

(Reply to Kyla) KylaJohnson\_81

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Hi again, Kyla. 😊 Really happy to read your second comment/reply. Hey, I should tell you... I know I get kind of wordy and, well... maybe sort of intense sometimes, when I'm talking about prisons. When I wrote you before, I was really going through it. I still am, actually, but it was really raw at that time, plus, I'd just had a visit with my psych therapist here and I was especially touchy about how she (and most psychs in prison) relentlessly minimizes my experience. As if the kind of shit ppl suffer in prison is in any way "normal." I'd pointed out to her that any non-prisoner who's seen and been through even a fraction of what I've experienced (what virtually every prisoner experiences) would quickly be evaluated for PTSD. She didn't think I was serious, which just pissed me off more. BTW, because of that I went and looked up the PTSD criteria and symptoms in a DSM (not the newest one, because I'm a prisoner so most information I get is old), and it turned out I was on the right track, even though I originally just said it for rhetorical effect. I met almost every diagnostic point they listed, and most other prisoners would too.

Anyway, you're right, prisoners do need people who will listen to them and maybe even give helpful feedback. I still have my doubts about working for any prison in any way, no matter how good your intentions are or even how much the inmates might need someone like you; ~~someone who~~ <sup>someone who</sup> cares. I'm just not sure you can be a part of something bad without doing more harm than good, you know? But if that's where your heart leads you, then that's where you'll go, and then I'm fully rooting for you to succeed in your goal of helping the people there. Like I said, I still do believe you can do useful work there, as long as you don't get swallowed up by the self-justifying culture of punishment. No matter what a prisoner has done (and many have done some awful things), he or she is also a victim of an insane and vicious system. I think a good counsellor will let her clients feel safe in having those feelings, and most therapist/counsellors don't. They almost always are more concerned with getting the prisoners they counsel to accept what's being done to them... imagine someone whose job was to convince Jewish prisoners at Auschwitz to accept their fate and their treatment! Sounds ridiculous, right? And remember, I said that it doesn't matter what the prisoner wherever you might work did... I say that because, just like every 3<sup>rd</sup> grader will tell you: Two Wrongs Don't Make A Right. (But 2 Wrights did make the first airplane, I've heard. 😊). Seriously, though... two wrongs don't make a right, and whatever a person has done, however wrong and terrible, it's still a fact that being locked in a tiny, hard, loud cage; humiliated and tortured in a thousand different ways day after day for years; separated and isolated from society, friends, family; made to believe you're less than fully human, that you don't even deserve basic decency anymore... that's wrong too. It's a wrong that makes nothing right, and if I have any advice at all for anyone who wants to help prisoners, it has to be... don't forget that. Wrong is wrong.