

Jamie,

Sorry for answering so late to your response. I need to be honest and tell you that you contacting me has been a blessing and a curse. A blessing because me reaching a young person with my words gave me the most rewarding experience of my life. I feel very blessed to have done that. A curse because I had people judging me about writing a 16 year old. I don't think they understand what my purpose is. See, I've worked with Teenagers before but never with someone so young. So, yes, I wrestled with the decision to write you back. Ultimately I had to talk to my sister and asked her opinion. She reassured me that I was doing nothing wrong.

So here I am, writing you back, finally. I hope you are doing well as well as your family. I hope you're going to school and staying out of trouble. I want to see if you can write your name like I taught you. That will really make my day. Just keep practicing.

Let me answer your questions before I forget. First I am 28 years of age and will turn 29, Nov 21st. I am of Mexican descent. On average the people who write me, mostly through snail mail, are between 18 and 25. I usually don't ask. But you are the youngest by far. Yesterday I was thinking about this. How people write me because of the things I write. I would've never guessed. Next question, yes, I've been locked up since I was 17 years old. For what? ... I really can't get into that

because my case is in the courts right now on appeal. I've been at this prison for 6 years now. How long will I stay here? Only the Creator knows. And lastly, yes, I can draw. I can draw pretty good actually. I'll draw something and post it up so you can check it out.

A planned goal can be achieved quicker. I don't remember who said these words to me but they are very true. So you wanting to become a psychiatrist can be achieved if you start informing yourself now. I mean, planning for it now so it won't be as difficult in the future. You certainly seem to have the heart for it. Just the fact that you tried to get your friends involved with this Between the Bars Organization shows that you are a natural caring person. I say this because you are socially aware of what's going on with us prisoners. I commend what you are doing and admire your dedication. And that's because when I was your age I was one year away from going to prison. So it's good to know that there are young people such as yourself who are interested in social issues affecting this country. Because you will be a leader one day. A great one at that. Believe that!

Take care.

With much respect,

Jesus Andrade