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WordsUncaged Submission

(Essay)

“The Value of Others”

One’s life has value, so long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, and compassion.

The thirty-three years I’ve spent in prison can be used to help the youth outside to prevent them from coming to prison. By sharing my personal experience in a positive way, it will allow them to realize that the life they live is not so bad. With the love and friendship I share with my friends, they tend to look up to me because in spite of my situation, I have maintained a hopeful and positive outlook. It gives them that strength to endure their problems in life, and in turn, the compliments they give me help my depression.

As I’ve gotten older, I’ve had more of a tendency to look for people who live by kindness, tolerance, compassion, and a gentler way of looking at things. I’m 59 now and I need to surround myself with more compassionate individuals that care and maintain a steady outlook. People who aren’t afraid to be open in self-expression and individual thoughts. These things help me deal with my depression.

Now that I’m an addict, I definitely have compassion for my mother. My passion to help my mother is very strong, so I try to do something nice for her every day, instead of waiting until she is gone. Because of this it helps me deal with my depression.

However, I refuse to allow the excess emotional baggage of my past life drag me down. By choosing not to dwell on the unpleasantness of my past, I deny it the right to dictate the power and potential of my future. It’s easy to be resentful or carry resentment inside. It’s easy to be overly critical of each and every thing. It’s easy to trip on trivial shit that will stop your growth. Better yet, it’s easy to fault others for your mistakes and failures. I still carry unresolved hostilities and grudges because I feel like a failure. Because I wasn’t smart enough to wiggle my way out of a prison sentence. As a black man, I’m very defensive, secretive, and have a problem with misplaced loyalty,

but having faith is one of my ways of getting through my troubled times. One can overcome any obstacles, you just have to be willing to make the effort and sacrifices.

Don't be afraid to nourish your loved ones. Everyone needs a little assurance. My family structure is my primary focus. My obligation is to give back to them for the supportiveness they give me. Being able to have them absorb strength from me can be healing. Giving back can be powerful. So throw away those shackles that are holding you down. You have the key to unlock them and free yourself from the mental bondage that has held you. My past is gone, it's history; it's finished. All I have is today—right now—so when one of my friends or family members turns to me for advice or help or assistance, that is my freedom.