

Mother: This is my daughter her name is Nzayisenga Salima she is 15 years old. I would like to talk to her.

Facilitator: Is there anything you would like to ask you mother?

Salima: Yes, What I would like to ask my mother is: we used to hear storied about girls long ago that they were very timid and used to do a lot of work and would wake up sweeping compounds. Is it true?

Mother: My daughter that is a good question because asking questions makes people wise. Girls of long ago, I am also saying what my mother told me, my mother told me that girls of long ago during her time would always stay at home, they would not move around much or visit. They told us that they were very humble and loving to their age mates. They were also especially very kind to disabled or old people. The thing they had the most was cleanliness.

Mother: These would wake up very early before the crack of dawn and wash the dishes, clean up the cattle areas, sweep the compound. She would basically do her chores very early. A girl who did her chores in the morning when everyone was up was not considered a good girl. But after doing all that they would take a bath, and sit down a get prepared to receive guests.

Salima: I also hear that girls of long ago never went to school, that parents did not want their daughters to go to school that only boys went to school.

Mother: Yes during my mother's time my because of their ignorance they did not think girls should go to school. They thought girls should do home chores, take care for the cattle, do the dishes, milk the cow then sit down and just wait until she gets married. Even when it came to inheriting property, girls did not inherit anything because the idea was that girls would grow up and go get married into another family then have her own children. They did not think girls should not go to school, only her brothers.

Salima: They say girls of long ago were especially very respectful they would talk to their mothers and aunts when a girl reached around the age of 18, she was taught how to behave ounce she was married into another family. How to be respectful of her in laws, not to say her in law's personal names and so forth. Why did you not say the names of your mother and/or father in law?

Mother: Well that is because it was considered very rude. It was considered extremely disrespectful and offensive. You were expected to respect her in-laws jus the same way she respected her parents. Besides that she would respect her husband and all hi relatives. I am talking about my mother's time.

Salima: What were you like growing up? What was it like for you?

Mother: Yes, I used to sit and talk to my mother. We went to school though. When I talked to her she would tell me that on my way to school If I met an old person carrying a load I should help them carry it and help them speed up. And never we had to greet everyone we met on the road. Always be friendly with all the other children at school, especially the children who are better in class so they can teach you

what you don't understand. So I studied well and my mother could no longer live with my father. My mother moved back home and I lived with my aunt. She was very similar to my mother. She loved being close to us and she would tell us stories, she was from Uganda and she told us she had gone to Uganda during the war of 1959. The bad things she asked us to not hold on to them because they happened because of our ignorance. Now we are developed, if we had been as educated as you are now some of the bad things which happened would not have happened because we would have analyzed the things people said before we acted on them. We would not have been forced to flee.

You should talk to all people but be careful and know who is telling you good things and who is telling you bad things. If they tell you bad things be careful not to do them without stopping listening to them, always be careful to decide between good and bad. And also live peacefully with everyone, because the reason we fled is because people had problems between themselves and failed to resolve them. You should enjoy discussions with people especially biblical discussions because people who talk about God and know him do not do bad things. God created us all, my daughter, God did not create Hutus, Tutsis and Twas. God created us all in his image and he breathed his breath in us. Someone who knows God, because everyone who knows God knows that in the beginning was Adam and Eve, did not bring about the thing about races. That is where we all came from. We are all people, we are brothers and sisters on top of that we are Rwandans.

Salima: Why did girls of long ago run away whenever they saw boys? And they got scared.

Mother: Running away? My mother also told us about that, they used to tell them that talking to boys was bad because boys would make them do bad things. A girl was supposed to wait for when she was old enough to get married, for a young man to ask for her hand in marriage then go away and get married.

Salima: Now, if the girls knew that it was bad to be seen with the boys didn't the boys know that? Why were the girls the one running away?

Mother: Boys walk with boys, It was the culture. In the times we are living in everyone is equal. Boys and girls are both equal. The important thing to know is that you can talk to anyone as long as you keep the discussion to constructive ideas.

Salima: Now the people of long ago thought that being seen with boys was bad. People don't think that way anymore because of "the times we live in?"

Mother: No I told you that the girls of long ago during my mother's time they did not even like to be in public. They were scared; they were scared of being in public because they were very scared. They could not even hold a conversation in public. These days boys and girls go to school together, sit together in class rooms, there is no reason why they should be scared of each other because they see each other every day.

Salima: So you said that long ago girls did not go to school that only their brothers went to school. Do you mean not one girl went to school back then?

Mother: Yes they studied but in my mother's time, they told us that girls had their own schools and boys had their own schools. Again in those times very few people went to school something like 1%. So it was

possible for them to go to school separately. Those times, even though girls had their brothers; they rarely met because boys would always be outdoors herding cattle and sometimes spent nights in the wilderness while girls stayed at home and took care of things. These days boys are raised with girls and they get a chance to spend a lot of time together while they are growing up.

Salima: Why did the boys stay in forests? Is it because they were also scared of girls?

Mother: No, It's because they were herding cattle.

Salima: So boys were not scared of girls?

Mother: Boys? I would say...those were stories, which I was told by my mother. So I am not very sure about it. In my time boys and girls went to school together and were not scared of each other. There you feel like you want to ask me?

Salima: No, there is nothing.

Mother: If there is anything else feel free to ask me. By the way in the way I studied, the mentality of saying boys first was still there. Parents still felt they should come first. Both my brother and I passed the exams but only my brother was allowed to continue his studies because I was told that we did not have enough resources to send us both to school.

