



**Dr Geoffrey Wango, Senior Lecturer,  
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Dr Geoffrey Wango is a Senior Lecturer in Counselling Psychology, Department of Psychology, University of Nairobi. Dr Wango conducts research in Counselling Psychology, Applied Psychology, Educational Psychology and Educational Policy Development. Their current project is 'Counselling Psychology in the Developing World.

Dr Geoffrey Wango has over 120 publications (including 22 Journal articles; 7 published Textbooks; 20 PowerPoint Presentations and 50 other publications in diverse forums, Conferences, Periodicals and Symposiums) and over 300 mentions in varied publications. Dr Wango is the Executive Editor and founder of *The Counsel-ling Magazine* presents articles of general and specialized interest on present-day diverse aspects in Counselling Psychology with special emphasis on the more traditional-cum-contemporary societies. Dr Wango has membership in several professional and research institutions with contributions in Google Scholar (over 500), over 140,000 Reads on ResearchGate, Academic.Edu (over 30,000 Total Views), Television and Radio Interviews, Contributions in Newspapers and Magazines LinkedIn, ORCID and other scholarly works.

## *Dr. Geoffrey Wango, Bio*

Many people often ask me about my personal stand, my passion in life and how I got into Counselling Psychology and why in particular the establishment and writing in their favourite publication, *The Counsel-ling Magazine*. Colleagues and students, participants in various seminars and others suggested that I should include some information that would assist clients, practitioners and students to perhaps establish a career, or even assess and evaluate their ethical, moral and professional standards. Well, this allows for personal reflection and I feel it wise to include a few remarks about my fervour for counselling, mentoring and education as well as various aspects of life.

### ***Early life, a Christian and a Counselling Psychologist***

I must first state that as a person, I am first and foremost a Christian, but as a professional, I am a Counselling Psychologist. Let me clarify this stand. I must confess with a deep conviction that I do not just believe in God; I know there is a God. This is important for those I interact with as a counselling psychologist and they include clients, students, colleagues in the profession and other persons in diverse fields including teachers, parents, researchers, participants in seminars or people to whom I talk as a motivational speaker.

I was born and brought up in Kenya. I schooled in the village at Githiga Primary School (Kiambu, Kenya), then Kagumo High School (Nyeri, Kenya) before I joined Kenyatta University (Nairobi, Kenya) and the University of Birmingham (Birmingham, United Kingdom). Indeed, I am proud of the knowledge gained in numerous ways. For instance, I was highly privileged to work in the Ministry of Education (Nairobi, Kenya) at the Headquarters where I gained immense knowledge, skills and experience and now I am proud to be a Senior Lecturer in Counselling Psychology at the University of Nairobi (Nairobi, Kenya). I have travelled to various countries including Ethiopia, Italy, Malawi, Senegal, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uganda, the United Kingdom and Zambia. *The Counselling Magazine* is in line with my professional growth and development.

***Appreciating others and being virtuous, a little sunshine every day ...***

My education and training include my interaction with people of a different faith (religion), gender, political and cultural orientation, ethnic or racial background, colour, position, education status, variety of careers and life occupations as well as all other aspects of our life. This has made me learn to deeply appreciate people and accept others, their opinion, ideas, beliefs and values and convictions. The Ministry of Education is a large community consisting of pupils and students, teachers, parents, various stakeholders, government departments and community members with several institutions that include primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities. Education and schools have numerous activities and programmes and hence I gained immense experience. Similarly, the University of Nairobi is a highly esteemed academic institution that engages in teaching and research and consultancy in order to enhance the communities' capacity for development.

I have embraced certain core principles, especially, integrity, team spirit, confidentiality and innovativeness and human values of beauty, love and justice although my virtues, professionalism and morals remain intact. I keep growing older, worldlier and hopefully ever wiser. I am a father and a husband as well I have personal and social responsibilities and increasingly higher expectations.

