

Date: 5/8/2020 10:55:57 AM

(CHAP. #4 PG. #1)

* NO STREAKING ALLOWED *

Another important subject to take into consideration -- especially in jail or prison -- is the importance of proper hygiene. Not only for your own health purposes, but also because you're almost always within ten feet of a human nose.

So when it dawned on me that I hadn't taken a shower in over two days,\1/ I immediately gathered together the items required to carry out the much needed task. Then, after looking out into the day room, I noticed that the shower closest to me was in the midst of being used. However, I also noticed that the shower at the other end was open and available. There was no question in my mind as to what would be necessary in completing the shower itself, but there was the question of what to wear while making the 50 foot trip through the day room. My evaluation revealed that I had four choices with which to consider :

- 1) Wear my pants.
- 2) Wear only my boxers.
- 3) Wear a towel around my waist. Or. . .
- 4) Wear nothing at all.

It's a shame my sense of perception didn't tell me to pay attention earlier, so I would have already known what the other guys had worn. It's also a shame that my sense of logic didn't just tell me to wait until someone else took a shower, so I could see what they wore for their trip. And it's even more of a shame that my sense of pride wouldn't let me just go ahead and ask someone. I'm sure John would have been more than happy to help.

The whole reasoning behind my choice of attire can be summed up in one word : MASCULINITY. \2/ I don't know why. I guess back then I must have felt as though I had some kind of point to prove. So, for me to wear anything meant I wasn't man enough to. . . Well, I'm sure by now you've deciphered which choice I made.\3/

My trip through the day room went without any hassle : no laughing, no howling, no threats, no whistling, and no proposals. However, as I pulled the drape closed behind me, all of that changed.

It all started with what sounded like some guy sliding about ten feet on the floor towards the shower.\4/ Then, suddenly, WHAM ! With what sounded like some guy crashing into the wall just outside of the shower drape.\5/ My pants were suddenly thrust through the drape, along with some friendly words of advice -- at a rather high volume. " NO ! NO ! NO, MAN ! THAT'S NOT HOW YOU DO IT IN HERE ! "

The question of how I could have been so stupid still plagues me to this day. Then, there's the other question : How the hell did that guy run down to my cell, get my pants, and then run all the way back in that short amount of time? Whatever the answer may be, his counseling turned out to be valuable information that I would need to know for my future address.

* FOOTNOTES *

1. This wasn't some kind of common practice that I would carry out on a regular basis. It's just that my access to the everyday things in life had been limited the last couple of days.
 2. The quality or condition of being a male person.
 3. Just in case you're a slow learner like I am : It was #4.
 4. The reason it sounded like that is because that's what it was.
 5. The reason it sounded like that is because that's what it was.
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Date: 5/12/2020 10:13:32 AM

(CHAP. #5 PG. #1)

* A FRIENDLESS FUTURE *

The 6 p.m. news attracted the attention of nearly every guy in the room -- including me. However, after having been told earlier that I had been the focus of attention, I thought it wise to just hang back in my cell and watch from between the bars.

My mug shot from my recent arrest filled the screen for a short moment, switching to bits and pieces of the investigation that had taken place. Unfortunately, due to my back row location, I was unable to hear the majority of what the news casters had to say. But considering the circumstances, I was willing to bet none of it classified as any form of compliments or flattery. Even after the story ended, it appeared I was still. . . the focus of attention, due to the way everyone turned around to look back at me. (God, I wish I could read minds.)

As the next story began, I noticed four guys get up from their seats, exchange a few words, and then casually stroll towards my cell with a look of. . . Well, let's just say they didn't have some happy-go-lucky images beaming from their faces. It didn't take a math genius to decipher that the odds were very much against me :

(1 green inmate) vs. (4 convicts with a mission) = MISSION COMPLETE

While I was still doing the math, the four guys made their way into my cell, with each one finding a comfortable place to either sit or stand. With his head hung low, the guy sitting on the foot of my bunk mulled over what he was going to do.

Finally, he said, " Look, man. You ain't gettin outta here any time soon. You got some \$#!+ to learn.\1/ Number one, you ain't got no friends in prison. Number two, your word is all you have when you go into the prison system -- don't £\ç|< it up. "

Another guy threw in his two cents worth, " There are three things you stay away from in prison : drugs, gambling, and a sissy. "

Then, someone else had something to say, " If anybody ever mentions the word TRUST, run like hell. "

There were a number of other interesting guidelines my counselors took the time to share with me. Howbeit, those were among the most relevant to me, and will never be forgotten.

* FOOTNOTES *

1. Whew ! Imagine my relief to discover this was nothing more than a bit of useful training I would need for my future address.

----- (oops!)

Hey ! Wait a minute. Let me share something else with you regarding this subject. It might be of some interest to you.

Of all the guidelines my counselors mentioned, the rule of not having any friends was the most difficult to abide by. Don't get me wrong. I've discovered throughout the years that it's relatively easy to live in the very same dorm for over two years and still not even know what the majority of the guys names are. But you've got to understand, not EVERYBODY in prison is an overall bad guy. And from the way things were looking, my abilities to live my life completely on my own in here just didn't seem possible. Then again, perhaps I just had a wrong idea as to what made one of these guys qualify as a friend.

Date: 5/12/2020 10:13:31 AM

(CHAP. #5 PG. #2)

* A FRIENDLESS FUTURE * (cont.)

One night, \1/ a cellmate and myself decided to devise a unique and clear-cut definition for the term: " Friend In Prison. " We didn't want to allow the fact that living in prison with the individual was the reason for the friendship. So we looked beyond the concepts of : someone I run laps with, someone I'm always trading food with at chow, someone I share a cell with, or someone I play Scrabble with quite often.

After taking a few minutes to ponder over the certain requirements, we established a definition that seemed to satisfy our concept : A true friend in prison is a person you know you would get along with out in the free world as well.

With a definition like that, I knew I was doing a good job at following the advice of my original counselors back in jail, because I couldn't see myself wanting to be around any of these characters if I was out in the free world.

After coming to an agreed satisfaction with our definition, we both happened to look at each other for a few of seconds, and then simultaneously said, " Nah. "

* FOOTNOTES *

1. This event took place about 13 years after I was arrested. Sometimes it takes a while for this kind of idea to pop up.
