



TWO ROADS

PARENTING FROM PRISON

2025

2nd Edition



VOLUME
37

To All Readers

Our monthly newsletter focuses on three phases: *Rehabilitation*, *Restoration*, and *Re-Entry*. These are the necessary phases of a successful incarceration and transition back to society.

Rehabilitation involves the struggle for change one confronts during incarceration.

Restoration reflects the refined version of one's self that we've become, and our restored self seeks service of self-worth to the world.

Finally, ***Re-Entry*** is the ultimate goal one accomplishes through class study, self-study or modification programs completed during one's incarceration.

We are TWO ROADS, and we want to be a viable resource for our readers. We serve you by sharing the honest chronicle of the stories and service of the incarcerated women and men of the Illinois Department of Corrections. Join our movement.

TWO ROADS Editorial Staff

****Please Note:** All letters, emails and photos will be reviewed by personnel **PRIOR** to being received by the TWO ROADS editorial staff. **All information that is not pertaining to TWO ROADS will be discarded.** Thank you for respecting the guidelines.

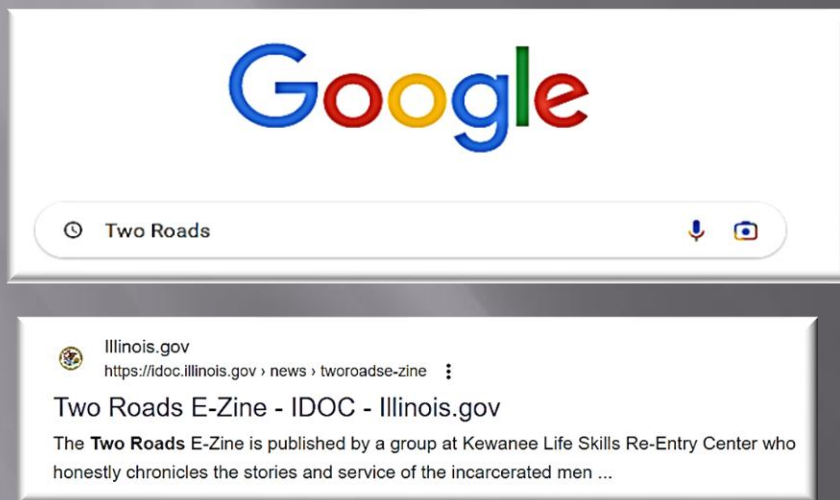
TWO ROADS

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Our Mission Statement

“We are committed to empowering those most impacted by harmful systems to become dynamic leaders and agents of change. Using the connecting, restorative power of these stories, we hope to do our part in bringing us all together to overcome societal ills, such as violence, poverty and mass incarceration.”

DISCLAIMER

TWO ROADS is built for bringing integrity and honesty about the people who are submitting their stories. There are times where the editors are required to make changes due to spelling errors or grammatical structure. Please know that **we will never take away your voice**, however, understand that we take pride in our work and strive to be the best in our representation of your voice.

Thank you.

PARENTING FROM PRISON

EDITOR'S TAKE

ED YAHKHAH'YIL
WILLINGHAM



In this 2nd edition of Parenting from Prison, it is not only where we'll be talking about the ups and downs of being a parent while your child (or grandchild) grows up from a distance without you, but also about the techniques, tools, advice, and/or help you have received while focused on parenting from prison.

The Editors at TWO ROADS would like to thank all of you who have taken the time to talk about your parenting in this edition. Even those of you who have chosen to take on a parent role (for those incarcerated with you). Know that your help, words of wisdom, and guidance can't go without notice.

Parenting itself comes with many challenges, so to do so while you are incarcerated is an amazing feat.

Never forget: "The most important legacy that parents can leave their loved ones is character and integrity."

THANK YOU!



PARENTING FROM PRISON

BY: TIMOTHY YOUNGBLOOD

Perhaps the key measure of successful parenting from prison, despite whatever mistakes we have made, is whether our children really understand that we love them as they are, not as we wish them to be.

Today, I'm far from what you might consider a perfect parent. As crazy as it might sound, when I was in the "free society" raising my two sons, I considered myself a perfect parent. But it's no longer my mission to be a perfect parent. My mission now is to be whole, to be complete, to heal, to be perfect and imperfect at the same time. My mission now is to listen to my inner voice and to live my life as fully as possible while incarcerated. My commitment now is to love myself unconditionally as much as humanly possible, for I know that when I do I will, in return, be able to love my sons unconditionally.

Being a parent in prison is already difficult to bear and not being able to watch my sons grow up and become outstanding members of the Youngblood clan make it all the more difficult. I can only hope that the training they received from me at an early age and through telepathy over the past twelve years of my incarceration, will not depart from them as they get older.

