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Re-sentencing Essay

Why are there so many stereotypes about prison? Not, all things are bad when you hear about prison. When my judge Chris Craft sentenced me to seventeen years in the Tennessee Department of Corrections: I thought I would die. I immediately thought of the length of time I would have to be away from my family and children. There are many things that have led to my incarceration, such as a troubled childhood and negative influences; however, I'm choosing to use this time to get my education and make a positive change for my life.

First, when I was growing up my mother didn't raise me, when she had me on April, 14th 1990 and she was released from the hospital; she handed me right to my great-great grandmother, my mother is what you would call a "seasonal mom", she'll come around whenever time permits her to. And as I grew older that made me angry with the other girls who had their mother around for "mom and daughter day". I would never forget when my mother promised me that she would come to the school for "reading around the Christmas tree", I was so angry that she didn't show up. In the year of 1999, my great-great grandmother passed away and afterwards I was passed from household to household living with different relatives and seeing all kinds of illegal activities. I guess when my family members grew tired of me and my older sister they sent me away to live with my dad's mother and she decided to get full custody of me.

Second, my grandmother had to teach me everything my relatives failed to teach me. When she finally got me registered in school, I started hanging around this girl from the neighborhood and by me not knowing her reputation I fell right into the loop. I started smoking marijuana, leaving the house without asking, and just being very rude and mean; I felt as if I was doing the right thing, not knowing that I was hurting my grandmother when she'd sacrificed so much for me. Some days I could just see the hurt in her eyes and I just ignored it. During the summer of 2004 I got pregnant and my grandmother was so shocked. I couldn't imagine how she felt when she had to register me in school for the 8th grade. As time went by I stayed in school and then one day my grandmother decided she just couldn't

handle me anymore, so I moved to Memphis with my mother and I met this guy and a year or so later I was in jail facing time.

Third, when I arrived to the prison in the year of 2014, and the officials placed me in a room all by myself; with just my thoughts, anger, and sadness. I kept asking myself, how did I let this get so out of hand? I got into a little bit of trouble in my first year of being incarcerated, but when I realized that it's just easier to be yourself. I decided to sign up for classes that helped me become a better person, mother, and build my character. I began to learn that in order to love someone else I had to first love myself, and it's okay not to be okay. I began to think about the world I live in, I see that society and some family members had counted me out. I had no high school diploma and now I'm a convicted felon, So I decided to start tutoring to get my GED. With being incarcerated it usually takes a person a year, maybe more to earn their GED; I was able to get mine in less than four months. I then signed up to become an Inmate Observer, that's when you're trusted inside the institution to mentor and watch those who have attempted suicide. It was a very humbling experience, because that could've easily been me. As time went on, I noticed that a flyer had been posted for Dyersburg State Community College and all it's requirements, so I thought why not? When the list came out for those who were accepted and I saw my name, you would've thought I was getting released because I was so happy. Now, I'm enrolled in college and I'm putting my best foot forward, some days I really don't have it in me to attend class but, I push myself to come each and every day. I know that this is another mile stone I've reached, I see myself having my own nail salon and being the best mother I know how to be.

In conclusion, I know when you think of prison, you think about all the things you've heard or seen in the media, but it's a good place to get your life together, don't get me wrong I would love to be at home writing this paper, but I'm here and I'm making the best out of a bad situation. So, prison isn't so bad for me. I know that once I'm released I'll have something to show for it. Even though I made my life a mess growing up and coming to prison it hasn't been all bad, I've made amends with family, I've maintained a close relationship with my children, and I'm getting a degree. I'm proud of myself and I know my family will be too.