

LOVE, THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

EVERLINE OBONDO



Love makes the world go round, so they say.

Love your neighbour as you love yourself. This is what i am going to narrate to you about.

It is in the morning, a day after we cast our votes in Kenya's 2007 General elections. We are going about our normal daily routines as we await the announcement of the results.

Njoroge, our neighbour and friend, comes to inform us that things do not look good.

Unknown to us, post-election violence had erupted in the Rift valley region. Specific communities were targeted and the youth in Nairobi were revenging. Attacking people on the streets and in their houses. We needed to run away and come back when the situation was calm.

I grabbed my three-year-old daughter, a handbag and we left. Everything left behind since we would be coming back to the house later anyway. We did not.

While trying to flee, we encountered a lot of hurdles. They have blocked the roads and are demanding identification to pass through. We finally make it to my brother-in-law's house. Here it is peaceful. No chaos.

For the next three months, we were forced to operate from different locations. I stayed at my brother's house. My husband was living with his brother. Household belongings heaped up in a friend's backyard.

This is how my Peacebuilding work began. My name is Everline Obondo. Founding Director of Generation Concern Foundation. A community-based organisation that works to empower women and girls at the grassroots level. I also volunteer as a Peace Project Team leader with Global Peace Women international.

Mind and care about your neighbour. Try fitting in their shoes sometimes. We will be forever grateful to Njoro, as we would sometimes call him. He saved our lives.