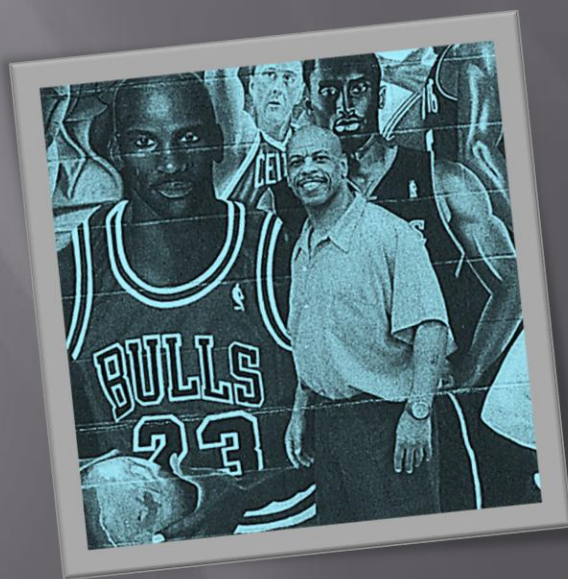
That training includes: don't do drugs, don't smoke, don't drink, don't join a gang, don't have babies out of wedlock. Think for yourself. Ask questions; save your money; get an education; develop a personal relationship with the creator of the universe; don't trust anyone your entire life. Put your trust in God only.

I am demure and mindful that, as a result of my incarceration, my sons may have special problems of their own. They may have endured shame, an unstable home life, a sense of abandonment, betrayal, and a negative self-image. They may even have gotten into trouble themselves. They may have conflicting feelings, mixed loyalty to both their mother and I, a lack of respect for me and my authority over them, no sense of closeness to me even though we were very close before my imprisonment. They may also bear the burden of my un-lived life. In other words, they may be struggling to find their own ways and spending their life trying to compensate for my un-lived life.

But as I parent from prison telepathically today, I grant them permission to have their own journey. The very freedom to live my life that I wished from my parents, I thereby grant to my sons to live theirs. To have their own journey. The very freedom to live the life that I wished from my parents, I thereby grant to my sons to live theirs.

I reassure them that they are loved, that they have a gift to share with the world – the gift of being who they are with all the flaws, shortcomings, mistakes, and fears of which they are so aware. In the end, they are not born on earth to fit in, to be well adjusted, acceptable to all, or to make their parents or society proud of them. They are born here to be themselves. Often that may not be pretty, and they may end up in prison like me, but it is honest, and that their gift to the world is their uniqueness. A uniqueness that will ask them to let go and trust that something within them is good enough, wise enough, and strong enough to belong in this world.

How dare one disregard what is seeking expression through my children, to cower in the darkness of fear, to resist the gift that illumines this otherwise colorless world. No weapon formed against them shall prosper. And every tongue that rises against them in judgment shall be condemned. Only God can judge them. And only God can judge me.



PARENTING FROM PRISON

BY: "CORLEONE" CHUC RAHIM FONDREN



Goals are achieved by not giving up—just like parenting. To never give up on your child or children. To fully understand what it is like to feel alone; to not have anyone to call yours or

family. The mistakes I have made that led to my incarceration have also become a reality to my children and the ones I love, making them feel alone. For that I am forever regretful but learning from my mistakes (what I call blessings). We all are different; they say, "comparison is the killer of joy."

During this incarceration, it has been difficult to parent from prison. My children are teenagers, and I also am the parent of small babies, so my focus has been to give them a real sense of my love. One of the biggest obstacles is not being able to take my kids to the park or even be there for major events in their life like graduations, birthdays and special events.

To give them comfort when they feel afraid, if they are questioning themselves, or if they have questions about life in general. Children even build up walls. They have to connect with you and create that attachment and bond to trust you. These moments always hurt the most because that is when the guilt consumes me. The feeling that I have let them down makes my body ache. I beat myself up the most in these moments.

The creator says that He will make us strong, through our weakness. Jesus stated, "take his burden for his burden is light." Being incarcerated and still trying to parent from prison is tough for me, because I want my kids to be proud of me. There are times I look into the mirror and ask myself; what have I done to be proud of? Then I pick myself up and say that there is plenty to be proud of, because from day one I have been dedicated to bettering myself and striving to be the best version of myself. Since day two I have been applying myself to be a father that they could be proud of. The unconditional love that my children give to me is enough fuel to operate the universe if it were heavy machinery.



Parenting from prison has tested my limitations, it has pushed me beyond what I thought I had and near a breaking point. My limitations are not your limitations. The obstacles I have faced are numerous. Such as: dealings with their mothers, the lack of communication becomes problematic to say the least, accompanied with the painful reality that life goes on no matter if yours has somewhat stopped. However, I have learned that *you have to want to succeed just as much as you want to breathe.* I want to succeed as a father so badly. I feel as though I cannot breathe without my children, and being that hero in their eyes is extremely important to me.

My sister, Dee Drucilla Quarles, once said to me, "Brother you have a big heart and never be ashamed of that." Because God gave you that for a reason. My dream goal is to build a foundation and legacy that God and my children could be proud of. I have to love myself in order to love anyone else. I have to always be in "Lion-mode," meaning always executing. I have to be intentional and elaborate, same thing each and every day. I have to have a heightened sense of awareness, to study then move. Not move then study, act before I think. I must think before I act, I will honestly say that is one of the main reasons why I am sitting behind this door at this very moment. Because I reacted to a situation before I thought it out. Now that I have been studying myself, I realized it was untreated trauma; scientifically, trauma can be passed down to our children.

