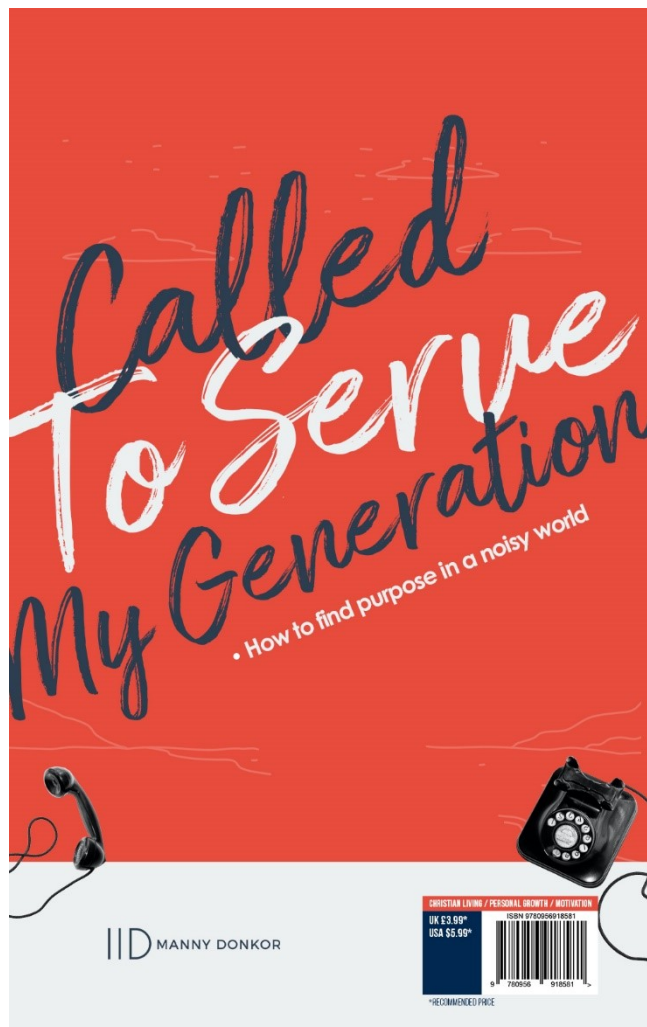


Called To Serve My Generation

HOW TO FIND PURPOSE IN A NOISY WORLD



Manny Donkor



First UK and World eBook edition published by Manny Donkor

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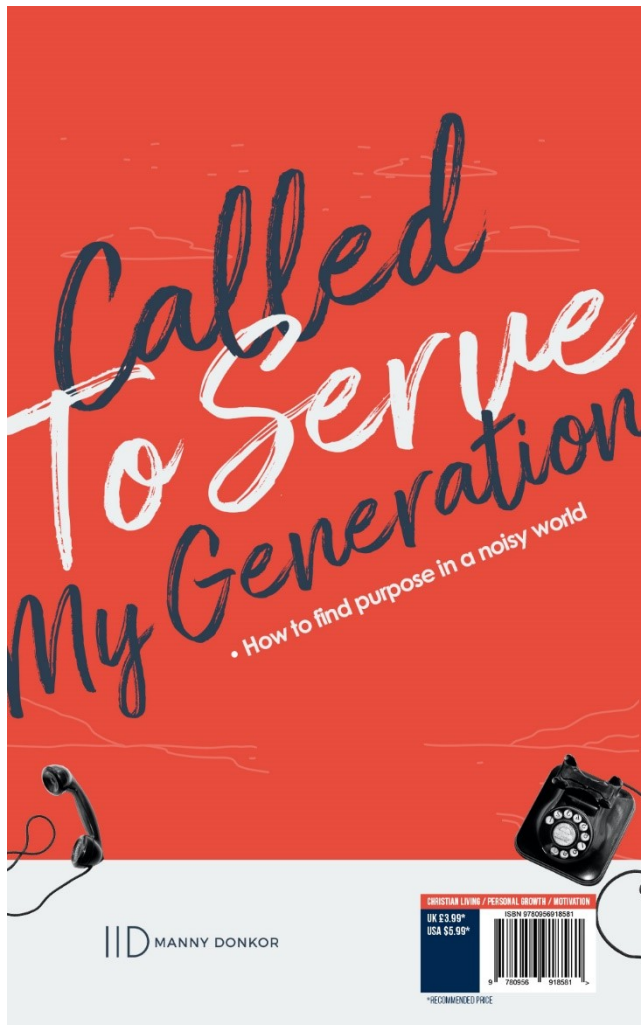
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To each there comes in their lifetime a special moment when they are figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing, unique to them and fitted to their talents. What a tragedy if that moment finds them unprepared or unqualified for that which could have been their finest hour.

