

Date: 4/23/2020 2:29:45 PM

Subject: Follow Up

2 whom it may concern, I'm sorry I realize I did u a great disservice the other day. See I spoke on Covid 19 n the divorce rate n my own dealing with relationships yet I provided no tools or examples 2 help U n others deal with the difficulty of being trapped in a "cell" with 1 or more persons

I will attempt 2 do that now via glimpses from my past n present n future! Of being trapped in a "cell" with 1 or more persons...

On February 1st 1999 I officially entered the adult prison system. Beyond going from orange 2 green the biggest difference between the County Jail was being locked in a cell 23hours a day - with another person no less: a not so perfect stranger!

Accustomed 2 being by myself, even on the streets mind u I used 2 stay in the house doing homework n at party's I was pretty much a wallflower, I stayed by myself in the room. Only speaking when spoken 2 but never really initiating small talk... So on the bunk I just laid there reading books, writing letters n drawing, occasionally.

Yup that was my coping mechanism as I'm not much of a social person

As I made my way 2 the juvenile max prison I loosened up a bit only cause my celly had story's he wanted 2 share n hear! Yet I still spent my time on my bunk being nerdy.

However over time my heart got hardened n I dealt with being in the room with strangers by harboring the internal belief "Ur dead 2 me" which helped me keep my bunkie on no talk, specially if I didn't like him or vice versa. Course with this obvious tension in the 6x9 it was hard 2 avoid bumping heads, which led 2 arguments n almost physical altercations!

This prison way of operating began 2 b defeated as I engage in the privilege afforded us 2 put in bunk up slips (I.e. a 90 day commitment) 2 b in a room with the person of Ur choice . During these months/years I had 2 learn how 2 Cooperate n meet people in the middle! Like with Dave, we came 2 an understanding that worked 4 both of us. 4 instance in the summer I got the bottom bunk, in the winter he got it. Y? The air that came in from the window when it was open tended 2 flow 2 that lower bunk!

We also used 2 alternate going 2 canteen so we both could save \$\$\$\$. In addition we had an understanding where if I cooked he did the dishes n when he cooked I did them, albeit the next day! as we did get quite full! We even reached an agreement regarding cleaning the cell. He did it Saturday n I touched it up on Wednesday, then the upcoming Saturday I would clean it from top 2 bottom n he would sweep it up on Wednesday.

Still in my heart I craved a single cell n took one every chance I got. Even was blessed 2 b in a prison that's all single cells from Sept '07-March '09.

So when I left I knew I had 2 reposition my heart n rituals 2 coincide with whoever I might end up in the room with! No more getting up at 3am n turning the lights on, no more walking laps in my room/walking with God literally, no more getting up Saturday morning sitting at the desk n designing n coloring my heart out, 100 coloring pencils n markers n pastels n tissue n what not scattered all on the floor, no more singing quietly outloud, no more in cell workouts with Gospel music playing at a moderate volume, no more....ME !

Thank God 4 God has He immensely helped me transition from single life 2 a relational one. He did this by asking me a simple question: "What's the root word of relationship? "

"Relate," I responded after like a day of research that included consulting a dictionary.

"That's what I want U 2 do. RELATE."

Still my rebellious streak kicked in.

"God, I'd rather relate n b in a relationship with a woman, sick of dudes, plus nobody trying 2 meet me in the middle. How is this fair?"

"Who said life was fair? U R called 2 Relate 2 Me n I Relate 2 people by serving them.

Remember. Follow My command 2 die 2 urself n Ur way of doing things."

From that moment on I had 2 embark on the most difficult journey of my life

2 PUT OTHERS 1st

Whew

During the countless times when I wanted 2 tap out God reminded me how He was preparing me 4 servanthood Leadership, marriage n teaching me how 2 b a husband ,teacher, n a better Father....

2 succeed I had 2 allow God 2 instruct me in the ways of mindfulness n consideration of others n how 2 reckon them as Alive 2 me. Amen.

