Joseph Sebarenzi, former head of the Rwandan Parliament, has endured tragedy most of us cannot fathom. He lost his parents, seven siblings, and numerous other relatives in the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Yet, years later, as a senior government official in a position to exact revenge, he instead pushed for peace and reconciliation. "Revenge is like adding guilt to victimhood,” says Sebarenzi. "It solves nothing. At some point, we have to ignore the past and envision the future. Forgiveness is a moral response to injustice, and victims should take the lead."

Sebarenzi grew up in Rwanda, and as a child saw glimpses of the tribal violence which years later would engulf his country. In 1994, when Hutus slaughtered more than 800,000 Tutsis, Sebarenzi and his immediate family were safely out of the country, but many of Sebarenzi's extended family were not so lucky.

Returning to Rwanda, Sebarenzi rose through the ranks of Parliament, eventually becoming Speaker, third in power only to the country's president. As the leader of parliament, Sebarenzi worked to improve the national government, speaking out for parliamentary independence and against corruption in the ruling party. Informed of a plot to assassinate him, and forced to resign, he fled Rwanda and found exile in the United States. He still champions a broad process of restorative justice in Rwanda as the country struggles with the ongoing effects of mass genocide and retaliatory killing among its Hutu and Tutsi people.

Today, Sebarenzi and his family live in Virginia. He teaches conflict resolution at the School for International Training, lectures on his experiences, consults, works toward his master's degree, and is writing his autobiography. Sebarenzi has also been an executive for national and international nonprofit organizations and a regular speaker on BBC and Voice of America. He plans to return to Rwanda eventually, and hopes his home country will soon be a safe place for people of all races, creeds and heritages.

For his college lectures, Sebarenzi tells his dramatic and historic story, and imparts a message of peace and forgiveness. This unforgettable and emotional program is perfect for International Studies departments, Genocide Programs, African Studies, Multi-Cultural Programs, Peace Groups, Progressive Groups, Christian organizations and keynote lectures. Whatever your group, Joseph Sebarenzi is a man of peace and grace whose message will not soon be forgotten.