

The Stress of Limitations on Rehabilitation

My name is Cesar Avila. I'm a 26 year old 2nd termmer that is currently incarcerated at California City Correctional facility in California. This prison makes me feel like I'm constantly being restrained and let me tell you, it's not even the lock downs or incidents of violence. To be honest, here at this prison things are pretty quiet and for that I'm grateful because that means my path to getting into programs will not be on hold so much.

So why do I feel like I'm being held down? Well, it's because I'm trying to better myself through education and vocational means and this facility doesn't offer these opportunities. You see, there's alot of inmates here who are eager, like myself, to learn "real" life skills that will be beneficial to them once they parole from this prison. I paroled from this prison April 22, 2015 after 6 years 4 months on a 7 year term with a GEO and that's it. Things are hard if you don't have a "useful" skill besides just a paper saying you know how to read, write, and calculate numbers.

Turn over →

If I would have been taught a trade while in prison, I could have went back out to society and start working ASAP. Here at this prison there is no variety of vocation classes to pick from and the positions are all filled with long lines that compile of waiting lists. From the streets to the inside, I'm still unemployed.

I think all prisons should be made into University-like campuses where inmates can learn anything they want so long as they want it because it'll speed up their process in rehabilitation. For instance, I want to learn how to weld and do plumbing, but because this prison doesn't have these classes, I'm shut out of luck. Then when I ask if I can be transferred to a prison where my rehabilitational needs and wants will be met, I'm laughed at. If that isn't limitations placed on rehabilitation in a place where it's name says it does just that, then I don't know what to tell you.

I am currently taking college correspondence classes and have completed a program called Defy, which teaches entrepreneurial lessons from Defy Ventures out of New York. But now what? I'm a hungry person that wants to be versatile in a positive way once I re-enter the real world. According to the staff here, though, my petitions to assist me in my journey of self-transformation are a waste of time and money.

Do you know how that makes me feel? Hopeless, angry, resentful, depressed, bitter, and anxious are a few of the emotions I experience on a somewhat daily basis. I do what I can to stay mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and intellectually strong, making the best out of nothing. There's times when I wish I could be in a classroom and be called upon by a professor or instructor so that I could show time invested in me is not in vain. Prison staff need to start being observant and considerate to an inmate when they express a desire to change.

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Do you know how many inmates want to become certified personal trainers but we can't due to the limits the institution places on colleges? The whole prison would want to jump at such an opportunity. My way of thinking and doing time productively can be found among other inmates in other prisons, it's not just me.

In the end, I think when it comes to the pursuit of knowledge and happiness there should be no limits. The lifestyle that I've lived I can honestly say I'd be appreciative of any opportunity that ~~was~~ is given to me because I see it as beneficial to my sustainability in a legit way in society. To any prison that has staff with the authority to make an inmates request come true, remember that we're all deserving of second chances, and you should pay attention to the actions of a individual from a human, not administrative, point of view.

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