–Winston Churchill, former British Prime Minister & Statesman

Chapter Six:

What Do I Have to Serve My Generation?

A psychologist was giving a presentation to an audience of curious minded, motivated people on a winter's evening. The seminar, mundane as it was, was special because he used the occasion to inspire his audience, many of whom were part of the emerging generation. He used the occasion to birth forth a passion in his captive audience. He inspired their exploration of the latent power residing in the deep recesses of people.

During the presentation, he took his audience on a whistle tour of the magnificent structure they were sitting in. It was an extraordinary building, judging by the look and feel of it, not to mention the incredible attention to detail. Looking at the designs, the way it all worked; those huge beams that held it all together and how they magically stretched all the way across the expanse of the ceiling, they were all in awe of this architectural masterpiece. He drew their attention to how high the walls were. They also noticed how warm it was inside, despite the cold outside. Indeed, the design of the place met both their appreciation of beauty and their need for protection from the weather—as they all felt safe and warm. Not one of them was worried that the building was going to fall down in the middle of the seminar.

The audience at the seminar and the presenter took a moment to revel in the structure they had somewhat ignored all day. It truly was something to behold! Then the seminal moment came when he asked his captive audience about the origin of this magnificent building they were seated in. In other words, he wanted to find out if they knew where the idea for the arena came from.

Some said a builder built it, while others shouted that someone designed it before it was built, obviously! He reiterated the validity of their answer—that a designer put together into a blueprint what they hoped will be a great place, and then the building firm turned the concept on paper into a tangible space that people can see, feel, and experience.

However, he told them that what they were seeing, touching, and feeling came from an invisible world. In fact, it came from the invisible world of a toddler's soul. This seemed to baffle his audience a little bit as they struggled to come to terms with the fact that this beautiful building come from a child. He continued...

This visible arena in which they were sitting in and enjoying its warmth, protection, and security, came from the invisible soul of a twenty-month old child who we will call Jenny.

One day many years ago, Jenny, having just learned how to walk, was exploring her world more and more. She was in her play den one evening right before bedtime, getting in the last few minutes before mummy tucked her into bed, when something happened. She took a few blocks of wood, and instead of her normal pounding them down and throwing them about, she stacked one on top of another and they stayed. Then she took another block and placed it on top of the second one, and it stayed there too. As she stacked the fourth block, something leapt inside her. She felt excitement and the sheer joy on her face said it all. She laughed and exclaimed *Yay!* She was so excited to see that a tower of blocks could be built and stay there, one upon the other. Mummy and daddy took notice of what was happening in Jenny's world too as they clapped and shouted, "*Yay*" with words of affirmation like, "*that's so good Jenny!*" Everyone was enjoying the moment, but what was really happening was much more than just a moment of joy.

It was a miracle. For Jenny was discovering two of the most powerful forces in the universe—*talent* and *desire*. She found out that when she worked with blocks, whether with wood or plastic, something inside of her felt alive and filled her with joy as she desired to do it more. She added another block and when it fell, she did not

quit. She built her tower over and over again—laughing, giggling, and exclaiming with each repetition of her creation. Her parents shared in her delight. Her talent for interacting with spatial design had just had its first display in the outside world.

In preschool and kindergarten, she loved the hours spent drawing and painting in art class. When she took the pencil or brush in her hand, something special happened. Not only did it provide a different level of enjoyment than running or cricket, but her teachers noticed it too. Rather than scolding her for her apathy for sports, they encouraged her with every drawing. Then she also found the same sort of attraction to her math class—an attraction which was lacking in her English literature class. Although she was good at most of her studies, math and art seemed really to give her that “*alive feeling*,” as opposed to just doing the chore of her assignments and homework. Sometimes in English class, she would find herself hiding a paper beneath her textbook on which she would draw the medieval castles described in the stories they read in class. Her parents encouraged her in her studies and praised her when she did well. When she struggled, they took the time to help her. They enforced their “*homework first and play later*” rule. The discipline they provided was becoming part of her, for when she went to university and was away from them, she studied while others partied. As a result of her hard work and diligence, she graduated with honors, becoming what she had dreamed of becoming since secondary school—an *architect*.

