

There is quite a bit of controversy in the world in relation to treatment programs in prison settings and, while I am personally of the opinion that alternative options should ALWAYS be explored BEFORE individuals end up being forced into more inhospitable prison environments in order to address their treatment needs, the truth is that measures of growth CAN still potentially be gained by SOME who honestly look for them and want them for the right reasons. It is true that this environment can be difficult to learn in as it's easy to become distracted by the aggressive negativity and hostility that exists between inmates in treatment and certain staff members who do not know or understand that the transitional phase is subject to influences of cognitive support and what some would describe as unnecessarily intense animosity or even overly abusive conduct. I am sure it can be difficult for some to balance authority and responsibility with realistic expectations while assertively enforcing reasonable compliance - especially in this setting. The other half of the truth in this is that many inmates in treatment are in denial which makes it impossible for them to be receptive to the educational material that's been made available to them. Many imply the "fake it until you make it" strategy in order to APPEAR to have changed or been susceptible to what could otherwise be obtained from treatment if they were encouraged to participate without as much fear and/or defensive tactics seeming to be in their best interests. I have personally chosen to apply myself to the best of my abilities while knowing that this could result in me being ridiculed, targeted, and/or accused of manipulating the system due to likely standing out from what has, unfortunately, become "the norm" as far as levels of dedication are concerned in this environment. In order to provide an example of what I mean, I am going to include a version of my first essay assignment for the treatment program I am currently enrolled in. A topic in the form of a question was generated with a 300 word minimum limitation of content stipulation being required and applied to it. The question for this essay is "Why Do I Want To Live A Life In Recovery?" and the following is what I created, converted, and customized for The APWA in order to address the subject matter.



" I have spent the majority of my life battling addiction and/or paying the price for decisions I made under the influence of its power over me and I've honestly just had enough because I am literally sick of it. Once upon a time, it was sometimes fun to experiment with drugs and occasionally create unique social memories with others if conditions and atmospheres were just right - but anymore - it's just about chasing an invincible / potentially imaginary dragon with delusions of actually being able to control it by allowing it to slowly kill me. What I am basically trying to say is that all of the good times are dead and gone and only misery remains for anyone who is still trapped under the spell. I have another very important and fulfilling reason for wanting to live a life in recovery and that reason is my daughter. Ever since I became a father, there's been nothing else that I've wanted to do more and the GUARANTEED rewards of personal satisfaction and the quintessence of shared joy that this provides for me FAR outweighs my POTENTIAL positive sensation that drug and alcohol abuse has ever generated in my life. I was born to be something much more than a junkie but, unfortunately, I had to be one before I could discover the truth of the lessons that the junkie lifestyle can teach. I've seen so many others who weren't as fortunate as I've been and I've grieved their losses in the midst of their loved ones while knowing that I was standing in the exact same line that they were in and wondering when my number was going to be punched. Somehow, for reasons I don't completely understand, I discovered that I was standing still AGAINST my own volition as the line continued moving around me. Sometimes it takes "crazy" or "unforeseeable/unexplainable sequences of events" to change perspectives and this is DEFINITELY what happened to me. I honestly don't know what a complete picture of a life in recovery looks like yet, but I am content to find a piece of the puzzle each day along the way as I find out what it's slowly becoming. I know for a fact that a life in recovery is NOT going to be WITHOUT challenges, but I feel better jumping over the hurdles one by one as they come instead of laying down and letting them run all over me. I've taken so much of this life for



granted throughout the years and I've made many more foolish mistakes than I'm proud to admit culpability for. That being said, I'm reminded that "51% of being smart is knowing what we're dumb about". The universe has invested quite a bit of intelligence and potential greatness into me and I am pretty sure it's expecting a return for all of the gifts and opportunities it's given to me. I know that I can find happiness in this world without relying on the very poison that takes it away. There is no room or time in my life for pretending to have the ability to slay invincible dragons (IF they ever truly existed in the first place) - especially since I know that extinction chose THEM - NOT ME."

[RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED ON MAY 1, 2020 BY 'MERLIN DUFREIN']