It has been proven that 3rd Generation Holocaust victims and survivors passed trauma down to their children.

I pray to not pass any trauma down to my children. I am deliberate in empowering them in thought, letting them know and hear they are perfect in my eyes, also that I love them, and they do not have to be changed by this world but have the power to change the world; study the best to become the best, also learn from my mistakes, their own, and others in order to accomplish their dreams. I do my very best to express to them: *Set the example and do not be the example.* It is very hard to be away from my kids and parenting from prison. I can say it has also been a blessing to be able to teach them many things from behind walls like principles, values, and morals. I am very thankful for the love and support I have received in the form of their smiles. I am truly blessed, and I thank God that in this lifetime I have been able to experience that.

To the mothers of my children, I truly love you and respect your strength and patience. In addition, I am proud to share such beautiful miracles with each of you. I do apologize for any pain or hurt that I have caused. I pray that you still have a spot for me at the table and in your heart.

To my children, I will forever love you, and that thought has changed me, made me want to be a better man. I do apologize for not being there every step of the way, when you hurt yourself, nightmares, bullies at school, first dance, first kiss, first real-life tragedy. I pray you forgive me.
Loyalty over Luxury.

To all the fathers and mothers incarcerated, it is never too late, and it is never enough; there is no such thing as too much love. Thank you, Kewanee, for giving me this opportunity. God Bless the Universe. RIP Mama, Pop, Smitty, Dash, Toot, Slikk, and Dirty.... Love you all, miss you so much!

CHUC RAHIM FONDREN

*All men fail.... The great ones get
back up!*



MAKE IT COUNT

BY: JULIAN ALEQUIN



When I was initially asked to do an article about parenting from prison, truth be told, I was excited, and my mind started to race with all the amazing things that I could write about! I could talk about being the best father figure to my baby brother that I could possibly be. I also have

beautiful nephews that I try my best to joke with on visits and phone calls, and I am constantly sending cards just to say I love them. I have my wonderfully better half nieces and nephews that send me TOY STORY coloring pages with birthday wishes and love. I have even had conversations with my friend's daughter, responding to beautiful childish gibberish with "Yes Ma'ams" and "Thank You's." I have many examples that allow me the opportunity to give you great models of what parenting could and should be. I have the ability to show why our leadership can mean so much to the generations that come behind us, even if we are incarcerated.

In that same moment of overwhelming excitement was a pain that couldn't be denied because the parenting that I would die to give is an impossibility. My story is not very common, but its truth is the most frightening part. I am no thug. I don't claim to be from the streets and have never tried to because I was always a kind, loving, generous young man. Right before I was incarcerated, I was a teacher's aide at a high school for kids with disabilities where I worked one on one with autistic students. I was also blessed with a daughter the year before who couldn't have been more perfect if I had made her with my own two hands. I was in a position that I believed to be my very own version of success until one night of weakness changed my story forever.

The night that began my current torment started with a "joint" that couldn't have been larger than a pinkie. The mother of my daughter happened to offer me a "hit" of the vice that she enjoyed every so often. Knowing that I don't partake in this pass time and have a VERY low tolerance for Tylenol, let alone THIS, you would think that I would deny this request...but NO! Instead, I allowed myself to not have any faith in who I was as a person and felt the need to prove myself to someone that didn't ask for approval. This 8 second inhale cost me 18 years of my life and a love that I will NEVER be able to duplicate. Within minutes I was weaving in and out of consciousness and would black out to yelling and wake up to screaming. After an amount of time, that you couldn't pay me to tell you passed, I awoke in a hospital bed handcuffed to it with my entire body throbbing in pain.

Every person that passed I posed the question "*what happened?*" They each ignored me as though I had the plague.

Soon an officer came along un-cuffed me and told me it was time to go. My questions fell on deaf ears once again so my attempts to understand ceased. They drove me to a precinct led me to an interrogation room immediately handcuffed me to a bench and walked out. I sat in silence for what felt like days trying to think of what in God's name could have happened for me to be in this situation. After a while two officers came in and took a seat, and I immediately began to bombard them with questions: "*What happened?*" "*Did I do something wrong?*," "*Is my family okay?*," my questions were answered with confused stares between themselves and I. "*Do you not remember what happened?*" That question has been the soundtrack to my nightmares for my entire incarceration. They proceeded to tell me that not only did I fight against officers, but I was responsible for injuring my daughter and her mother due to thinking that "*WE WERE ALL GOING TO DIE.*"

My tears became the antagonist to the story that so many wanted to be true...that I was a violent, drug abusing, Latin man. The truth was the opposite, and it would take time to shine, but its shine wouldn't matter much. At least not to me. I was easily labeled a monster, and I accepted it because I failed at the one job that I was given as a

father. PCP and psychosis would not be an excuse that justified my baby's pain.

*I tell this story
because my life will never
be complete.* I will NEVER
have the ability to help her
understand the meaning of
love or mend her first broken
heart. I've missed her scraped
knees and first teeth. I will
miss her graduation and
prom night and I'm sure
some of you are thinking that
I deserve that and maybe so.