This character trait of determination carried on into her adult life. After being diligent and creative in her early jobs doing basic drafting and small buildings, she was given more and more responsibility. She remained faithful with her talent and had the character to bring it to fruition. Soon, she was promoted as partner at her firm, which meant a chance to do the big jobs. Her promotion came just as the city was planning a new event center, and proposal drawings were solicited.

Many more steps were involved, but in the end, Jenny’s design won the bid. It was her design that created the arena where they were having the seminar on that day. It is a very interesting story, isn’t it?

As beautiful as the story is, it illustrates a fundamental fact about us in our bid to serve our generation. That fact is that each and every one of us has been given something: call it a gift, an ability, a skill, natural disposition; and it is this treasure that we draw on when we serve our generation. Call them what you may, we all have all or some of these natural resources or abilities deposited inside us, waiting for our recognition so that we may better serve our generation.

David was able to serve his generation at the time because he had these resources—*gifts*, *skills*, and *abilities*. There were those that had been given to him by God before he was born. There were also the ones he learned as part of his growth and upskilling for the responsibilities that were going to be placed on him. Surely, the time he spent in the wilderness caring for his family's livestock provided the opportunity to hone his stewardship skills. Later on, we know that this leadership skill which he learned from shepherding came in handy when he became the king of Israel. It is this skill that enabled him to create the atmosphere of good governance in Israel, not to forget the enormous economic benefit it brought to the nation.

In addition to having these skills, his time as a shepherd afforded him the opportunity to learn the art of warfare and military strategy. Later in his reign, he deployed this skill in embarking on a military expedition. This expedition expanded the territorial boundaries of Israel, often by conquering nations and making them vassal states. These nations, as a sign of their loyalty to their conqueror, brought tributes which went into the national treasury and supported major infrastructural and developmental projects in the nation. We cannot mention David's military acumen and his skill in the art of warfare without mentioning the epic battle with the *champion of Gath*, Goliath, which announced David as the heir apparent to the throne. This seminal moment was significant as it empowered the Israelite army, who at this point had been afraid of the Philistines, to complete the rout by chasing down the Philistines and defeating them.

His love for poetry and his skill at playing musical instruments were also key in his serving of his people. As an ardent Yahwist, not only did he encourage the worship of Yahweh as an integral part of

national life, he also developed musical instruments which were used in the worship of God. A study of the Psalms reminds us of his legacy, which transcends time as it forms an important part of our devotion to God (1 Chronicles 23:5; 2 Chronicles 7:6; 2 Chronicles 29:26; Amos 6:5).

All of these ways David served his generation endeared him to the people and this is why he is remembered long after his death as the greatest king Israel ever had.

We all have gifts, abilities, or what I will call natural dispositions. These are given to us at conception; whilst we were still being knitted together in our mother's womb. There are others too that we acquire as part of our education—either through formal education in the classroom or apprenticeship, or through the school of life when we go through the various phases and experiences of life. These experiences provide us with the skillset required for surviving in our environment. It is a combination of these things that equip us to better serve our generation.

- To unearth these resources, we need to do the following:
- Become aware of our talents, gifts, skills, natural dispositions, desires, dreams, and other treasures in us.
- Listen to them and value them as life itself.
- Take steps to develop them beginning in very small ways.
- Seek coaching and help to make them grow.
- Do not care much about the results but just continue to express them whenever you can. Remember, you are manifesting them to help improve the lives of others and hence the need for you to continue expressing them.

Throughout the Bible, there are numerous examples of people who were endowed with gifts, talents, abilities, and skills, who deployed them for the purpose of improving the lives of the people. Here are a few examples:

“The Word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.’”

Jeremiah 1:4-5 (NIV)

“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: ‘when he ascended on high, He took captives and gave gifts [spiritual] to his people. So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.”

Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-14 (NIV)

In the Ephesians example, although the context used is for the fanning into flames of spiritual gifts, the concept holds true for all other gifts and abilities apportioned to us by our creator, the one who formed us in our mothers' wombs. Thus, we all have some natural ability seated in the depths of our soul, which society is crying out for. These gifts are there to be used in serving our generation. In this way, we can equip people for the works of service so that in the end, we, as the body of Christ, will be built up to become matured, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. We all have the responsibility of fulfilling this mandate and the first thing we need to do is to recognize that the resource we need to do it (God-ordained assignment of service) is buried in us, simply waiting for its recognition and manifestation.

In the developmental stages of God's relationship with the people of Israel, he instructed Moses to build a tabernacle which would represent the dwelling place of his presence among his people; a constant reminder of him being their shield and exceedingly great reward. To accomplish this project, God had chosen a fine gentleman who had the skills in craftsmanship and had all the abilities needed to complete the building of the dwelling place for God. *Bezalel* was his name. This is how God described him in the Bible:

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of crafts.’”

Exodus 31:1-5 (NIV)

Apart from Bezalel, God also provided skilled and gifted men who would help with the task of building the tabernacle. Chief among them was Oholiab, who was the co-builder and project manager. Oholiab was not an ordinary man; he was also a skilled gentleman like Bezalel:

“Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you.”

Exodus 31:6 (NIV)

Bezalel is the prototype of a skilled person. He is the epitome of a life that is deposited with so much from God. When the need arose for the tabernacle to be designed and built, God activated Bezalel with those inherent skills of craftsmanship to accomplish the task. He also provided him with the men who would help complete the project since there was no way he could have completed it single-handedly. The men were equally skilled and understood the enormity of the task ahead, and were ready to deploy their gifts and talents. Later on, through the rest of Exodus, we see how Bezalel and Oholiab and the skilled men went about constructing the tabernacle, brick by brick with great attention to details. Interior design and decoration, stone masonry, gold and silver smithing, and carpentry are a few of the skills which were on display on the project.

So how do we unearth the treasures buried inside us so that we can serve our generation? How do we make sure that we are in a position to serve our generation with what we have been endowed? One thing is certain and that is that it would be a shame to live our entire lives not being able to be solution carriers and problem solvers; not being able to leave our footprints on the sands of posterity. We therefore

have a duty to make sure that our society is improved, however small or big the improvement is, through our service.

So how do we do just that?

Fundamentally, we can identify the treasures we have when we *dig them up*! This will ensure that we are aware of what we have, and having identified them, use them to serve.

Dig It Up

We have seen how the visible world is brought into being by the invisible world. It is what we don't see—those latent gifts, imaginations, and abilities that give birth to what we see in the natural, material world. We are also aware that as human beings, we all have something woven into the fabric of our being, which is the medium through which we are able to bring forth into the physical world all the things of wonder, like the magnificent event center referenced earlier.

However, for us to even identify these treasures, we need to dig them up. This is a very important step. Digging them up will enable us to acknowledge their existence; with that we can serve our generation by the will of God. It is often said that the poorest person is usually not the one who has no money and other material possessions. Much as these possessions are important as they help make life pleasurable and comfortable, they are not a reflection of true wealth and worth. They are temporary and fleeting.

Rather, the poorest person is the one who does not know what they have buried inside them: those invisible traits, abilities, natural dispositions, gifts, talents, and skills. These are the mark of true wealth. With these gifts, one can create environments and things that transform people and communities. From these transformations, they get the material things that make life simple and comfortable. Such people (the poorest), even if they know what is inside of them, choose to ignore these resources as they tend not to see the importance and value in harnessing them for the greater good. Like Esau, they would rather sell their birthright (the treasures) for a bowl of some lentil

soup, rather than asserting their rights by harnessing and making good use of these God-given treasures (Genesis 25:33-34).

Remember that the world is eagerly awaiting the manifestation of what you have been given, so that people can be encouraged to contribute to their community in the same way as you do when you deploy the treasure in you. This might seem surprising but that is what happens when we heed to the call to serve our generation. We, in the process, empower other people to also pluck up the boldness and confidence to step out into the unknown and create an environment that will foster the development of our fellow humans. What you have inside of you is exactly what someone out there in the world is waiting for in order for them to step into their destiny. Your lack of awareness of this right now is depriving someone from accessing the result of your treasure in order for them to move forward on their life's journey.

