

Behind the scenes

You might think I have sat by idly all this time since my entries have been less than forthcoming at best but this is not the case nor has it ever been. So **I** have compiled an array of things that I have been working on in my absence. I hope your thoughts and opinions will be forthcoming.

Life is about personal choices:

Every choice we make always leads to another choices as well as consequences for that choice. Even before making every choice we should thoroughly consider every possible outcome and the next steps we will take to ensure we reach our goals and maintain our focus. Every choice is made because we have set some kind of goal and decided that it is attainable. Whether or not we reach this goal or continue to maintain our focus is a choice. This in itself is the first and last choice.

A person is not controlled or dictated by their past. Nor the choices they make, although at times a person doesn't always make the **right** choices. Nothing is ever set in stone or binding or even unchanging but a person has to be willing to do what they must in order to change themselves and their lives. It is possible to live a good life and experience happiness.

It would be easier to conform to these 11 beliefs but I find myself doing something outside the norm. That hard thing which could quite possible present any number of problems and potential outcomes. This is an unknown risk that **I** must take. Which with every risk comes potential gains and/or loses. I feel as though that any a small gain would be greater a thousand times than even the greatest of loses. You can't control every loss but you do have control over your ability to gain something--whether it be from all or few or one experience, circumstance, a situation, or life itself. In my life, **I** have lost much and to most people loss could be compared to failure. To me, however, failure is not an option and **I** will only fail if I choose to give up. Not even death will signify failure because the choices **I** make over the course of my life will undoubtedly affect others especially my children who will be making their own choices long after I'm **gone**.

Before I became incarcerated I was more focused on the small stuff like work and having everything because I thought if I could provide for my family well enough that this was putting them first. I had 3 jobs and was in the military and this took precedence over my family. I thought because **I** was able to financially provide for them that this would in turn compensate for my lack of quality time with them. Since being here my thinking has drastically changed and I have had an opportunity to get my priorities in order. Now **I** not only put my family first as well as my children, I give them all my time because time spent together is worth more than all the money made during time spent away.

Am I defined?

Usually I tried to define myself by my past never focusing on my future. I've made many mistakes some I believe even to this day are unforgivable. I was the type of person who never thought in terms of is the glass half full or half empty. I just simply always said "It has something in it." I used to believe that I had yet to succeed at anything and that I killed everything I touched. Very recently, however, I learned that so long as I never give up, so long as failure is not an option for me and so long as I never allow my past to dictate my future that I am not defined solely by my past: failures, mistakes, and disappointments, or the pain and unhappiness I've long since experienced. So far. I can change my outlook, future, or potential to make mistakes simply with my choices. So long as I allow myself to make good choices then **I** will always keep trying.

I've never been one who really had the opportunity to make friends. I don't have the greatest of people skills nor am I familiar with the things one does to maintain a friendship. But I do know how to listen, I can give affection, I can bring laughter out, and make it echo off the walls, written words come natural to me, the compliments I give are not idle words passed through my lips, I find it easy to go out of my way to do something for someone and expect nothing in return, I can become as silent as a statue patiently awaiting the problems of life to be presented even if no words are forthcoming, and it would be no great loss to me but an immeasurable gain to extend a kind word that will either begin or end a person's day. I may not have the greatest of people skills but I find the best way to learn something is to live it. I've had the opportunity to meet some great people in my life and from each one I've allowed myself to become who **I** am today. It's these people that I give credit to for the ability to unselfishly give of myself to whoever may be in need. Does it only have to be my friend that I allow myself to give to? I think not...

Usually I'm what's known as a perfectionist. One who has to do things with perfection. Even if **I** can't attain it, I still will do what I have to until I do. In my perfection, however, I find that this way of thinking and type of performance is undoubtedly when **I** seem to make the most mistakes. I've found that being like this prevents me from enjoying life to the absolute fullest. **I** seem not to be able to see my strengths because all **I** see and focus on are my weaknesses and failures that did not achieve perfection. As I've gotten older, I've realized that being perfect or being the best at something or more accomplished is not what is important. Setting a goal only to find that you have reached it, your ability to learn from a past mistake and not make it again **because** you have acquired wisdom that can only be learned by living life, not admitting defeat just because you have to try again and the realization that life is beautiful and to be cherished because it doesn't last forever. There are endless possibilities at chances for building your self-esteem; change what you can, accept what you can't, and know when neither is possible that you have the ability to pick yourself up and keep trying.

Can you see the change start to take affect?

One time **I** read something. It reminded me of a saying--"Birds of a feather, flock together." Just the other night 9/9/13 I read a letter from one of my brother's who said something quite similar to this. In fact he said the exact same things the first line of the paragraph **I** had read does. It's hard not to act like those around you because if one allows themselves to be surrounded by certain people they begin to mimic those attributes which they see in others. It's much harder not to become a product of one's environment because of many different reasons. As a child it is the influence of those you strive to be like, as a teenager it's the peer pressure that comes from your friends and classmates, as an adult it is one's inability to do that ~~which~~ which is hard. People usually do that which is easier--like giving up before they have ever really tried. If one does this would it not be very possible to say that more will follow suite? Whether or not you realize it someone is always observing your behavior. Wouldn't it be better to leave a lasting impression for being the odd one? or just another face that blends into the endless crowds like so many before you?

It's all someone's perception or sense of integrity to do all those things that they feel are right. But even the road to hell is paved with good intentions. For a long time, I used to believe that those actions **I** did were always right but for all my "right" actions I ended up in a wrong place. A place I never wanted to be. Who as a child says to themselves "I want to go to prison when **I** grow up." Most people can see themselves become doctors or lawyers. **I** remember wanting to be a forensic anthropologist because of a book **I** read by Iris Johansen called "The Face of Deception". It's a mazing how something can alter your thinking so drastically. Even now my thinking has altered drastically because **I** have no plans of ever coming back.

Quote--"some people look at the world and say 'why?' some people look at the world and say 'why not?'"
To me this quote brings to mind risks, possibilities, unknown paths, uncertainties and any other things that could happen. We always tend to ask why in an attempt to keep us from doing things that may seem hard at first glance. We would rather give up than do that which is hard for us. Why stands for 'NO' in a sense and 'WHY NOT' signifies all the good reasons why we should attempt to do all those things we normally wouldn't have otherwise done. The profession I am actively seeking to pursue, most people at first glance assume it's a simple task. But it's by far the hardest task I have ever undertaken. If I sit there and ask myself why I would have many reasons and many times over given up by now. Instead I continue to ask myself "WHY NOT?" Should I continue to keep going? Why not? Should I try harder? Why not? Should I allow all my failed attempts all to help me become better at my chosen profession--why not? Should I take any risk so that I can do what is needed to achieve success? Why not? I've never let myself dwell on the why's but instead "WHY NOT?" Should I live my life for me so that I can find a measure of happiness? WHY NOT???