

Life in prison



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

- a. After reading the text, my understanding of prison life changed. I understood better what goes on inside a prison, the daily lives prisoners have, their incentives, desires, fears and longings. I saw their perspective and point of view through the personal life of " Anonymous N. Inmate", and developed a greater understanding of what it means to be a prisoner. I was introduced to the way of life in the prison, the strategies prisoners use to adapt to the prison system, the way the correctional system deals with the prisoners and also- the attitude and approach politicians have for this subject. The text provided me with a comprehensive view of this subject.
- b. There are different strategies being used by " Anonymous N. Inmate" and the other inmates in their adjustment to the prison system. Some attempt to become more involved in prison lives in a good way, occupying themselves with programs and activities that pass the time, like reading, drawing, getting a job, educating themselves, participating in religious activities and other activities. These are used as ways to escape the difficult reality of living within the prison compound. Others choose to behave differently; engaging in the economy of illegal goods and services, prison politics, joining a gang, etc. Both methods are, in a way, forms of escapism of the reality and keeping one engaged and busy. Another adaptation to life in prison is that which involves sex in prison. While some prisoners opt to only masturbate, others begin having sex with other men, while picturing women. The dire lack of any women and the possibility to have sex with someone of your own choice leads them to doing this. This is clearly an adaptation difficult to make, but statistics show that between 12 and up to 65 percent of prisoners do this.
- c. The inmates need for respect, hope and safety contributes to the

correctional policy to a great extent. By knowing what the prisoner needs and aspires to, the correctional system can adapt its methods of conduct, its strategies of operation, its rewards and punishments to these needs of the prisoners. For example, prisoners who exhibit a good behavior could be granted with special freedoms or privileges, something which will enhance their sense of being respected and valued. These prisoners could be commended on their good behavior, encouraging them to keep it up. In the same way, while of course keeping a humane and reasonable approach, prisoners who misbehave should be discouraged from continuing this form of conduct.

d. The facility in which " Anonymous N. Inmate" is housed in definitely needs some correctional policy changes. He describes a system driven by the desire to save money on prisoners, one that regards money as its primary care, rather than prisoner rehabilitation. The emphasis should not be on saving money, but rather on reforming and rehabilitating the prisoners, so that they could return to society and become productive, law-abiding members of the community. If the only (or main) interest is to save money, regardless of how this affects the prisoners, this goal will never be achieved. Also important in this regard is the fact that incentives for prisoners are vanishing. The governor and prison authorities have been removing nearly all the incentives possible for inmates. These include among others the " good time"- a time off a prisoners sentence that will be granted if he behaves well during his imprisonment period. Another major thing was the fact that no parole is given to prisoners anymore. If they dont have parole, they basically dont get any second chances- no one is keeping an eye on them, making sure theyre behaving well. These things must be changed for

the benefit of prisoners and society as well!

e. I don't agree whatsoever with K. C. Caraceral that the root problem in criminals is that they have toxic shame. He explains that toxic shame happens when a child's basic emotions, needs and wants are exposed repeatedly and unexpectedly. This supposedly causes the child to dislike and disown these parts of himself, and eventually develop a false self. The mental toll results in a person committing crimes in order to let loose his true feelings (Caraceral, Bernard, Alarid, Bikle & Bikle, 2003). I personally think that this is wrong, and don't agree with it at all. I don't think that shame has a part in crime, but rather that crimes involve a lack of shame. Criminals are not ashamed to commit crimes, and therefore they do so. Also, there is no real evidence that shame and being shamed has anything to do with people committing crimes. No causality has ever been established between the two. Caraceral's theory may rely upon several academic sources, but it is constructed poorly, and is quite false in my opinion, which can be backed up by the lack of proof in the academic literature regarding this subject.

References

Caraceral K. C, Bernard T. J, Alarid L. F, Bikle B. & Bikle A. (2003). " Behind a Convicts Eyes: Doing Time in a Modern Prison". Wadsworth Publishing Company.