This means I had 2 confront my pet-peeves n how 2 deal with them. Like wearing my earplugs 2 deal with excess noise from cellies who sing out loud n or refuse 2 wear headphones. Had 2 make morning preparations the night b4 like getting my cup of coffee 2gether (mindful of the noise the bag of coffee, sugar n creamer makes not 2 mention the clicking of a stirring spoon!) In addition got my armload full of books 2gether n 2 inkpens ,the goal being 2 not have 2 run in n out of the room so my celly could sleep though he never returned the favor even slammed things down on the bottom bunk as I tried 2 sleep in the top! Mindfulness also meant being mindful of others inconsideration n thinking 4 them or doing things 2 prevent u from loosing Ur cool. Like my putting tissue up n down the door post so my roommates slamming of the door was a gentle "click" Should've sent his face! What else also had 2 implement feng shuei the Japanese art of strategically placing things. So I placed things where the wouldn't b in his space or in his way etc. I also studied peoples personality, pet peeves, quirks, etc so I could make appropriate adjustments 2 decrease the likelihood of an altercation! N sometimes I simply just had a plain ole adult conversation, difficult cause the men here aren't really held accountable 4 their character or in home behavior! But when all this failed I simply stayed out the cell long as prisonly possible.

Through it all I learned:

People R selfish n will 4 the most part will always insist on their will being done n will use whatever tactics available 2 sway u 2 their opinion, way of life,etc

People view others as disposable

People tend 2 take their anger at themselves n others (more powerful) out on others (less powerful)

People have no clue or the slightest idea what relationships R or how 2 b in them appropriately/righteously. Most view n enter relationships 4 self serving purposes!

(Now these don't apply 2 everybody but like 85-90% of humans)

N I'm one of em!

God showed me this so who am I 2 argue

All it took was God telling me 2 share my TV with my celly who didn't have one n not only that but 2 put it on his TV stand! OK no sweat but then their arose a conflict of interest. All his die hard shows came on the same exact time as my favorite shows! Boy did that light my fire as instead of Shark Tank he watched Dateline,instead of the Cowboys football game he watched the Packers! Yuck! It was then I learned I had die hard shows n wasn't as selfless as I tried 2 convince myself I was

Yet the big key god showed me was that in Relationships we humans tend 2 b more infatuated n 2 base Relationships off of shallow things like body type,sexxx,physical beauty, money,possessions, fame,prestige,reputation,what we'll get out of it etc.

Because of this infatuation relationships don't tend 2 last that long as the things we were infatuated with grow old,get lost,disappear, rust,or someone comes along who infatuates us more. Yet god has shown me that relationships built on God's version of love last eternally.

Just 2day he woke me up n spoke 2 me bout how we has "love" on the things we "love" about a person n pray that will b enuff 2 sustain the relationship 4ever. However love gods love even,takes into account the things I don't like about my partner,so 2 speak. The key 2 lasting love is How am I going 2 deal with the parts n nuances of him or Herr that I don't like?

Now something's can b changed,I use the word change loosely!,but still it has 2 come from inside the person. Like a person can choose not 2 clean up the room while u sleep! Someone can choose 2 not punch the bottom of a bunk cause he mad at a football game! On the flip side things can't b changed like the way a person chews,snores,etc with those its 4 us 2 find away 2 get through it n over it! Once had 2 deal with a roommate who moaned in his sleep!

So in closing that's my from the inside lookin out advice.

Get 2 know Ur loved ones

Find a way 2 deal with Ur pet peeves, while acknowledging u may do things that trigger their pet peeves

Sit down n have a grown up conversation bout what U don't like about those u live with n find a healthy way 2 deal with it

Hug n kiss Ur loved ones literally if none of y'all got Covid 19 u can't give it 2 the other!

Well I'm off 2 rec!

God bless.

MRF