

It wasn't long ago that I found myself in a compromising situation as a "inmate" at York Correctional Institution, in Niantic, Connecticut. I put great emphasis on "inmate", because it seems that is all we are to those employed through out the facility. Although we are distinguished by numbers, while incarcerated, we must remember we are so much more! Daily, many of us become victims of psychological abuse by staff.

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me," is a saying I think everyone heard growing up. Now, at twenty-three I know words can hurt far more than sticks and stones. Words can cause wounds and those wounds leave scars that last a lifetime. Psychological skills are vital to surviving prison and remaining strong is a understatement. Its not just the isolation from friends and family, or the 20-24 hours a day in a less than 8x10 cell, or the emotional abuse that occurs but all of it built up inside.

June 2019, the loneliness, confinement and psychological abuse get so bad, I attempted suicide in my cell. When I came to, it was then that I realized I needed to make a change in the prison system and fast. I have a great vision to help those who will come after me so that they are blessed and do not withstand the hindrance I have.



Always, I have understood: "God will never give you more than you can handle." I believe this statement to be true. This is how I know I have to fight the good fight — not only for myself but justice for all.

Walking in darkness is dangerous and can simply be avoided if we remember where there is darkness there is a shadow of light nearby. Similarly, the trials and tribulations I endured while in prison made it seem like I was in my darkest of days, but "this too shall pass," I continually reminded myself. It wasn't until I was sitting alone in a dark and dreary cell in the mental health unit that something significant happened. A still small voice said, "Don't give up Enysia!" In the weeks to come I began to develop a deeper awareness of how my actions could, should and would affect those around me. Followed by the series of events I hoped that my suicide attempt would bring unity to the small community I temporarily lived in. While this was my deepest hope — it didn't happen. At least not right away.

Religion and prayer became a positive outlet for my weary soul. I began teaching those around me about peace, forgiveness and how to love one another. We all needed to learn how to comfort each other in the midst of the storm. Trust me, there were days I became frustrated and



wanted to give up. But that would mean letting the enemy gain victory over me and I wasn't about to let that happen! What did I do? I began to pray, pray, and pray some more. Finally, I didn't seem like a prisoner in my own mind. Physically I was being held captive but mentally I was free!

Imprisonment as a female and minority has not been easy but it did teach me alot. The past two years taught me to always stand firm and fight for what I believe in.

After incarceration, I will continue to make my voice heard. I will do my best to change and bring awareness to the prison system injustices.

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