Salima: If they could find the resources to send your brother to school why could they not find the resources to send you to school?

Mother: they told me they had enough resources to send only one child to school. They said I should stay at home and do house chores while my brother went to school. That is how it was.

Salima: If it was no longer the old times when girls and boys were separated, and you were studying with boys, why did they still think less of girls?

Mother: Since it was a mentality of my mother's generations it was hard to get eradicated in our time. We went to primary school but we felt it was not necessary to go to secondary school. I felt that I did not need to have secondary education together with my brother because my parents had told me they could not pay for both of us. My parents encouraged me to stay at home and help in the chores, learn how to weave mats and wait until I was old enough to get married. Unfortunately he was unable to continue his education because of 1994. He died and our parents died as well but I survived. Unfortunately I knew I should study but I was unable to so I stayed in the same life my parents had told me to do small jobs, which helped me survive.

My daughter I advise you to study, these days all children study. It does not matter whether you are a boy or a girl as you know the government has accepted to help you so my advice to you is that you study and study hard with a lot of hard work so you can be profitable to your family and friends. Anyone who does not go to school cannot do anything for themselves; his/her future cannot be good. You should also try to be friendly with all your classmates, talk to them, do your homework together and help each other so that the Rwanda we are heading into will be filled with people who are intelligent and polite. That is my advice to you. If you want to get to all this you will have to listen to your parents, teachers

and also love your country but before all this you have to love God. You can keep asking me whatever you want to.

Salima: There is nothing else.

Facilitator: Thank you very much I am happy to have participated in this conversation. Talking to your daughter is a very good thing that will build her. I had a question. You told us how your parents separated when you were in Primary 3, how your brother and parents died in the Genocide in 1994 and that you survived. What would you say gives you strength to make it through these tough times?

Mother: What gave me strength was the good up bringing my parents gave me, when I moved to my aunt's place my aunt used to tell me to go farm the land before going to school. We would wake up early in the morning and go farm the land. She liked growing potatoes and ground nuts. After farming she would tell me to have a bath and go to school. She would tell me to hurry up after I was finished with school so I can come back and help her with chores. She used to say that I was the only person around who could help her because her other child, a son, had grown up and gotten married. She taught me how to fetch water and she would always tell me, "my daughter, do not be lazy. Even if I died today you would survive because you would be able to work for anyone and make money." She also told me that in all I did I should always take an hour to revise what I had studied in school and make sure I remember everything. The thing she refused me to do was wandering around or going to play soccer or other games. She wanted me to work because she used to say that it would be my future life. While I was still living with my aunt my mother went back to living with my father for a while. My father was a very dedicated Christian and I think I would be right to say that my mother mainly caused the separation.

Every time I went home during my holidays, my father would take me to church on Saturdays, he was a seventh day Adventist, I remember this one time he showed me scripture which said that a child who obeys their parents is blessed but a child who does not respect their parents can not make anything for themselves in life and becomes a failure, sadly I don't remember where the scripture is. And I walked around with those words. My father taught me the word of God and my aunt taught me how to work hard.

So when I grew up and separated from them, I planted the same things my aunt did and was successful. I sold some and made money I saved the money I got somewhere. One day, one of my neighbors who made small baskets called me and said she would teach me how to make small baskets. I took the money I had kept and went and bought the things I needed and started making baskets. One day, my brother who had been living outside the country came and moved me from where I was to Kigali where I am now. He said, "Now I think living alone in the village is not good, what else do you think you can do here in the city?" I told him that I could do a small business too. Then he gave me around 15.000Frw (\$30) and told me to go and see something that I could do to make more money.

I went to the market and started selling children's clothes and that is what I still do to this day. That is our source of income in this house. I had my daughter while I was in the business of selling clothes and I raised her now she is grown, she also has two brothers who I am also raising from this business. They eat well and life goes on well.

Facilitator: Thank you very much for telling us that, I am sure your daughter has profited immensely from all you have told us. Is there any, "Parable" that you would like to tell your daughter so that she could remember all the time about you saying it? I am not sure if she has any more questions to ask you?

Salima: No, I have no further questions.

Mother: My daughter, there is a saying, "You do good and you find the same ahead." That is a saying that can help you throughout your life. The reason I tell you this is when you live with people and you are kind to them you may reach somewhere where you don't know anyone but you'll also receive kindness in return. Even if you stay in the same place you've always been, the same people you were kind to could be kind to you. Another thing is that you should water everything because you do not know what will grow and what will not. This means that in your being kind, do not be kind because you know someone or because you have blood relations, be kind to anyone who it is within your power to help in any way because you never know who will help you in your future.

Facilitator: You have told us that it is good the you told us that it is very good to be kind to everyone. Could you give us an example in your life where you were kind to someone and you had the same kindness returned to you in another way as a life experience so that your daughter can have a mental picture?

Mother: A kindness my parents or me did which I was repaid for a good example is the kindness my father showed people. For example there is a point I reached and there were people about to kill me, you know the things which were happening at that time. Then as I was about to get killed an old man came and told them not to kill me, he told them that I was his daughter and that they should hand me over so he can take me home or they would have to kill him first. The men said, "you crazy old man, go away. What you are saying is lies." But the old man said, that he would not let them harm me in any way while he was there. That I was his daughter and that he would not leave without me unless they killed him first. The other men handed me over while making threats that I could not last long anyway and they would end up getting me, and the old man took me and took care of me until all the violence had subsided: all this because of the kindness my parents had shown him.

Facilitator: I thank you very much for having taken part in this interview and thank you for taking your time.