

Reply ID: hxc9

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST
GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL!

AUGUST 2, 2017

Dear Tierra,

First and foremost, i would like to thank you for reaching out to me. I hope through this exchange you are able to get the closure you are seeking. i know I don't deserve to call you by your name, but i didn't know what else to say. You are not a victim, but a strong woman who survived one of the most horrific ordeals another person could go through. Allow me to tell you something I should've done more than nine years ago: I AM SORRY! I'm sorry for all of the pain i and my family put you through. You didn't deserve it. If I could take it all back, I would. Please understand that my reason for writing this is not to cause you anymore harm. God knows that isn't what i'm about. Instead, i hope to help you heal and get the closure you sought.

Again, you are very brave for attempting to speak with me. I make no excuses for what I put you through, because there are none. When i first read your letter, i cried for hours. Why? Because i had taken something from you that was God-given. I stole something from you that no human should've stolen. It was a sacred part of you to give to your husband and I didn't give you that option. I apologize and will continue to do so for the rest of my life. It may mean nothing nine years later, but I have written you and the other women I hurt apology letters since 2009. Victim Services has them.

I understand that this may be a one-time thing and that i may never hear from you again. It wouldn't surprise me. But I want you to know that i am no longer the 17yr old coward who hurt you many years ago. Often i've wondered what had happened to you all. If you'd gotten help. I pray everyday for forgiveness to the Creator and hope you did. Such a heavy burden is something you should've never had to deal with. Still to this day, i feel that shame and ungratefulness because i am in here getting psychological services for free when you may've had to pay for them. I'm getting off track, but please understand that nothing i did to you was your fault. The blame is on me.

I'm hesitant to mention this, but I wouldn't be the man i am today if i didn't. When i nearly ruined your life, i was a seventeen year old kid with many emotional, physical, and mental problems. I had a lot of issues that i didn't know how to address. one of the major ones was that i had been abused by both men and women from the age of nine until i was fourteen. Please understand that i am not using this as an excuse because not all abuse victims turn around

and hurt others. it was the coward in me who thought hurting someone else would make me feel better. It didn't! in fact, it only made the numbing hole at the center of my being wider. I was a teenager hurting and felt that i didn't have anyone to turn to. I'm not worthy of asking you to forgive me, so I won't. That's your decision to make without any prodding from you.

What i will do is congratulate you on all that you've accomplished despite the agonizing event and trauma i put you through. I always knew this day would come, but didn't know how I would handle it. i hoped that I would be prepared to express the sorrow and anguish i feel knowing that I was cause of so much pain. Unfortunately, August 2nd will be a day neither of us forget. For you, it will be a day where another human being altered your life in the most profound way imaginable. For me, it will be a reminder of me epitomizing the worst in humanity. No one should've gone through what you endured. i never knew my family did that to you. On their behalf and mine, i apologize. I was so full of lies and too busy running from my responsibility to recognize the hurt, pain, and grief you were dealing with because of something I had done. I'm truly sorry, tierra.

please don't say that you wished i had taken your life on that day! It rips up things inside of me that i will never be able to put back together. To know that i caused you to feel that way. I may've ruined your life, but it was your defiance that allowed you to continue. To thrive and find someone who sees the beauty within. To love you and the life that you've brought into this world. Congrats on your marriage. You did that, Tierra. You are a fighter! That's something no one can take from you. Regardless of life throwing you its best punches, you're still standing! You're still strong! I don't know a braver woman in all of the world.

For me, it wasn't easy but after much conselling, i did come to grips with what I had done. The hurt I had caused you. I don't want this to come off as bragging, but instead as a commitment from me to you on not committing the same crime ever again. I have used my time behind bars wisely. I'm sure it'll come as a surprise that I mentor at-risk youth? Why? Because my whole reason for existing is to give back. I've taken so much from humanity and my community that i've dedicated my life to righting my wrongs and giving healing to those i've harmed. I have taken college courses, written five novels about understanding the options "at-risk" teens have growing up in the inner-city; I am also a tutor for young men coming inside trying to get their GED. I mentor in the Choisons program. As you can see, i also write personal excerpts of self-discovery and growth on Between The Bars. It has given us to opportunity


to do something we may've never done otherwise; seek closure. I pray that's what i'm doing and not making things worse as that would destroy me. I only hate that it took me hurting you to figure out all of this. Life is bigger than me. It's about making wherever you are better than how you found it. My first novel, One Root, One Evil was dedicated you you strong women for holding me accountable. You saved my life. It's published on www.prisonsfoundation.org.

Tierra, you are a fighter. A brave, courageous, and inspirational woman and your family is truly blessed to have you. You are amazing and nothing no one has done will ever change, nor dim the light that shines within you. Nothing can hinder your progress. You have a great support system. When this time of the year rolls around, use them. Celebrate your success and knowing that you helped change the course of history. I got help and no one else will ever be hurt by my hands again. i can promise you that! And you helped do this.

Many have said that i don't deserve to live after what I put you through and I don't blame them. I would probably feel the same way had I been in their shoes. i only hope and pray that i have it in me to handle myself as bravely as you have. Please don't let me or what i've done hold anymore space in your life. I was nothing more than a bully trying to make myself feel better by causing others pain. I was a coward trying to not let everyone else see that i was really hurting inside.

In conclusion, i hope that I was able to help you accomplish whatever it was that you sought outside of closing this chapter on your life. It still eats at me'til this day that i am the cause of your grief. everyday since i've gotten your response, i've woken up and read it as a reminder of how to properly treat people. And that if I don't, your words will be the consequences. I am no longer a person who takes and destroys. now I give my all to help others. Those who are heading down that dark path of hatred of self. Please take care of yourself and continue to bravely face all that life has to offer. As i close this letter, I am aware that people will want to throw fire on the flame and try picking apart every word that i've written to use negatively. I only wanted to help! Your light will shine no matter what. So forget the naysayers.

yours truly,


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