

The third and final reason to go the re-entry home way is, people are different and change. A long distance (phone calls, letters, visits) is a far cry and way different than a physical relationship, where you get to really know an individual and their daily habits; some of which may take some adjusting to.

**Do not wait until you are close to your parole board hearing before you begin preparing** for that hearing. That would be a mistake and very chaotic and stressful as, things do have a habit of happening unexpectedly; always finding a way to fall through when you least expect it, especially while you are trying to hold them together.

A year prior to your hearing is sufficient to begin putting your plans together (**find a sample of a parole packet at back of this guide**).

**Remember**, neither the psyche nor the board commissioners will care if your chronos and or certificates are not in your central file. It is up to you to ensure a copy of all of your chronos and certificates are put in your central file. If they are not in your file at the time of your hearing you will not get credit for having done anything to receive them; no matter how much explaining you do for the reason they are not in there and you really did participate in the group that garnered them.

What you may hear is, you came unprepared, you need better time management, you are not responsible or flat out unreliable. **No matter what self-help group you attend and they tell you a copy of your certificate or chrono will be sent to your file, you will never be ostracized for sending an extra one; it shows responsibility.** Send it to the lifer's desk or through your counselor then periodically check up on your file to ensure everything is in there that was sent.

**Remorse:** At all times you must have and show remorse for your crime, prior actions and have sympathy for your victim(s). **Empathy:** Put yourself in the victims or victim's next of kin's shoes and look at your crime from their point of view. This is what empathy is about. **Impact:** You must show that you fully understand the grave impact your crime caused; how it affected others, their family, their financial loss, mental/physical lose, alienation from family, friends, co-workers, community and neighbors. Show that you care and that it affects you.

## TRIGGERS

### 4 Components to Triggers

1. **General:** Feelings/Emotions (Where did they come from?)
  2. **Specific:** Action (What action did you take?)
  3. **Reason** for trigger: (Who/what brought on the trigger?)
  4. **Replacement Behavior** (What is your replacement behavior?)
- First, you must understand you have triggers to those things that affect you, which are compounded by emotions and feelings.
  - How do you know you have triggers?  
Because of past events.
  - You must recognize your triggers, own them and change their negative affect on you.
  - What are triggers affect on you?:

They can cause you to think and react negatively, take action, hurt yourself or others and get into trouble with the law.

- Triggers can also cause you to think of consequences, seek positive resolutions, question your actions. Triggers can arise from deep within the roots of your childhood or from unresolved issues.

Look at the the below examples pertaining to the four components cycle. See if you can come up with ways in which to replace your negative thinking cycle:

<u>General:</u> Feeling/ Emotion 	<u>Specific:</u> Action 	<u>Reason:</u> Who/What 	<u>Replacement:</u> Behavior 
* Frustrated	Yell/Curse	Wife talk down to me	Patience
* Irritated	Outbusrt	Failure to complete task	Relax/ Positive self -Talk
* Humiliated	Fight	Others make Fun of me	Understanding



### **Triggers are not always negative:**

- A song can trigger good feelings
- A movie can trigger good times
- Rain can trigger fond childhood memories

When can stress, anger, irrational thinking and rejection turn into triggers of aggression and or violence?

- When they go unchecked

A triggers point of view lies in the recycle bin of the mind, awaiting instructions or "any" opportunity to be recycled to the forefront of your mind and put in to action...good or bad. Choose wisely. Define your triggers.

You must know your **triggers** in which causes you to be violent, **Sensory, Internal, External**; smell, sight, sound. It could be that you get upset when you see something or hear certain music, taste something that triggers you to get violent, your old neighborhood, old friends, a certain place or music, something you touch. It is up to you to learn what triggers your anger.

You must know your **strengths**. It could be helping others, perseverance, etc. You also must know your **weaknesses**: poor communicator, impatient, etc. **what makes you happy**, etc.

**Making amends:**

How do you make amends? **Direct amends** is done by way of mentoring, how you interact with others, etc. **Indirect amends**, remorse letters, donations, etc.

**Challenges:** You will need to explain what challenges you will face upon reentering society, which can include employment, how to properly utilize public transportation, telling your family, neighbors exactly why you were in prison for so long, etc.

**Never tell the psychologist one thing and tell the board panel something different.** Doing this will put you on a long journey of denial within and denial of a parole date by the board. **Do not do it under any circumstances.**

If you are in denial about any aspect of your case, now is the time to have some courage and get it right...**before you go before the psyche and the parole board.** Your counselor will prepare a parole board case file prior to going to the psyche and board. This is the perfect time to put all of your cards on the table if you are serious about your freedom and changing your life. Everything will be in this file, from the dates you transferred from one institution to another, to any grievances you filed, etc.

**Make sure you take your time and view your file** and be sure to have all of your certificates and any other paperwork you want added to this file. Anytime you want to review your file you should put in to the counselor for an **Olson review.**

**Attorney:** Unless your family can afford a private attorney, one will be provided for you by the state to sit in the board hearing with you. He/she will make an initial visit with you at least 45 days prior to your hearing. This will be the appropriate time to bring up



and discuss any issues you may have concerning your files, psyche report or anything else you may have issue with.

The next time you see your attorney will be the day of your hearing, approximately half an hour before it begins. **No attorney can give you his/her guarantee that you will be granted parole**, as they are not the decision makers. Their job will be to see that you have a fair hearing and give a statement on your prison behavior at the end of the hearing in favor of you being granted parole. It is up to you to maintain a clean record so the attorney will have something to help you get a parole date with. **Do not expect to get help if you continue on a bad path.**

**You** are the primary speaker at your hearing and it will be up to you to give your best presentation. At the end of the hearing you will be given time to make a presentation. Utilize this time to first formally apologize to your victim/next of kin: always making eye contact with the commissioner and not the victim/kin. You may add who you are today versus who you were during the commission of your crime, your goals and achievements while incarcerated without being arrogant, sarcastic or sounding like a narcissist.

**Parole hearing day:** This is the day you counted down to, stressed and was nervous over, unsure and afraid of its outcome, but you must brace yourself. **Do not go in the hearing sounding rehearsed over knowing exactly what you are talking about.** If you sound rehearsed; that is like everyone else, it will be detected by the commissioners and everything you said prior to that moment may be discounted. You must put in your best efforts to give yourself the best chance at being granted parole.

The hearing will consist of you, your attorney, a custody staff member, commissioner, victim/victims kin, victims advocate and a deputy district attorney. Everyone will be seated at long tables between you where the commissioners will be seated directly across from you.

**You will be instructed not to look at or in the direction of the victim or the victim's kin.** You are to make eye contact with the commissioners, which may consist of a head commissioner and one or two deputy commissioners. The head commissioner will ask all questions.