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WordsUncaged Submission
(Essay)

“Challenges of Parole”

There are significant challenges for a person on parole, especially after serving 20 years or more. It begins with the individual and how he or she chooses to view these challenges, attitude is everything. In the technocentric society we now live in, it is significantly more challenging because of the advancements in technology that prisoners are deprived of. In prison, there are no cell phones, no computers, no internet.

Being in prison is like being in a fish bowl. Life in a fish bowl consists of swimming in circles day in and day out, waiting and biding your time until you are either released or buried in a pine box. In prison, our little fish bowl, we wait for someone to feed us, provide clothing, bedding and other materials such as toilet paper. We learn to be dependent. Dependence is the bane of our existence; waiting is a big part of life in a fish bowl, waiting on others to serve us, waiting on others to provide for us, waiting on others to take care of us.

In the morning, we have to wait to be released out of our cells to walk to the chow hall, wait for some nameless person behind a window to pass us a tray of food. After eating we have to wait to be excused or released from the chow hall to go back to our cell. If one is on medication that needs dispensing, we have to wait in line until medical personnel doles it out to us. If we want to come to the yard for fresh air and sun, we have to wait until we are released for yard where we will walk in circles or engage in some other routine of exercise, which is the same on a daily basis. Waiting begets dependence, the bane of our prison existence. There's no thinking required, no critical skills necessary. All this waiting however, can be turned into a positive attribute if we will allow it, which goes by the name of patience. It depends on the individual and how they view it. Waiting can teach us discipline that we can use for our future on the outside. Let's face it, in this fast-paced world of fast food, express lines for transportation and check-out lines at the grocery stores, Instagram...insta-this or insta-that, having the discipline of waiting can slow life down for us, and having discipline is a must to be victorious over the challenges of parole, where nothing comes easy.

For some newly released parolees, they'll find themselves in this fast-paced world trying to catch up on all that they've missed while incarcerated. This is a BIG, FAT, NO-NO! Yesterday is gone, never to return. Gone like a vapor in the wind! Don't dwell on it!

A person released from prison will face many challenges and these challenges will reveal our character. If we spend our time in prison never challenging ourselves spiritually, educationally, mentally, or emotionally, then we will be at a greater disadvantage, making it even more difficult to face the challenges of parole. A job, clean clothes, housing and transportation are the most basic needs for anyone, but especially for someone on parole. If we have no support group or family to help further our rehabilitation, and the parolee has never furthered their own rehabilitation while incarcerated, the challenges of parole will be insurmountable. We must avoid becoming part of the negative statistic of being a recidivist. If not, we'll find ourselves yelling over the tier saying, "Hey homie, I just got back, send me a care package!"

Lastly, I would like to say to someone on parole or soon to face the challenges of parole, that our lives are governed by the choices we make, but the choices we make are governed by our thought process. What we think and how we think about it will be a major factor in determining our success or failure when it comes to the challenges of parole.