

Redemption

How long should it take to redeem yourself? First I would like to ask who's watching or who cares? When we get sentenced to decades or LIFE there's no one to say "Hold up this young man has gotten his life together, he doesn't need to do 20 more years." Well who's to say what's enough time? I see it as doing it for yourself and God and understanding where you went wrong and seeing what should've been.

Unfortunately I was blessed with a disease known as cancer. My life came to a halt and all I could do is think as I was restrained to a bed every week. I couldn't fight the courts because I was focused on living. So I received my 30-year sentence and I was sent Upstate, sick and dying headed nowhere.

I started hanging around guys that were maxing out 3 and 4 year sentences. That was around 5 guys. One of them has a life sentence; another is fighting for his freedom. One I never heard from and the final two was buried by their mothers. One was buried within two weeks of his release. But that's the life we were betraying. I know for sure I didn't want any of those endings, so I had to figure out how to become a man within these walls.

I couldn't be "DADDY" so I had to settle for father. I had to figure out how to stay in contact with my daughter. But how can I persuade her to believe I didn't leave her on purpose? How can I protect my brother from making the same mistakes I did? How can I make my mother proud to speak my name? Lastly how can I prove to my victims or my victim's family that I've learned my lesson? That I understand the importance of humanity and how sacred the life of another is. I see what a father means to his family. I see now what the community need from us men.

I want my chance to show and prove to the world that I am great enough to raise my child. That I am great enough to work beside you. That I am great enough to be your neighbor. That I am great enough to prosper on my second chance. I started by taking the long-term offender's class. Where I learned about the ripple effect of the crimes we commit and who I could lose during my incarceration. That gave me a reality check. I took Thresholds where I was peered up with a juvenile lifer (Eddie). I had a chance to really talk to him every week for 8 weeks straight. I started to look into Mental Health, Victim Awareness, History of PTSD and Fathering programs. I even went to NA once or twice. All these programs taught me about myself these last couple of years and I learned a lot from others sharing their experiences.

In conclusion, redemption has to do with correcting behavioral issues with oneself. And proving to the community around you that you have grown and now realized what flaws you have.

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