

My Environment Shaped Me My Response

It is not enough or complete to just blame my environment. Now that I know its power to influence my thoughts, ~~feel~~ feelings, emotions, decisions, and actions I am on guard! I am now conscious of my previous unconscious modus operandi.

Being aware of how my environment shaped me is only the first step. I must now set out to address the damage with courage, resolve, commitment. This has not been easy because prison and society are very judgemental and stigmatize those who suffer or have suffered some type of mental health illness. I want to say that legal drugs called medications had detrimental effects on my mental health and I know, despite the ~~medical~~ ^{judicial} community's effort to place blame solely on the individual, that I suffered side effects from the drug called INH back in 1994. My environment shaped me because I was not aware of the possible side effects (serious central nervous system side effects) this drug could have caused and my doctor - Dr. Chow, Kaiser Permanente, failed to inform me of the side effects this drug could cause. He told me to seek a Psychiatrist, but I failed to seek treatment because I said to myself, "I am not crazy... You are." Back then even I stigmatized mental health issues to such extent that I refused treatment which could

have meant a different outcome in my life.

Being aware of how my environment shaped me means I take present action to actively pursue greater self-awareness, development of ideas and plans to overcome my shortcomings such as anger, resentment, anxiety, fear, doubt, pain, sorrow, falling behind in acquiring skills necessary to function after 25 years of imprisonment. I am in pursuit of my self rehabilitation by openly writing to organizations (as I find) which can help me on my quest to achieve ~~more~~ nurture despite of the overwhelmingly negative environment in which I live. It is clear to me that there is no desire to empty prison beds - This would mean the demise of industries which benefit from such misery. I have made a decisive effort to come out of the misery of my own negative thoughts and it has worked! I credit my faith in Jesus first of all and the practice of reciting and meditating on scripture. My improved awareness has led to greater peace and introspection. Most importantly, I have gained very valuable insight into the issues, dynamics, errors I committed which resulted in my imprisonment for harming others. I can now accept responsibility with mitigating factors.

My response culminates with a frontal attack on the system which decided to criminalize mental illness. The evidence is clear that Psychologists and Psychiatrist

may conclude that there were mitigating factors in a crime or prison disciplinary violation; nevertheless, a person is found guilty regardless of the mitigating factors (mental) because "justice" must be carried out. This type of injustice is clear... The mentally ill are held to the same criminal standard as someone without such condition. This is DIAMI! Deliberate Indifference Against the Mentally Ill!

In summary... My environment shaped me; now that I am aware of this I have taken steps to respond. Those in the business of mental health should be advocating for a change in the current DIAMI in order to bring much needed, better treatment of those in need, to the benefit of all. Hospitals, not prisons!