



JERICOHO CIRCLE PROJECT

NEW STORIES

During the latest intensive weekend at Bay State Correctional Center, inmates had the opportunity to write "new stories" about themselves. These new stories were the result of their discovery of a place inside from which to move forward in their lives. At the core of these insights, was their discovery of greater compassion, self-understanding and the value of "giving back" to their communities. Four of these stories are included below:

STORY 1

Jericho Circle has helped me to see that I can be more positive in the world and to others. I can be a beacon of light that can help others see with a clean sense of direction in their life struggles and sense of being along. This past weekend has given me a sense of knowing that I can help someone who has experienced growing up without a father.

I have learned to process and express my feelings in a way that allows my inner child to grow with unconditional love, one that will continuously love and nurture. Jericho Circle has also allowed me to have a vision, one that I never realized. I can be assured that starting today, I can give my medicine to the people who are lost and misdirected in their lives; a positive beacon to follow and not be afraid of being lost or lonely.

STORY 2

I have learned that God doesn't make junk. I am a human being who has feelings and emotions. I have learned that life does not have to be filled with anger, rage, and pain. It is okay to feel good, it is okay to feel love, it is okay to have an opinion and to voice it.

It is okay to seek and receive forgiveness. There is nothing in my old life and in my new life that I can not be forgiven for, forgiving others and ourselves is good. In my new life it is okay to be me and not what people want me to be, I am no longer the yes man.

It is okay to express love via a hug or by a spoken word. It is okay that I fall on my ass and to get back up and go forward. In my new life I am free from the pain of my past, it is okay

to cry. I am not John Wayne nor do I want to be. It is okay to be me, caring, loving and at peace inside. No more do I consider myself a failure. My new life is a learning event on a daily basis. My new life is exciting and filled with many new things to learn and see and do. I now have a love for life that I never had before. I am learning to trust, trust is the key I will use to open doors. That Is My New Life.

STORY 3

Before today, I could not forgive myself for the hurt, harm, and destruction I have caused family, friends and community. However, today, I began a journey in which I achieved a process of releasing personal hostilities, disbeliefs and learned behaviors. This has enabled me to slowly begin the process of personal forgiveness. Through the Circle process, I am safe from abuse, antagonism, and harm. I am now aware of who I was and who I am today. Most importantly how I want to live my life and interact with community. I alone hold the power to forgive myself. My new mission statement in life is: a man among men, I develop a world of respect and dignity by loving.

STORY 4

The point of my new story is to use my garbage to help others. The seed of evil was exposed, as a child being hurt, rejected, deprived. Under years and layers of numbness is the seed of evil. In that seed is hate, anger, hurt, shame. Not a good seed of emotions. Unless like any seed I need to let it grow, take a breath. This happened to me today. My old story, all the garbage today in my dump; in my new story I see reality. I grew up with two of me, the man that tried to do good and the child that never felt good. What I lost the most, the value of life that is what I lost. Today I have found this value in me, I do matter, I do count. I have learned in order to do this work and keep working, I have to be willing to tune into channels I never knew existed. Today, I have started to find one essence of my soul. I lost reverence, what is it? Reverence is engaging in a form of depth of contact with life, that is well beyond the shell of form and into essence, it is contact with the interior of its being-ness and attitude of honoring life.