

Like Father, Like Son?

my story is like a lot of others who grew up the way I did. I grew up in poverty in a single-parent home with four older sisters. my Father went to prison when I was very young, so he wasn't in my life at all when I was growing up. Sometimes, I would get letters and birthday cards from him, but that was the extent of our relationship. when my mother lost her job, we moved from a bad neighborhood to a worse one where at the age of 9 I learned about gangs and soon after joined one. By the time I was 12, I was running around the streets hustling, drinking and smoking weed like I was grown. Even though I really wasn't going to school, I was smart enough to have managed to graduate to High school.

my best friend and I were the youngest in our set, so we were always trying to prove ourselves. I went to "juvy" the first time when I was 14. when my mom came to visit me there, her words to me were: You're gonna end up just like your Father which will prove to become true. When I got out of "juvy" four months later, things seemed to get worse at home. We had lost our house and had to live in the shelter for awhile. After months of my mother trying to find us a permanent place to live, she decided it was best for us to go live with relatives in Mississippi where it happens to be where my Father was in prison. shortly after moving there, my mom took me to visit him, meeting him for the first time. It was awkward and uncomfortable. I didn't know what to say or do, and I could

tell he was nervous, which only made me nervous. Our second visit wasn't quite as awkward, and all the subsequent visit ~~wasn't~~ together grew gradually less difficult. While getting to know my Father, I was trying to know myself. During that time, I struggled a lot with identity like a lot of teens of course. I really had no moral support, and my role models were my mother who was now addicted to drugs and the Gangs back in Chicago who I felt loved by. Looking to escape the slow and boring life in Mississippi, I rebelled and found my way back to Chicago, picking right back up where I had left off doing: Hustling, drinking, and smoking weed. Also during that time I became very promiscuous and ended up getting a girl pregnant whom I really didn't have a relationship with. Right before I was arrested for this case she gave birth to a boy who since being incarcerated only have seen him a couple of times. At the moment I hear he's following in my foot steps, but I'm hoping to change that soon.

I missed out on seeing my Son grow up. I can't rewind time, but I sure can try to make a difference in my own life, so I'll be able to become important in my Son's life now that he's going down the wrong path. There is no future for him behind these walls, and I pray to the Heavens that I will be granted my freedom and the power to stop the cycle of Like Father, Like Son incarceration - I guess we'll find out?

Respectfully,
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