David was able to identify his treasures. His time with his father's sheep in the desert provided him with the skills he would later need in his reign as one of the most successful kings. These skills also unearthed his flair for writing amazing poetry as an expression of his worship to God. This is evidenced in some of the greatest pieces of literary work written in human history. In addition to that, he was also musically gifted. Such was the level of his giftedness that he was able to soothe King Saul when he had periods of depression.

Could you also be very gifted with the natural disposition for music? Or have the flair to lead people into moments of worship when you play an instrument like the harp, piano, or saxophone like David did? Could you be a person who has the natural flair for Godly wisdom, that every word that comes from your mouth is seasoned with so much Godly wisdom that everybody stops in their tracks to listen to what you have to say? Could you, like Jenny, have the natural disposition to visualize a concept for a building? She brought that talent to the physical realm for the benefit and enjoyment of people—providing shelter and accommodation for people to work and dream.

The answer to these questions lies in the digging! So how do we dig the treasures up? How do we know what we have been given so

that we can manifest these treasures for the betterment of our generation and society in general?

Seek the One with the Blueprint

When a product manufacturer launches a product, an important aspect of the product is the manual. It contains steps and directions on how to get the best out of the product. It also gives you indicators to what might be wrong with the product when you see it display certain characteristics. Such is the importance of the manual—that you cannot really enjoy the product until you have read the manual to help you set it up properly. It contains the manufacturer’s vision for the product. It also contains the manufacturer’s guarantee to you of how to get the best out of the product you have purchased.

Similarly, we are all the product of an invisible, good, creative God who molded us in his image and likeness. This is in contrast to the prevailing rhetoric which suggests that we are products of evolution and not as species created by an intelligent God. We have been deliberately, intentionally, and intricately formed by a Creator who wanted to manifest a human species that would carry his creative DNA and would eventually use the DNA to create and live in a world that reflects his creativity. We have evidence of this at the beginning of creation when we see him use the power of words (invisible) to create the world (visible) that we have today, including the pinnacle of his creation—you and I (Genesis 1-2).

Therefore, when we get to the point of trying to identify the DNA we carry, the best place to find it is to go to the source of it—God Almighty. And he promises us that when we come to him, he will not deny us. Rather, he will show us what we are made of and more:

“This is what the Lord says, he who made the earth, the Lord who formed it and established it—the Lord is his name. ‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’”

Jeremiah 33:2-3 (NIV)

There are great and unsearchable things we do not know because of our limitations and frailties as human beings. Only God knows! And

he bids us to come to him so that he may make known to us what his purposes for our lives are. He wants us to know what he has deposited in us to help us on our journey of discovery, and how to use these resources to serve people in our generation. All we have to do is approach him and he will show us. So will you approach him today as you read this book? If you do, he will surely answer you by unveiling his plans for your life. Ask him today, because when you ask him, you receive; when you knock on his door, he opens. When you seek, you will find, because he will show you (Matthew 7:7-8).

Become aware of these treasures—gifts, talents, dreams, desires etc.

When your intelligent creator has showed you the blueprint of your life, the onus is on you to identify them and become aware of them. This is sometimes easier said than done. One of the fundamental questions that many an emerging generation asks is: what they are good at or what they have been born to do. Now, while there may not be a one-size-fits-all answer to these questions, there are a couple of signs or hints that will indicate what you are very good at or naturally disposed to do.

Call them nudges or hints, these questions will point you in the right direction of discovery:

- *What are my strengths?*
- *What am I passionate about?*
- *What do I have (skills and resources). This will indicate the problem you were called to solve.*
- *What gives me satisfaction and fulfillment in my life?*
- *What do I enjoy doing for hours without remuneration?*

A true God-given talent will possess you to the point of doing that thing over and over even if there is no physical or material reward. The God who sees you in your raw state will compensate for you in more ways than you can imagine. All you need to do is to do it.