I have sat here day in and day out praying that God hears me to make her stronger and smarter than I could have ever been. It kills me that there are so many parents that are incarcerated that find ways to complain about their circumstances with their children. They hate the people that bring them to visits. They can't stand the people that they have to call to talk to their kids. They despise the child's mother or father so *"A few days off the phone won't hurt, right?"*



I would do ANYTHING just to hear my daughter's

voice. As parents you have to be appreciative of the blessings that you have. Those phone calls and visits are BLESSINGS. Every chance that you get you should be sending them cards or letters just to tell them you love them or let them know that they are on your mind. These moments that may seem like slight irritants because it's "pointless" mean the world to these little people that just want us to acknowledge their existence. Realize that there are people that exist that would give their life to get the blessings that you have. Don't squander these opportunities that you have just because you're incarcerated, and you are under the impression that it doesn't really matter because you can make up for lost time when you're free. NOTHING is guaranteed and your next moment may not be what you expect it to be so...MAKE IT COUNT.

Those who created the pains of yesterday, do not control the pleasures of tomorrow!

TR

PARENTING FROM THE INSIDE

BY: SAM SKINNER

*Parenting from The Inside
can and is very stressful,
frustrating, and complicated*

at times because you are missing out on very important moments in your children's lives, such as taking his/her first steps, potty training, the first day of school, graduations, sweet 16 teen b-days, and so much more.

*The stress, frustration, and complicated situations
arise when, #1. Your relationship with your
child's/children's mother isn't the best* and she starts, or is, playing childish games with your being able to stay in contact with your child/children and even being petty by not letting your mother see the child/children; all because you weren't with her for whatever reason.



#2. When your child/children get sick and you're not there, when they're at the doc/hospital scared and they want daddy. Naturally, we're the protectors of our families.

Furthermore, when they get hurt, depending on the severity of the situation and your absence because of choices you chose to make.

#3. When they start to ask those questions, where's my daddy, why everybody else daddy at home and mine's not here, and you can no longer tell them you're in school, at work, or out of town. Truth is, they know you're in jail because of constantly hearing it, and they start realizing it and then believing it, so the stress and frustration becomes more of just that, because these conversations are constantly had. Your child/children wanna know, what did you do? Or what did they say you did? Are you going to get out soon? And when are you going to get out? And now they are more anxious than you are for you to come home. (Game Changer)

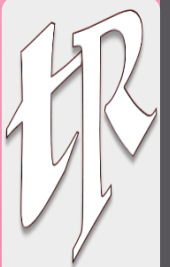
Moral of my story is... there are "Pros and Cons" when it comes to "Parenting From The Inside."

Pros - When the mother/mothers of your child/children are being mature adults "Parenting From The Inside" becomes less stressful, frustrating and complicated. Notice I said less, because while this is true, the "Fight for Justice" continues.

Cons - When the mother/mothers of your child/children aren't being mature adults, "Parenting From The Inside" is just that, stressful, frustrating, and complicated, this is my "Reality and Truth," what's yours?

SAM SKINNER

Although the initial try doesn't guarantee success, the lack of trying will undoubtedly guarantee failure! Success is never final, and failure is never fatal, the courage to try again is what counts!



PARENTING FROM INSIDE

BY: TERRANCE LLOYD



When you make that call, or get that visit, you feel a certain way.

Just the thought of seeing your child's face melts your heart. Being incarcerated and managing to be a father from prison can be a tough situation at times. In my opinion all you can do is give your opinion from behind these walls. When I talk to my children, I feel they listen, but sometimes I feel my absence play a big part. I feel sometimes my absence makes my children distant from me. I have talks with my children, I tell them daily: Stay in school, be better than your dad.

I have taken several classes on parenting, such as inside out dads and Malachi dads. Most of the classes say that time means more than material. But children these days want the material, so, with me being incarcerated, I like to balance the two. I reward my children with material things from report cards and progress reports. I know it's bribery, but they are getting what they want, and I am also. The question of when you are coming home always appears in several conversations.

Knowing you have time to fulfill can be a gut punch feeling. Personally, I just give that honest answer because I feel that honesty plays a certain part of fatherhood. There have been times that I wish my children were not honest with me, because when they tell me some of these things, I feel I failed as a father.

Being incarcerated for 11 years, I have a method for being a father from prison. Some people might not agree with this but I'm half friend, half dad. As we know, generations have changed over time. Kids from past generations didn't grow up like we did back in the early 2000s. They have all types of smart devices and God knows what. But being a half dad and half friend, *you are a friend and a dad.* I feel if they can gain trust in you being their friend, but also remind them that you are their dad, the relationship behind bars will grow. I feel if you are just behind bars trying to tell them what to do all the time, that wouldn't sit well with them. I feel if you build a friendship, while also being a dad, you have a better shot. I have had several conversations with dads, and they all have different opinions on being a father while incarcerated. So whatever method works for you, let it be. As long as you and your children have some type of bond, that's the goal in the end.

TERRANCE LLOYD

PARENTING FROM PRISON IS SO HARD TO DO!

