

10 Years & Counting

I've always been a very mathematical/logical person. I see patterns in most everything, and have always tried to make my incarceration seem to pass more quickly by playing games with my time and chopping it into survivable pieces.

One of the games I've been playing for the last decade was telling myself that prison would be hard until I'd been down for 10 years - then it would become easy. On October 1st, I passed that 10 year mark, and sad to say I lost that game. Prison is still hard. 😞

A few months ago I reached the milestone of "only" having 5 years remaining until my release. At that time, I began to panic. How would I survive on the streets? Would any of my old friends accept me back into their lives? Somehow the less time left, the harder things were seeming.

I was able to refocus myself. I made an attempt to contact old acquaintances, and while it wasn't anywhere near as successful as I would have liked, I'm getting an idea of where I stand. I decided to go back to school to officially learn programming once I get out. Most importantly of all, I stopped worrying about things I cannot control.

The problem is, I rekindled my interest in the outside world. I began to hope and dream again. Now, despite the fact I have completed almost 70% of my sentence, time is once again crawling by. The easiest way to do prison time is to get into an endless routine and let time blend into a dream. I'm much happier now, and that is truly wonderful, but now I'm again aware of every passing minute. Now, more than anything, I feel my chains chaffing and want nothing more than to be free once again.

I do truly appreciate the rays of light that pierce my personal darkness. I love hearing from people and being reminded that I might just still have a place in the outside world. I enjoy being part of a bigger pattern, and being able to think my story has yet to be entirely told. (Here's to hoping for a huge comeback in the next few acts ☺)

As for Catie, I send to you my best wishes. I'm shamed to admit that while I do remember you, all my memories focus more on Till. (or on Kristy) The fact that 23 years later, you not only remember me, but were also willing to bring me hopes says that perhaps I missed a huge opportunity to really know a great person.

After hearing from you, I cannot help but feel nostalgic. Our youth defines so much of who we eventually become. While not everything about the "ol' days" is good, I remember that during that period of my life, I truly tried to make every life that I touched better in some way. In many ways I feel that I have become a better person than I was when I came to prison.

Trying to improve the lives of others is one piece of myself that I had somehow lost sight of - yet I hope to regain it. If I can take my hard-earned wisdom and apply it to the good-natured core that I've selfishly suppressed as an adult... if I remember to be thankful for the good things in my life... if I can follow the basic principle of treating others how I would like to be treated, and never again take for granted those who share their lives with me... then perhaps I don't need a second chance at life. My lessons came hard, but I do not believe I've entirely screwed up my first chance beyond redemption - and that's a chance I'd like to take.

Freedom

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