Listen to Them and Value Them as Life Itself

Remember that these questions are there to help you on the journey of discovery, which will prepare you to serve people of your generation. They are the resources that will bring you into contact with people. Therefore, it is very important that you listen and value these hints just as you value your life. That's because these treasures are life to those who pay attention to them. Continue to answer the questions above; continue to listen to those inner nudges, for these are the springboard for the discovery of what lies inside of you –the resources which will be harnessed and used in serving your generation.

Take Steps to Develop Them, Beginning in Very Small Ways

Nurturing is an important step in the process of identifying and deploying our treasures to serve people in our generation. Nurturing and developing our resources involve enrolling in various courses to sharpen and refine them for use. Jenny's flair for spatial design was followed by a stint in graduate school where she honed on her natural talent, ending up with a skill for drawing and conceptualizing buildings.

A person who has a natural disposition for singing may take singing lessons with a voice coach who can help them hone on their gift. It might also mean finding places and avenues where you can develop your skills on the job. Volunteering is one great way of nurturing a talent or skill. When I finished my teacher training, I volunteered at a night class for asylum seekers who needed to learn English as part of their integration into British society. Although I was not paid for it, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, as it gave me the opportunity to further develop my teaching skills.

Seek Coaching and Help to Make Your Talents Grow

Part of developing the treasures you have buried inside of you is seeking the help of an expert coach. Some of the treasures can be enhanced by activating them in the right environment, such as volunteering. There are, however, those that would need the help of

subject matter experts (SMEs). While some of the services of these experts are expensive, there is also good quality coaching available for lower fees. Either way, you should be prepared to put your money where your mouth is.

Researching to find out these resources has never been easier than it is today with a click of a mouse or on your mobile device—Google!

So, it is not entirely true that you don't have anything with which to serve your generation. You have been carrying within you all the resources you need to help impact the lives of people in your world—your family, community, and the world at large, one person at a time.

What is required now is to start on that journey of discovery. And as the saying goes—*a journey of a thousand miles begin with the first step.*

The first step is to seek clarity as to your potential from the one who created you and has the blueprint for your life available. Remember that when you ask you will receive; you will receive great and mighty things you do not know. Because God will download his DNA together with the treasures he has placed inside you. This will help you on the journey. He has a huge stake in you manifesting your abilities for the improvement of humanity.

Then listen to the hints and nudges and deploy them in whatever shape or form you can, one small step toward improving the lives of other people. You will also need to invest your time, energy, and money, as well as other resources to develop and hone the treasures.

You owe it to your generation and for posterity!

This is how you serve the people in your generation by the will of God so that by the time you see *corruption*, you would have left an indelible mark on humanity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Emmanuel Donkor is an Author, Speaker, Trainer and Youth Leader who is passionate about calling out the emerging generation to deploy their potential for a more fulfilling life. He believes that a life lived with purpose is usually one that is lived when we add value to others by serving them.

He believes that a life that is well lived is when one devotes themselves to adding value to other people and this is done by serving. Thus, a life of purpose is one lived when we are of service to others. When we start to serve one another that is when a higher call to purpose is placed on us. This is why he has devoted his life to serving his generation and the next one by adding value to them through offering his expertise, experiences as well as mentoring.

Also known as 'Manny', Emmanuel has a bachelor's degree in English and Theatre Arts from the University of Ghana and a Master's degree in Communications from Westminster University in London. In addition to these, he also has a certificate in Christian Entrepreneurship from the Joseph Business School, London at the Dominion Centre in Wood Green, North London where he was adjudged the best student at the class of 2014.

Manny also has a certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) awarded by Cambridge University where he currently lives. This has enabled him to teach English as a foreign language (EFL) to many learners from all over the world for over 7 years mainly in London and Cambridge as his passion is teaching, training and learning and development. He is currently a student member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) UK with a special interest

in Learning and Development (L&D). He hopes to use the skills and training from CIPD to help equip businesses and organizations skill up their workforce in the Knowledge Economy.

As a day job, he is a corporate trainer at Cambridge University Hospital Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust where he is part of a team that trains clinicians (doctors, nurses and other allied health professionals) on their use of Epic which is the electronic patient record system as part of the digitalization of patient care in the UK.

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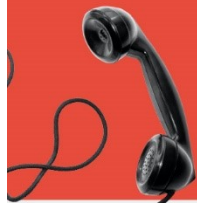
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