

## MY LIFE EXPERIENCE

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My name is ANTHONY MUGA AYATTA. I am forty years old. I come from the western side of the county. I am in Naivasha maximum prison serving life imprisonment for defilement. My childhood upbringing was characterised with limited supervision from elders mainly parents which led to negative influence of peer pressure, drug abuse and alcohol consumption. As a teenager I indulged in alcohol abuse so much so which eventually led to committing crimes. At the age of twenty five years my life was in a mess as a drunkard. My participation in crime eventually landed me in prison. Lack of counseling and guidance is partly to blame for my misconduct and largely I am to blame myself. My life in prison has been traumatizing as I did not know any techniques, methods or knowledge on how to cope. Depression, anger, anxiety, fear and uncertainty had been the order of the day in prison life. But now I am proud to be coping positively through being resilient and mindful. Presently my feelings of hopelessness and low esteem are diminishing with time. Mindfulness has been a large step and eye opener in my life. Through the five facets of observing, acting with awareness, non-judging, non-reactive and describing I feel transformed into a new person. Through acceptance my emotions of anger have gone down. I get along with inmates well enough. My thinking and inner landscape has changed by improving greatly. I no longer feel a failure as I used to before. By learning to control my mind by applying mindful techniques when confronted with mixed feelings which used to pull me down. My emotions are under control most times of the day. As I write this I feel good and confident about myself and most of all I am happy, alert, awake and attentive. If time can be reversed I could re-live my life again and do it properly and mindfully this time without going astray at anytime. I now realise that being in prison is only a wall but there is no wall that can deny <sup>me</sup> from living my life to the fullest. The mindful programme is no doubt beneficial. It should be encouraged at all costs to other institutions and outside prisons to those especially who are at the brink of failure to salvage <sup>them</sup> from falling like the way I did. Finally let us not forget to pray ceaselessly to God the almighty to give us the power, courage and energy to see, realise and do the right things all the time and everytime.

ANTHONY MUGA AYATTA

*Anthony Ayatta*