

JANUARY 25, 2014

Hello World!

Walking the quarter mile from the chow hall to my housing unit tonight I politely listened to one of my podmates rant and rage about how his friend "got f--ked by staff". He explained how his friend refused to give a urine sample to test for drug usage. The consequences were swift. He was moved to another yard, his TV and radio were confiscated, and he is going to be transferred to another, higher-security prison. Staff at this prison want the inmates to program (follow the rules). Malcontents will be removed.

On entering my pod I asked the obvious question. "Why did your friend refuse to give a sample?" The answer: "He would test positive for drugs." Here is where I get confused asking stupid questions. "Did he know drug use is illegal?" "Yes." "Did he know staff can ask for a urine sample at any time?" "Yes." "Did he know there would be consequences for refusing?" "Yes." "But he did these things anyway?" "Yes."

I asked no more questions and made no comments. Prisoners not yet ready to begin the journey to recovery always blame others for the bad situation they find themselves in. SURPRISE! Bad choices lead to bad consequences. Fact is the man f--ked himself. Until he looks into the mirror and blames the reflection his life will continue down this negative road.

The day I stopped blaming my ex-business partner, my drug supplier, the judicial and prison system for my predicament - my 34-years to life sentence - I could affect change. It was not in others but in me. It was empowering. The truth set my mind free. Good or bad things that happened to me could almost be pre-

dicted. When I chose to do good, good returned to me. When I chose to do bad or even wished bad on others, bad returned to me. Simple. Simple. Simple.

Arriving at this revelation, although painful (it's my fault) was the easy part of change. I've spent years uncovering the "why?" of my criminal behavior, my false beliefs, and broken mind set. Again, it SUCKS to say, "I was the problem," and shameful that because of it, many suffered.

Being farther down the road to recovery than my podmate and his friend, I want to shake them while shouting, "Wake up!" Life is so much better (easier) when you discover that you have the power to determine the direction of your life. It may sound strange to say, but by my accepting responsibility and being accountable for my crimes has made my prison time less painful. I deserved my sentence and I'm trying to serve it with dignity, honoring my victims by doing what is right.

I must acknowledge that I had a lot of help, support, and encouragement along my stumbling path to recovery. I am eternally grateful for them. People do care. So - if you are blaming others for your bad situation, make sure at the top of the list is the reflection in your mirror.

Thanks for checking in on me.

Cordially,

Gregory Barnes Watson

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Novel: A Thundering Wind

Journal: A Year in a Life Sentence

(Amazon.com)