

CHOICES AND CHANGE

All decisions have consequences; good or bad will come from them. Some in prison select wise options. The repentant ones weigh out the cost of each action against the possible rewards. The lives of these brave souls generally change to reflect strong, positive values. Each success the members of this group have spurs them towards further growth. The lives they lead are generally healthier, happier, and more productive each passing year. The reinforcement they need comes from experiencing more peace and contentment. Unfortunately, they represent a fraction of the population.

The majority of prisoners regularly make poor choices. Sadly, the decisions are costly. Many inmates throw away the opportunities afforded them. The misguided ones toss out future success in the hope of getting away with some infraction that has no real payoff. Therefore, these men and women sink progressively into a pit of depravity; the moments of getting over on the system lead only to frustration, anger, and turmoil. The fantasy that happiness can come from rebellion is revealed as an illusion when they are punished for their misdeeds. However, few see it for themselves. Instead, the sufferers blame each other, the guards, and circumstances for their pain.

The best way to lower the recidivism rate is to teach inmates how to make positive decisions. The skill is unfamiliar to many people. Plenty of men and women in the free world struggle in the same area. The big difference is the severity of the actions and their consequences.

Inmates will be unable to rejoin society as constructive members until they learn to be self-directed. I implore you to look inside of yourself. Do you make quality choices? If you do, teach two others to do the same. Then encourage them to follow your example. In time your efforts will impact the prison population. Inmates can also be taught to choose wisely. Rehabilitation is then possible. Perhaps fewer people will even end up incarcerated because of gaining this skill. Decisions have the power to change the direction of our lives. Will you be a part of the solution? The choice is yours.

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