***Counselling, the helping profession***

It is important to know that as human beings, our growth and development are constructed through human interaction, communication and contact. This enables us to organise our inner selves, our World, including our beliefs and ideas, personalities and career. Nonetheless, life has its highs and lows; it has its great moments as well as challenges, uncertainties and fears. As a result, we make merry and get happy, we find love and are bound heart and soul, while at other times we are heartbroken, we suffer pain and anguish, we thirst, we are filled just as we face hardship and disappointment; we are sometimes bruised but also, we are blessed and must strive to be happy. We must not be cynical about the events of this World or treat certain events as an enigma. Suffering occurs when we love ourselves too much when we want other people to love us as much and in the same way that we imagine we want to be loved, and not in the way that we love. In my own view, joy and happiness, suffering and tragedy happen as part of life but not as a punishment. But again, my view is that love should manifest itself, and respect must be

earned, not by demand but naturally because we deserve it from our own work and intentions. As human beings, we must be intrinsically motivated and this will then be manifested in our actual living. Subsequently, *The Counseling Magazine* aims to inspire people to live a positive quality of life.

For me, Counselling Psychology is a profession that should be an opportunity for us to reflect on our standing in relation to ourselves and others so that we can develop and live fulfilling lives. Throughout life, we are happy, we find contentment in various ways but we also face certain challenges. Consequently, if counselling would enable people to cope more effectively with their lives and circumstances better, we should provide opportunities, clues and information to people in a bid for a more fulfilling life. That sustenance and/or psychosocial support, sometimes re-education could include information, spiritual nourishment, financial and business acumen and moral esteem, as well as raise their self-concept thus uplifting their lives. As a professional I have an informed understanding of the contemporary World, contrasting opinions and current understanding of people and human behaviour and these ideas and opinions are expressed in *The Counseling Magazine*. This is because I am convinced that as human beings, we must be inimitable.

Life is a pilgrimage through the World where we ultimately learn that our heart is at the service of God, others and self in that order. There are instances when we are lifted and humbled and our pride gives way. The unexpected also does happen and life can crumble and we are not always prepared for everything in life. The disasters, as well as momentous happy moments of life, force us to reassess ourselves and to always seek a purpose for ourselves and others. In all these, our past goes with us, but the more we free ourselves from pain and hurts in form of facts and emotions, the more we realize that the present has space and vast space, waiting to be filled up with a future overflowing with more love and life's joy. I still gladly mention that the self is able to develop to the fullest sense by taking in the community and/or social group as a member of a generalised order as well as the feelings and attitudes of others towards the self. This in essence enhances overall growth and development and hence *The Counseling Magazine*.

### ***My life philosophy***

My own philosophical orientation is strongly influenced by the Christian philosophy and principles of humanness. I consciously draw techniques on person-centred therapy due to the emphasis on the individual whom I am convinced can re-enact their lives in many ways, just as I respect and applaud the communal us-ness. In addition, I highly value and derive many techniques from cognitive behavioural therapy. This is because we must learn to focus on how our thinking affects our feelings and actions, and just well interact with others. Rationalisation is also an opportunity for self-reflection. A related conviction in me is that people should be provided with an opportunity and coupled with counsel, as this is empowering to people.

I love seconds; they fly, I hate minutes; the moment you turn, it is gone, I loathe hours; they appear to drag for an hour then you realize it is gone, days are awful; they go on to the end of the year and it is all over as we welcome a new year, then more years and forevermore. I dread looking at a watch so I don't wear any! The great pretence that is since you can always check

the time on the phone, computer and hanging clocks! Certainly, there is a need for everyone to plough back what they learn in life. This includes setting realistic goals for our World. Therefore, I do not ignore past experiences especially when they overwhelming affect our emotions and behaviour. Subsequently, it is an acceptance that our past and present shape our development and behaviour. Even as a counsellor practitioner, there are many aspects that influence our lives, and I hasten to add and as well agree, also on faith. Sometimes faith will deliver, and sometimes faith will sustain. Thus, I admire Sir Winston Churchill's words:

*Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.*

Faith is therefore important and as counsellors, we ought to respect it as more studies are conducted in this and certain other aspects of our lives. In addition, we too must walk the audacious journey to the apex of our lives, to power our personal ambitions but not by trending on others. We must be safeguarded by integrity, competence, education and (professional) training, experience and skills, but not ethnicity, racism, biased gender inclination or affiliations or biased political innuendos. Instead, counsellors and other social workers must deal with the client holistically. Let us, therefore, set an example and then turn to others, their situation or circumstances and assist them as competent practitioners so that they too can find their own place in life and society. An understanding of self, another, others, community, nation and the World is what it means to be a human being and for a professional counsellor.

#### ***What else can I say ...***

It always comes as a surprise to many people who think I am so social to know that I am also quite reserved and private. I actually spend a lot of time alone reading and writing, exercising, listening to the radio and watching television. I hardly go out at night since I do not drink anyway. I love listening to music, watching movies and listening keenly to educative programmes I am excited by comedies and cartoons and I read and write for hours on end. *The Counsel-ling Magazine* has taken me to far greater heights than I would personally have imagined.

My favourite reads include *Psychology Today* which has a focus on psychology; *Counselling Today* by the American Counselling Association; and, *PsyPost*, a website dedicated to reporting the latest research on psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, sociology, and similar fields. The Holy Bible is my life and spiritual stimulation. My topmost books include writings by Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Barack Obama and I certainly enjoyed the book by Michele Obama. I read columns in the Sunday Nation (Kenya) including Chris Hart on *Relationships*, and Yusuf Dawood, *Surgeon's Diary*. I keep time and I am punctual to the extent that some people consider me a bit of a nuisance. I am aware that I am sometimes too analytical, but tactful. As a friend, I care, I am committed and I place my friends and colleagues as invaluable. I am excited that I'm meticulous and adhere to deadlines strictly. At the beginning and end of the day, I say a prayer to God. Even for me, I walk steadfastly with God till He takes me away.

***Counselling, Professionalism Development and Intensity: Designed to provide valuable assistance***

I am convinced that counselling psychology as a profession and we as people can transform our lives as well as change the lives of many people in the World in a variety of ways. It was Sir Winston Churchill who said, 'History will be kind to me for I intend to write it,' and I certainly want to do that as well and be a part of History. This includes all the persons offering help such as the parent guiding the child, the teacher and counsellor who steer the child in school (Individual Education Programmes, (IEPs)), the doctor and nurse with the patient who has a terminal illness, mentoring of new employees in an organisation, workplace counselling programmes that assist employees in various ways, the clergy and members of their congregation in pastoral counselling and care, social workers, lawyers, accountants and bankers and many other instances of service and helping. We must of essence provide a safe space for our families, relatives, friends, colleagues the entire community and among nations.

*The Counsel-ling Magazine* resonates with the concept of lifelong good health, that is, quality life (QL) and this is in turn extended to quality-adjusted living through the years (QUALITY). The QUALITY of life is based primarily on the needs of the client as it relates to what they know about themselves and by extension others, the past, present and the future. The focus on counsel-ling as a process in *The Counsel-ling Magazine* is grounded on life principles including how to organise our lives systematically and comprehensively in order to develop self-understanding and thus make it more meaningful. This resonates with expanding our ideas into opinion creating and operating systems (OCOS). Counselling Psychology is effective in the understanding of one another in peace, conflict resolution, crisis and trauma management as well as in the way we manage our vast and intensive emotions, a bit differently though. Inclusion in counselling is total and caters for the needs and feelings of diverse populations, including the often secluded and specialised clients, to promote personal well-being; let the person be, and, enable them to live a quality life and quantity living. In the end, we must drift up the mountain starlit with great enthusiasm.

I trust in God, I love humankind and I am committed to our well-being, that is what it means to be humane. This is because God fills us with great grace in our lives every day; we must be kind to ourselves and share that kindness with the World.

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