BY: DORAN SIMS



For me parenting from prison has been hard, stressful, scary, and painful.

Being incarcerated is the longest I've been out of my daughters' lives. I never wanted to put them through anything like this, and it hurts me so much, because I grew

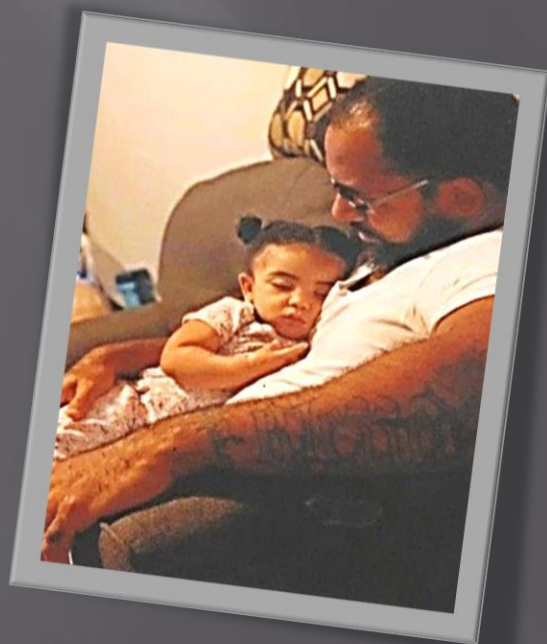
up with my father constantly in and out of prison. When I took my time, my oldest was *eight* and my youngest just turned *one*. I remember when my oldest daughter broke her collar bone, and when my youngest was bitten in the head by a dog. And just a few weeks ago she came home from ballerina practice, she was practicing her dance, and she hit the corner of a table, and it cut her deep and she had to get stitches in her face.

Not being there when they get hurt makes me feel as if I failed them, because I feel like I'm supposed to be there to protect them and I'm not. When I hear the hurt in their voice and they are trying to stay strong for me and not tell me that they are ready for me to come home, but I know

how bad they want me home; it really hurts me. Every time I feel like I'm letting them down by not being there. My youngest tells me every time after her birthday, "Daddy why didn't you come to my party?" and every year hearing those words is like a stab in my heart. Me and my oldest have a tight bond, and I'm grateful for that and all the time we were able to spend together. Any time she starts to slack at home, school, or sports, I talk to her, simply asking her what's going on? Once we figure out the problem, we then fix it. I tell her that she is capable of anything, and how she can do anything she puts her heart and mind to, but she has to do it. I also tell her that whatever sports she is involved in at the time, volleyball, flag football, cheerleading, or soccer, to be the best, give your all, take it seriously, and to make sure that she is having fun.

My youngest and I only have an over-the-phone bond,

but she knows me from videos I left her, a few video visits, and everything her mother and sister tell her about me. So, when I tell her something, she listens. And she is like me in so many ways; like she doesn't even know we both love CHOCOLATE, BBQ CHIPS, and throwing little slick shots here and there.



When I talk to her, I ask her how is her day, did she take her dog out, and what did she eat. She asks me what all you do today, and what did you eat. I told her 3 or 4 days in a row how I ate oatmeal for breakfast, and she told her mother, "mommy Da-Da ate oatmeal for breakfast again, I want oatmeal for breakfast."



I call them in the morning when I can to make sure that they are up getting ready for school and I call at night and ask how was school and to make sure they did their homework. If not, I will sit on the phone, listen, and help them with it. We also tell each other jokes.

The last time I saw them in person was the week before they shut the state down for COVID. Then, February 14, 2024, I got transferred to Kewanee, and here they have the Day with Dads event in June, and I got to see them again; that was everything to me! I love them so much and there is nothing I would not do for them.

I'm a girl dad, and proud of it—and I'm proud of them!

Those two girls are my everything, they are my "WHY."
They are the reason why I cannot fail.



Thank for your time,

Mr. Doran Sims

PARENTING FROM PRISON

BY: CLARENCE PRATHER

It's gotta be one of the hardest things, but the most important thing we could do behind these walls. And the first step is understanding that it's gonna be tough. Our words only carry so much weight, especially when they're younger. So to me and what I've known to work is "Persistence." Now I have two kids with my baby ma Shonte, and she has two from a previous relationship. But I was with her before our two, and when her other two were 2-3 years old. As they got older, they started to develop cuss words and I would stop them but they would keep saying it. And over time, they eventually stopped. I remember vividly one day when we were in the car one of the kids was like "shut the FU," and looked at me and stopped herself. That's when I really knew that kids respect you if you respect them; just like most mature adults. Persistence.

If we're grading ourselves on how our children immediately respond to us, we would get a solid F.

Parenting kids is more than about disciplining them. And I

believe too much time is spent on that aspect of parenting. My baby ma has a very tough exterior, which she developed from losing her mom and dad at a young age. But she rarely hugs or kisses the kids. She provides for them, spoils them, but she rarely shows true affection, and I voice that to her ALL THE TIME.

