

Friendship What is it good for?

Growing up I never had true friendship. I never made any, life long connections with anyone, including my own family. I was a stranger to my strange family.

As children we learn to emulate the adults around us. My parents showed me how to be a friend. My father didn't have any friends and my mother had a lot of dope fiend friends in her life.

I know this sounds like a cliché but before I was arrested I was already in prison. My day to day activities were controlled by my addictions. I cared more about getting high than I did having friends.

I was your best friend if you shared your dope bag with me. I would share what I could spare with the bug eyed dope fiends around me because I knew sooner or later they would have a bag of heroin, speed or weed that they would share with me.

once I arrived in prison I used my dope bag mentality with everyone around me. I just wanted to be able to get through the day without some tattooed psycho trying to kill me because I didn't say Good morning. I would smile and laugh with people I didn't like. I've agreed with a mans opinions about space aliens that made an episode of the X-files seem plausible because he was crazy as hell.

My connections with people was about as real as wrestling on T.V.

I hated myself, I hated being in prison. I have told my friends in the past that I would slit their throats in front of their crying mummies to get out of prison. I grew tired of pretending that I liked people and that I didn't hate myself. I just wanted to die, so I could escape the pain of living. I began to withdraw from the people in my life that I barely tolerated. I couldn't understand why they wouldn't leave me alone. All I wanted to do was sink into the sickness of wanting to commit suicide.

God had other plans for me, people were put into my life that allowed me to become the man you see tonight. I go to groups to conquer a past that tries to control me. I am a man of God and for the first time in my life I have core values.

I know now that I am capable of being a true friend. I am closer to my friends than I am to my own family. I have three close friends here tonight that encourage me to be a better man than I was when they met me.

Through my friendships in prison I have become a better Father ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~husband~~ ^{human}. I no longer hate myself or the life I am truly living now even in prison, and that is what friendships are good for.

Thank you gentlemen.

written for my toastmasters club. Lost best speech of the night by 13 seconds.

Roland 5/21/17