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Subject: The Most Important Message to Ex-Offenders

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Inspiring the people with the problem to become their own Solution

The Most Important
Message to Ex-Offenders

The most important message we have for ex-offenders or for people who work in rehabilitation and corrections system are that an individual can achieve a completely normal and legitimate life after having been incarcerated. There are literally tens of thousands of people who comprise the 30 to 45 percent of people released from prison who *did not* recidivate.

One of the greatest challenges for most people is simply believing that life after incarceration is possible – the fundamental belief that it is possible for someone to have a life of legitimacy and normalcy after having served time in prison. Many people do not even try because they have been told over and over that a felony conviction presents almost insurmountable barriers to community re-entry. And, unfortunately, in many cases this misinformation comes from those who have recidivated. If community re-entry is so impossible, then how do we explain the 30 to 45 percent of people released from prison who never go back?

For many people, a big challenge to re-entry is their own impatience. Most of us – indeed, our entire culture have come to expect instant gratification.

People who are over fifty can remember the days before credit cards, cell phones, microwave ovens, computers and the Internet. Those people who grew up with the many devices and services that provide instant gratification find

themselves somewhat lost when they are in a position whereby they need to do the work first and then look for the reward afterward. This is not a criticism of any individual – it is instead an observation and indictment of our culture. Good or bad, our culture has come to expect the reward before doing the work, and capitalism has served to expand this doctrine into almost every corner of our existence.

Most people have financed their homes, automobiles, major appliances, education, and other big-ticket items. They received the benefit before doing the corresponding work that earns the money to pay for the benefit. Depending upon your individual view, this is either an advantage or a detriment. When an individual has a felony conviction and has served time in prison, society puts him or her at the bottom of the ladder.

Those who accept the reality begin their climb – one rung at a time. Those who are impatient sometimes attempt to restart their life at the top, or at least further up the ladder than the position they have earned.

As convicted felons, we are held to a higher standard, and our future success is based upon meeting those higher expectations. If an individual is impatient and insists on starting back at the top, it's probably going to be a very frustrating experience. Conversely, if an individual accepts where he is in life, and that he is in that position as a result of his own choices, exercises patience, and practices the doctrine of doing the work first and receiving the reward later, he will succeed. It is not easy – it's hard. But, don't let anyone tell you that it is an exercise of futility.

The only true barrier to making a successful community re-entry is ourselves.

Learn more about ex-offender's making
a successful Community Reentry
that lasts a lifetime.

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