

Free To Strive

People have hopes, dreams, and goals. It is the same in prison as it is in society. Some things remain the same no matter where one resides. Even when incarcerated, one can hold on to their humanity. Happiness seems to reside in the hearts of those who work towards something. Direction and purpose give me the means to overcome boredom and melancholy. My life in this cage is much like it would be on the streets. I spend my years in work, study, and recreation just as I would if I were free.

Yes, I work at a job. Prison is no escape from the need to be productive. My current assignment has to do with education. I am currently working as a tutor, teaching mentally ill inmates. I have also worked in a sewing factory as a laborer. I was a janitor of sorts for a while and I spent time in the kitchen as a cook. Mainly though I have been either a teacher's aide or a tutor.

I attend school too. I am currently four classes away from an Associates of Art degree in American Studies and an Associates of Science degree in General Business. I hope to continue my education by seeking a Bachelors of Science degree in Business Administration. In addition to secular classes, I take self-help and religious courses. I am in three of them at this time.

I have many pursuits that entertain me. I enjoy reading, writing, and playing guitar among other things. I also exercise by walking and doing strength training. I have a few friends in prison with which I socialize. I relax while listening to the radio and sometimes I watch a little television.

I know that what I am describing fails to fit in with the stereo types of prison life. The truth is one's existence here is much of what they make it. That is no different here than it is on the streets. I do have worries that most people in society have to a lesser degree; the problems of incarceration cannot keep me down for long. Yet, there are also fewer freedoms available. A comfortable cage is still a cage. I will never stop longing for the outside.

In conclusion, drama is available in prison; however, it is avoidable. Some inmates pass the years by being productive. I am one of those who choose to separate myself from the crowd by concentrating on doing useful and productive activities that improve the standard of my life. In the course of doing so I get to help others. I do have a sort of contented life here but it fails to prevent me from hoping for the freedom available to me beyond these walls. I yearn to be free to fulfill all my potential. My desire is to soar to greater heights. The limitations of the environment only restrain, they do not define or stop me from striving.