We have to show our children that we love them,

through proper discipline, but also loving affection, because then they wouldn't want to disappoint you. One of my own little special slogans I've had all my children saying for the last five years is that, "I'm Black, I'm Beautiful, and I'm Smart." Sometimes I might go a month without asking them to say it, and then one day I'll be like, "What's our favorite three words?" And they will repeat it back. I love that because it directly connects them on a personal level with me, and will be carried along their lives' journey even with me being gone.

Don't give up. Stay on the ball. I know our women

can be sometimes difficult, but they be frustrated too, and the last thing we want to do is piss off the baby mama, if you want to be in your kids life, you'll have to be on the same page in order for you to keep that relationship with them open.

I write my kids twice a month. One with a funny lil' card. I call as much as possible and talk for a couple of minutes. They have a program I just signed up for where we can read a children's book on a disk to give to them to listen to. So things like that are very beneficial for maintaining that relationship. It's only so much we can do, but whatever you can do, do it. I leave you with this: "Persistence" will always pay off when we're trying to parent from in here or out there. Peace!

Clarence "Celo" Prather

*Success at anything will always come
down to this: FOCUS & EFFORT.
And we control both.*



MY TRUTH—PARENTING FROM PRISON

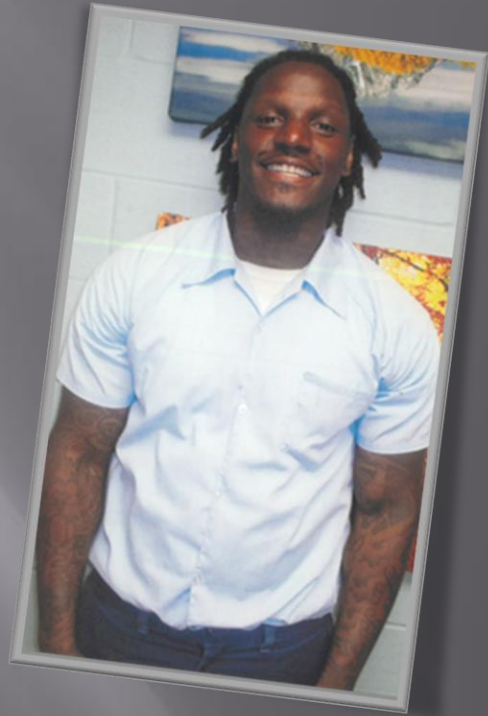
BY: DESHUN WILLIAMS

My journey began

years ago, Feb. 1st, 2018,

when the mother of my child and I gave birth to a beautiful girl whom we chose to name

Malayah Williams.



It was a first-time experience for both of us. Young and in love, my daughter changed my life. I gave up the streets and everything that came with it – for her. I was, and to this day still am, a very proud father. I enjoyed everything that came with being a new dad. From changing diapers, giving sink baths, to the late-night crying, and bottle feedings. It was an experience I will never forget. Fast forward she is five months old now; not crawling, not walking, just making a lot of noise with cute facial expressions. Those were the times when you put up or shut up (fatherhood at its best).

On July 10th, 2018, I committed a crime that could possibly send me away for forever. I never ever thought in a million years that I would put myself in a position to never look into my daughter's precious eyes again, her not knowing what is happening to daddy. I remember hearing sirens approaching near my house. I knew then the police would soon be storming in, and in a blink of the eye my house was full of people, there to remove me from my daughter's life, not knowing what it would become. Thoughts of "*will I ever see her again?*" invaded my mind.

I was charged with 1st degree murder and my journey away from my daughter began. I was placed in Cook County Jail where I spent the majority of time I received, for the pain I caused another family (which I regret each and every day). Four years-nine months-and ten days, to be exact. Every single day was hard for me, not being able to use the phone, to hear her voice night or day. I just felt lost and confused, as if this all was just a nightmare, but as a man, I refused to give up on myself or my daughter. She did not deserve to be given up on, no matter if the connection between her Mom and I was failing.

To all my brothers who are fighting serious cases, keep fighting! My princess gave me hope and the strength to stand firmly before the judge to accept the results of my actions, which came with consequences I had to live with.

I took a life and regret it, however that should not define me, nor does it mean my life must end.

I have something to live for, a kid to fight for, I had to keep fighting until I made it through every obstacle, every hurdle that was placed before me. I had to put my pride in my pocket and my ego in my shoe in order to walk this path of redemption. I let go of the toxicity this situation created between her mother and me. It was not about us anymore; it was all about our daughter Malayah. So, each and every opportunity I had, I called and video chatted with her. Whether it was for 2 minutes or 20 minutes, I had to make time for her. It did not stop me from being a parent. Doing my very best to encourage her from this place where encouragement is a foreign language to some. I called always letting her know how very special, smart, and beautiful she is; and always how proud of her I am as her father. For the 7 years I have been incarcerated she has never missed a birthday call from me, because I know how special that is to her, not to mention what it means to me.

Never stop being a father, no matter the circumstances I have remained patient, focused, and prayed

up. Being away from my baby had completely broken me down, God helped me build myself up to a stronger, more focused father for my baby. I have seen the error of my ways and can finally see the light at the end of this very long, dark tunnel, that came with me facing 45 years to life, to be blessed with 20 years at 50%.

