

Wayne Montanio, V-98487  
Words Uncaged  
(Essay)

## **LIFE WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF PAROLE**

My name is Wayne Montanio and I was sentenced to Life Without the Possibility of Parole, which means, no hope of ever being able to show the remorse and empathy I have for the family, friends, and community of the life of Dondi.

The reason I was able to become a changed person was through the studies conducted by the University of Sacramento, that recommended prisoners not be eternally condemned to maximum security solely for their initial crime, decades after their arrest.

The study concluded that prisoners often mature, change their behavior, and discover the social value of caring for others. There is a long pattern and history of lifers eventually becoming the most peaceful and productive of all prisoners. This study recommended that prisoners should be able to earn their way to a lower level institution when their behavior is consistent with positive programming.

By this, I mean being in a Progressive Programming Facility (PPF), a place where gang politics and racism do not exist. To show that I am willing to make changes, I signed a contract agreeing to all the rules and regulations of being at this facility. This yard has given me the tools and the opportunity to go to different classes that teach essential life skills. Classes like Conflict Resolution, Alternative Violence Program (AVP), and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). There are many classes and groups offered to help anyone trying to make a conscience effort in being a new and rehabilitated individual. We learn our individual triggers, the causes of why we committed our crimes and how to make amends to the family and community while we are still living in a place of suppression.

I am a Marine Corps Veteran, and in this prison, there are many military veterans. We meet as a group to help one another with different forms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD). The veteran's group, as a whole, still serves its country by writing letters to other military personnel for moral support. We also help with donations to Blue Star Mothers to assist with the volunteer work they do for the Military Men and Women on deployment.

For the many years of incarceration, I have met men who have spent twenty years or more, men who are now sixty and above—these men have matured and live with integrity and honor. In Lancaster State Prison, I am happy to be here learning and growing with these men. God has made a way when it seemed there was no way. This facility is such a positive force for change and rehabilitation, a place that supports and encourages men who have decided to change themselves. We are all ready, willing open to being prepared to be productive members of society, if given the chance.