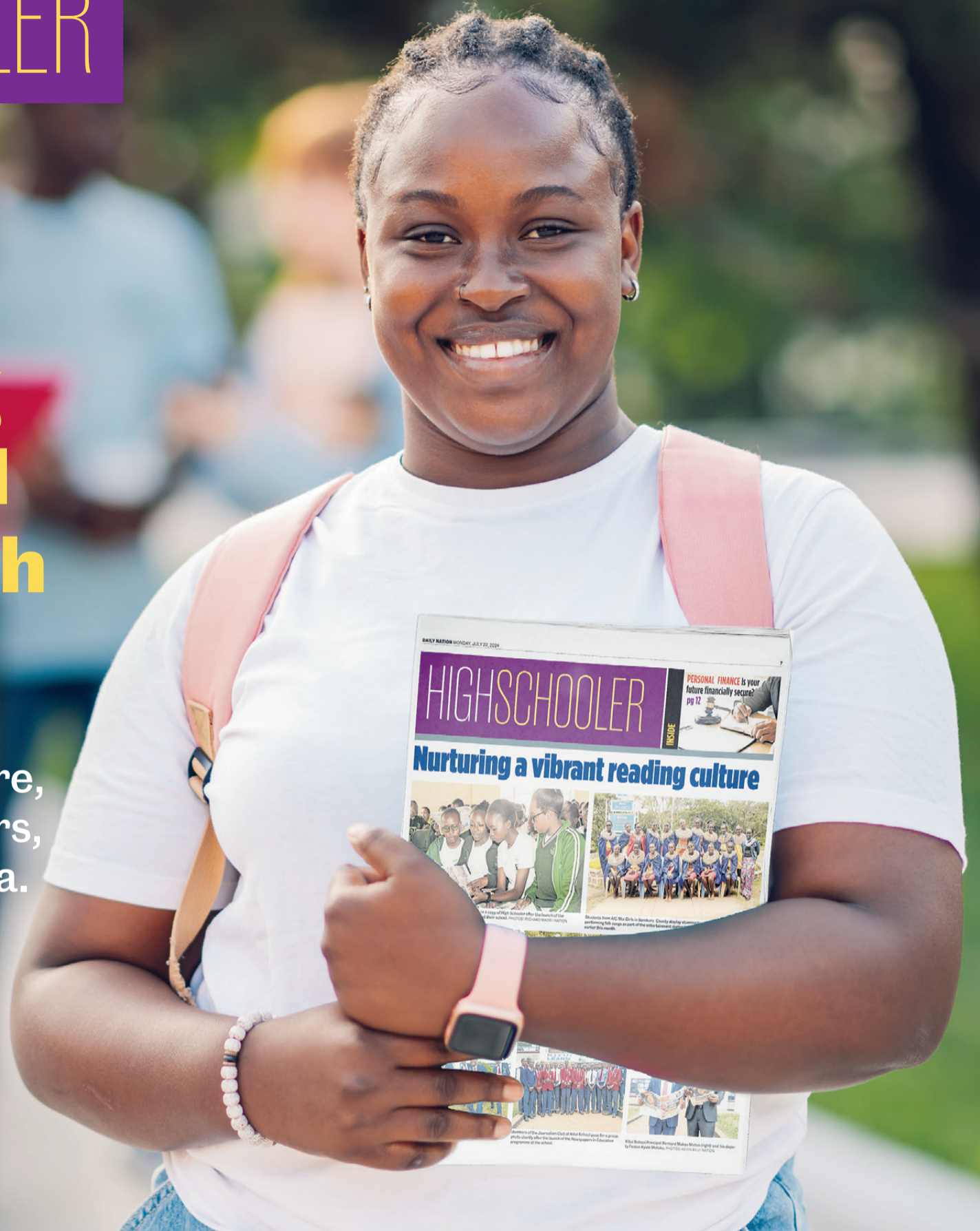
I'd tell him or her that it's a very nice sport. It activates your entire body. It's therapeutic and fun. At the moment it doesn't pay if you're at the amateur level. But once you go pro, you can earn from it.



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