*YOU can't correct what you
are unwilling to confront!*



*REAL FATHERS MATTER,
NEVER GIVE UP!!*

Thank you to all the brothers who help me keep pushing forward, keep your heads up, it gets better.

Keep your heads up to all my family, trying to make it home, I am praying for you. Thank you to my Family, to the woman in my life, and my Daughter – I love you so much.

To the mother of my child, thank you for being a great mom – it does not go unnoticed...

I have taken full responsibility for my actions, and I have been held accountable for my actions. I have 7 months left and my daughter is 7 years old. God gave me a chance to hopefully see Malayah's 8th birthday.



Thank you for your time,

Deshun Williams

PARENTING FROM PRISON

BY: ANTONIO "BABYTONE" WOODSON



I'm glad that I have been blessed to have the type of baby mother that I have,

because she made sure that I was able to be a part of my son's life throughout these 22 years I've been incarcerated.

Since my son was a young boy, I always got on him about staying focused on what was important, that school was very important because it would help him in the future, and that if he stood on business, everything after that would indeed follow, lol.

Me having this mentality, knowledge, and understanding gave me the opportunity to share it with my child throughout his life. I am glad to have been a part of the MAN that he has become today. The type of MAN who is very responsible and respectful, an individual who strives towards positivity, good energy, being very productive, and with an amazing personality. I am so proud of my son for all he has become and the achievements that he has accomplished throughout his young life.
Peace & Blessing.

Keep up the amazing work that you are doing son, you are a man with dignity, integrity, and conviction. There is a great blessing coming your way. When you do good in the universe that same energy comes back full force 10 times over. Especially, when you believe in doing the things you're doing outta the kindness of your heart, not because someone is telling you, or you expecting something back in return.

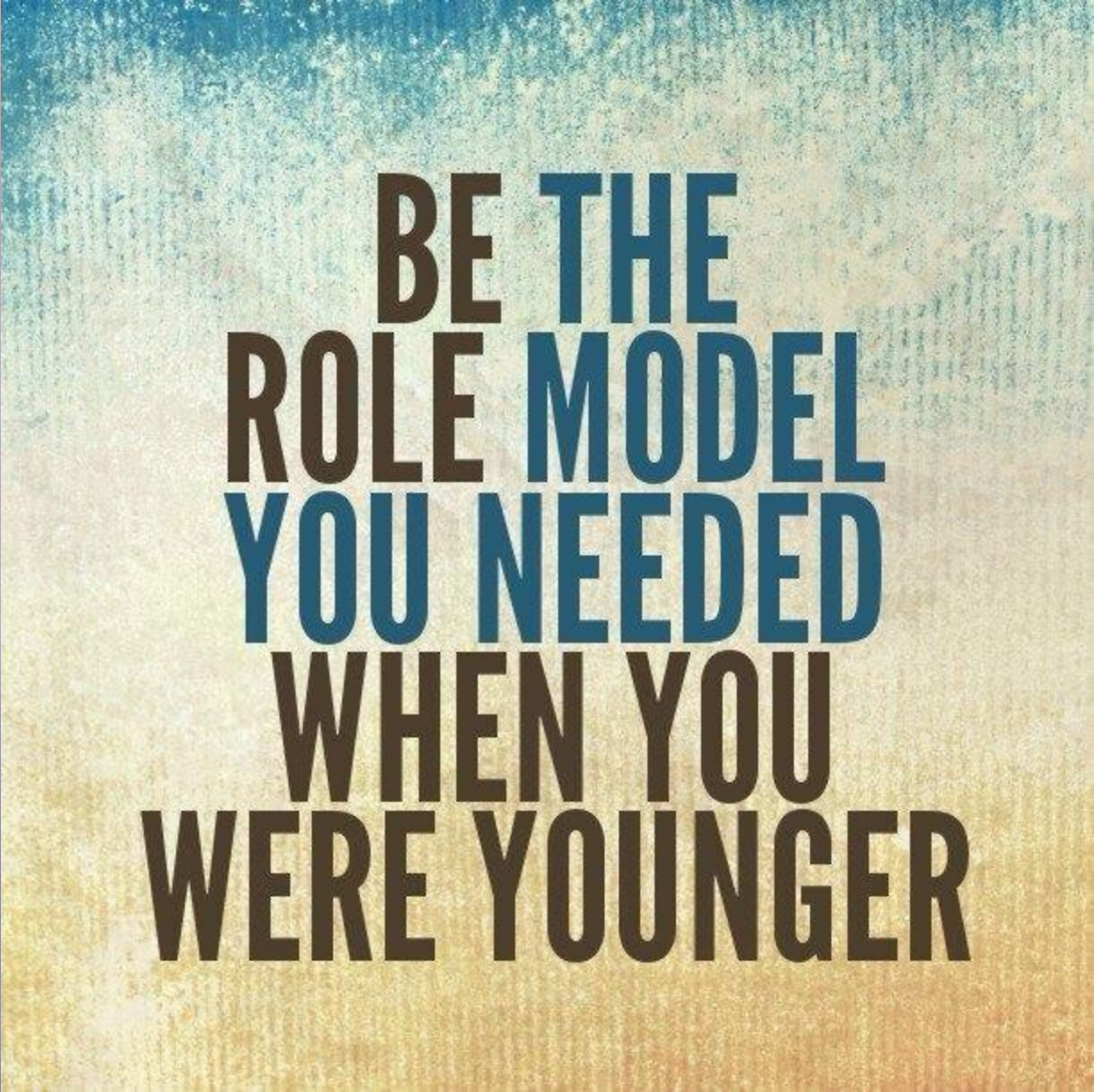
Know that I cherish our conversation-and YOU especially son. Always remember that I will ALWAYS have you in my thoughts and HEART forever, I LOVE YOU, SON, from your Dad (Poppa Tony).

