

Derrick Sanders #
265718
Oshkosh Corr. Institution
P.O. 3310
Oshkosh, WI 54903

Hello World;

My name is Derrick, but friends and family call me either D.Rock or Dissob. I hope to bring insightful information as well as intrigued those that are adventurous and curious to know what a prisoner thinks.

I would first like to state that I am incarcerated. That is my situation, but it is not who I am. I am an intelligent man that is paying for his poor choices. I ask that you see me as a Man, not as a "Prisoner or Inmate."

I've been incarcerated for almost 20 years - since 1993. I can honestly say that this experience has made me a better person. I chose to use this experience as a learning tool in my life. As with all tools, I've tried to "fix" what was wrong with myself. I hope to share that experience with anyone interested.

To briefly introduce myself, I am a 39 year old healthy intelligent African American man. I am Godfearing, caring, outgoing, and very funny. I enjoy making others laugh and I'm an extrovert by nature.

I enjoy learning, meeting new people, and conversing with others. I am a loyal friend which sometimes gets me in trouble. I am very goal orientated.

My hobbies are reading African-American history, classical literature, poetry (reading + writing), and doing brain teasers. I also enjoy jogging, aerobics, and playing handball.

My goal is to pursue a career in Social Work. I hope to work with disadvantaged youth. I am currently enrolled at J.W. Potterville as a Distinct Learning Student in Business Administration.

This is just a glimpse of who I am. To learn more about my past, present, and future aspirations, get to know me by logging on and engaging me. Let's share experiences.....

What Is My Purpose For Blogging?

My purpose is two-fold: I want to reach out to the world by sharing my story with hopes of helping others, while at the same time using the feedback I receive as an opportunity to stay in contact with society.

It saddens me how society discards those citizens that find themselves incarcerated. We are all humans and have the same wants, needs, and aspirations as everyone else, yet because of our mistakes and poor choices, we are often

forgotten about.

Am I less of a human due to the poor choices I've made? I laugh, cry, seek companionship just as others. Yet this situation - incarceration - has somehow delegated me to a second-class citizen status.

Society has judged us, sentenced us, and left us to travel this journey alone - even family and friends. Why so? Why are we forgotten? More important, how will we (I) be judged for my actions?

Although I could never adequately explain to you how it feels to be incarcerated for 1 day let alone 18 years, it is even harder to explain how it feels to be forgotten, ignored, and left for dead by the outside world.

I hope to share with you 'My voice', my personal experiences, and my triumphs. I do not attempt to speak for all prisoners, I only speak for myself. I have a voice and I am worthy of speaking.

I will speak with honesty, which sometimes can be harsh. For those seeking a fairy tale - you will not receive it here. I speak with conviction and I speak from my heart.

As I've said, I am an intelligent man with much to offer. I have a range of topics that I can speak on and I have just as much if not more to offer than those that are "Free".

Although I can't change the perceptions of prisoners (we are monsters, users, and worthless)

I can prove to you that quality people resides in prisons. I am willing to engage in productive dialogues with anyone willing to exchange thoughts, ideas, and life experiences. I only ask that you don't judge me based on what I've done in the past, but judge me on who I am today.

I guarantee you that once you listen to me, learn about me, and get to know me, you will truly enjoy what you find and you will respect me.

If you get nothing from me, I at least hope that you enjoy a good laugh and a fresh outlook on the incarcerated. For in all honesty, we've all felt "imprisoned"; either at school, work, or just our daily relationships in life.

I have a lot to offer and I seek a lot to learn. Engage me, walk with me, help me navigate through this process I need to conquer from incarceration to freedom. The reality is that 83% of those incarcerated will be released! So when will you interact with me - today or in the future?

I know I have not provided detailed specifics of why or how I arrived in prison. This is in no way an attempt to hide or downplay my crime. I am merely providing you with a brief glimpse of who I am today, before showing you who I once was.

If you are interested in learning more about how I became the man that I am today, go on and let's dialogue. My life is an open book that I would love to share.

If you are not interested, then I wish you a blessed journey in life. I would like to leave you with a piece of wisdom -

Who among us is perfect? If we allow any one to be mistreated and/or looked down upon, then as the great Martin Luther King Jr. said:

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Donik Sanders

The Cage

The Bird found itself in a cage and wondered would it ever fly.. So many birds before him would sit in its cage and simply squawk, never preparing for the day when it will be free.

Yet this Bird was determined to fly within its cage. So everyday it would look toward the skies to witness the many birds that were flying high..

Unlike other caged birds, this bird didn't simply sit in the cage hoping that one day it would be free... this bird flapped its wings everyday.

While the other birds consider him the fool, saying things like "why are you flapping

your wings, don't you know that a caged bird can't fly?" This bird continued to flap its wings and look to the sky ...

Then one day as the cage door was finally opened (as the bird knew it eventually would) this particular bird didn't just fly, it soared so high, higher than the birds that were already free. and as the other birds struggled to gain strength in their wings, this bird was strong and reached heights unseen.

When asked how, why, did this once caged bird fly so high? The bird responded with conviction : "while those other birds wasted all that energy and time in the cage squawking, I was strengthening my wings, preparing for the day that cage would open. I would look to the sky, not just at the free birds, but I looked at the unlimited possibilities that I knew I could reach... I never wanted to fly, but that's simple, that's my nature, I've always wanted to soar, and it took being in that cage for me to realize that!"

By: *Derrick* ^{Author}
12.3.10
T.R.K.