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‘We defied work rules for love’

Geoffrey and Brenda navigated busy clinic schedules, workplace rules, and long message exchanges to build a love that lasted 11 months of careful courtship, proving that patience, purpose, and persistence make for a lasting romance.

BY OLIVIER MUKAAYA

In 2017, Geoffrey Wotta and Brenda Khaita met at the Zam Zam clinic in Mbale City, eastern Uganda. Geoffrey recalls noticing Brenda towards the end of the year, but it was not until January 2018 that he found the courage to approach her.

"We started by exchanging phone numbers to get to know each other better," he remembers.

Their connection developed slowly and carefully, as workplace rules prohibited relationships. Consequently, their conversations shifted to social media and phone calls. Due to differing schedules and departments, they rarely saw each other outside of work, but their bond deepened with every message they exchanged.

"What attracted me most to Brenda was her kindness, her cheerful nature, her infectious smile, and the respect she had for herself," Geoffrey states. Conversely, Brenda was captivated by his gentleness, his caring nature, and his unwavering kindness.

Before making their relationship public, the couple often visited each other's homes after work, allowing

them to get to know one another beyond the confines of the clinic.

Courtship

By March 2018, after several months of exchanging messages and having quiet visits, Geoffrey proposed to Brenda, and she happily accepted. Given their hectic schedules, Geoffrey opted for a modern approach and proposed to Brenda over a WhatsApp video chat. She accepted, making the long-awaited moment both personal and digital.

Although they worked together at the clinic, they maintained a professional demeanour, understanding that losing their jobs was not an option since they relied on it for income.

"We attended to our duties without showing attachment to one another," he explains.

As their relationship developed, they began to spend more time together privately. By May 2018, they decided to partially live together, believing it would help them understand each other better amid their busy schedules.

In June, they took the next step by introducing each other to their parents.

Geoffrey spoke with his father, who welcomed their plans and offered his blessing. The following month, his mother also approved and provided marriage advice. On November 4, 2018, Brenda's family welcomed the couple, with her brother emphasising that their marriage would require courage, commitment, and a willingness to learn together.

Wedding preparations

Plans for the introduction began as early as 2021 but were delayed due to financial constraints. By 2023, they had the necessary funds, but the couple agreed that Brenda should first return to school to upgrade her qualifications. She attended school from February 2024 to June 2025.

Once she completed her studies, Geoffrey gathered resources and approached both families to formalise their plans. They set a date to meet with Brenda's family to discuss dowry items, and preparations began in earnest.

The couple also formed a committee through a WhatsApp group, with friends gradually contributing to the celebration.

Marriage counselling

During their pre-marriage sessions, Geoffrey and Brenda learnt that marriage is "a school where you never graduate." They discovered the importance of patience, respect, and cherishing one another. Geoffrey notes, "To hold my wife in high regard, I must be

FIVE LESSONS FROM GEOFFREY AND BRENDA

1. Small gestures matter.

A shared smile, a thoughtful message, or a meal after work—these little moments built their bond.

2. Patience pays off.

Their 11-month courtship shows that love can grow stronger when given time.

3. Family first.

Introducing each other to parents and respecting family traditions made their journey smoother.

4. Communication is key.

From phone calls to WhatsApp video proposals, staying connected kept their love alive.

5. Plan, but stay flexible.

Life may throw delays (school, finances), but adjusting together strengthened their relationship.

patient and refrain from sharing private matters with outsiders."

Challenges

Organising their wedding was not without hurdles. Committee members were often too busy, attendance at meetings was low, and some pledges went unfulfilled. Financial constraints and the high cost of cows added to the stress.

Memorable moments

Despite challenges, the day was unforgettable. Geoffrey's most treasured moment was seeing Brenda radiant and smiling, while his best man entertained the crowd with lively dance moves. Brenda cherished dancing and hugging Geoffrey in front of her parents.

Advice for couples

Geoffrey encourages those preparing for marriage to nurture strong relationships with in-laws and enter marriage with no thought of retreat. "One should not stay with someone's daughter like a thief; it is important to be known to the family so you can work together if challenges arise," he advises.

Geoffrey and Brenda's story proves that love grounded in patience, purpose, and mutual respect can blossom even amid busy schedules, financial constraints, and the demands of everyday life. Eleven months of careful courtship, thoughtful planning, and shared dreams culminated in a wedding as joyful and meaningful as their journey together.