Thank you all for listening.

Champions are willing to do things they hate, to create something they love!



TWO ROADS



**BE THE
ROLE MODEL
YOU NEEDED
WHEN YOU
WERE YOUNGER**

A STEP-FATHER'S TALE

BY: SHAUN FOGLE

I would like to introduce my daughter Zoe, I met her when she was about 5 years old (almost a decade ago when I met her mother, who is now my wife). She is extremely intelligent, very thoughtful, kind, self-motivated, and she loves animals.



As far as parenting from prison goes, I am pretty sure that I learn more from her than she does from me. I am so grateful to be a part of her life. I look forward to being there for her beyond these prison walls and having her back as she grows and develops into her different purposes and roles in life.

Zoe, thanks for having me as your father – and student 😊

I love you, DAD!

PARENTING—A FOREVER DEAL

BY: ABDUL KHABIR

I spent the first seven years of my sentence in isolation from friends and family, a part of that was due to the price of phone calls, some due to my own stubbornness. I thought I had life all figured out, and I could do everything on my own. I had major pride and an ego to match. As the price of calls went down and my ego began to deflate, I started calling home a bit more. I used to love hearing about my daughter and the great things she was doing. But I was torn at the fact that I never heard it from her. The news always came from my mother or sister.

As I started to discover the power of accountability and began admitting my wrongs, my daughter began to come back into my life. That was five years ago; she was 19. Since then, our relationship has grown tremendously. For the first year, she would barely speak my name. I discovered she was quite angry with me; I had let her down. I made a poor choice that removed her from my life and I from hers. I hurt her and others whom she cared about. There was another man raising her in my place and she considered him to be her father. I understood, yet I felt a deep cut and pain I'll never forget, and I had held the blade.

Today I am not only a father but also a grandfather, my grandson is now 4. What I have learned most about being a father and grandfather is to be present, be consistent, be honest, and listen. Listen attentively and give guidance when it is warranted. If you say you are going to do something, hold true to your words. Hold on to the moments and memories. The first time she called me dad as an adult was just like the first time she said it as a baby. Both of those moments are treasures to me. Looking back to my youth I have learned one thing: I emulated those I looked up to. Therefore, if you want to be a good parent live how you want your kids to live. As a friend of mine always says, be the message you bring. We have to get out and stay present in our children's lives; nothing says I love you like being present. My mother never had to give me the world because she is my world – she was there. My opinion, the best parents are those who set good examples for their children.

It may seem impossible to be a parent from prison. Do not be discouraged, whether your child is speaking to you or not, you can start right now! Just start by working on yourself. Figure out what got you here and what you are going to do to be better. Do not feel less than if you need to seek help; I hardly ever go at it alone anymore. My decision making has not proven to be the best, so I ask for help. Just saying, "I'll do better," is not enough. We do not have to wait to be good people. But we do have to work at being better than we are.

I know I have a long journey ahead of me and growth will never stop as long as I do the work necessary to stay on the Siratal Mustaqeem (Straight Path). I feel that I have learned much more from being a dad than my daughter has learned from being my child. The lessons will continue to come for all of us, parent and child. Moreover, we will continue to love. The ups and downs do not start or stop here; Parenting Is a Forever Deal.

My beautiful daughter Kiley, thank you for loving me and giving me a second chance. Thank you for being the light in my life and teaching me what it means to be such a beautiful soul.



JESSE MYERS
(Abdul Khabir)

TWO ROADS

...wants you to submit articles, or short poems, to our E-Zine on the following subjects:

- ❖ **Safe Places** (The space you find Peace)
- ❖ **Life after Prison** (Your experience with ATC or MSR)
- ❖ **Wrong Side of the Argument** (A time when you were on the wrong side of the argument)
- ❖ **Physical Health/Fitness**
- ❖ **A topic that is important to you**
- ❖ **Addiction** (Your experience or how you deal with it)

Provide us with your picture if you want it featured as well!

We believe that by sharing our stories we can empower and inspire our fellow men and women in prison to become dynamic leaders and agents of change in our journey of Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Re-Entry.

Remember, your family and friends can see
TWO ROADS online!

**Outsiders, Staff, and
individuals-in-custody**

With Staff Support

Please send your submissions
and scanned photo (if you
choose) to
doc.tworoads@illinois.gov

Without Staff Support:

Mail submission & photo

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