

Brandon,

It hurts to be sitting here writing you this letter. Our journey has been tough, it has been filled with pain, tears, and heart ache; I made a lot of mistakes. I write this letter now in order to caution you of what may lay on the road ahead if you don't open your eyes, and also to tell you what has become important in life as a result of where I have been. The year is 2013, and you have been in prison for four years now. The specifics of how and why aren't what's important right now, there is a bigger picture. You got here because of ignorance, because of a mind set, and because you were trying to be someone you are not. Just know that people will always try and test you, and no matter what you think, only a real man can walk away. Anyone can fight, the weakest people can fight. Anyone can act or react with violence, but a **REAL MAN** can turn the other cheek and walk away. Things are going to happen that will make you bitter with those closest to you; you have to be the bigger person and confront your problems, talk them out. Express yourself. Don't run away from your problems. No matter what happens your family loves you unconditionally. They will be there when you need them most and you least expect it. They will always pick you up when you fall. Love them and help them at every opportunity, they deserve it. Don't be afraid to love, and when you do, love completely. Being young is no excuse, if you love someone show and prove it. Do the right thing now so you won't look back and wish you had done better, or done more. Watch the company you keep, your true friends deserve the world. Dedicate yourself to things that are worthwhile. Do something positive each day. Always have courage, "with courage you will dare to take risks, have the strength to be compassionate, and the wisdom to be humble. Courage is the foundation of integrity." (Keshavan Nair) No matter what, always love yourself.

Sincerely,

You



Dear Younger Self,  
Hey Kid! Do you know who this is? It's YOU at the age of 31 years old speaking to you from your future that wasn't destined. It sounds strange but listen up this is news you can use! I think we really need to have this heart-to-heart conversation for your sake to prevent you from ending up with a 29 year prison sentence as projected. The penitentiary is a place you grew up fearing similarly to the graveyard because it was always referenced for the sole purpose to scare you. Well you believe me don't you? It is not where you want to be! Ever! Why? It is emasculating, full of suffering, restrictive, populated with the worse people, there's no females, you have no true friends, your family can only visit or write you, the food is subpar, and you will diminish as a person unconsciously if you don't guard your mind, heart, and psyche. I want to deter you from traveling a destructive path that endly will lead you to disaster and ultimate self destruction. Don't you enjoy your freedom.. making your own choices?.. eating what you like.. going wherever you want, etc? In a mere moment you could react without thinking properly and jeopardize all those liberties. There's a beautiful world you will one day want to travel and fully explore that's filled with interesting people and meaningful opportunities. Of course I am aware of your great potential, natural talents, and attributes that are hardly unnoticeable despite your adolescence; but you're wreckless, stubborn, and negatively influenced by your peers and environment to the point you foolishly reject wisdom, warning, and valuable guidance. Nobody is so smart they have all the answers to life's lessons Geoffrey.. "A smart man learns from his own mistakes but a wise man learns from the mistakes of others." Learning things the hard way is sometimes best but not usually the best way, it comes with a price that's damaging. Your inability to think beyond the present will prove to be detrimental eventually- think before you act or react... some actions or words spoken you'll regret and cant take back! It's important that you understand the importance of the morals, principles, and

Year of 2013 integrity instilled in you by your parents and embrace them. Furthermore, it is imperative you learn to love those that love you and learn to use great measure in discernment carefully judge the character of the people you surround yourself with (especially women). They can hurt you the most! It's common that the things people like the most can end up becoming vices, unhealthy habit or negative altogether. For instance you are passionately drawn to beautiful women, men, and recreational drug use, and gambling at your age already. This is a recipe for a problematic future. They say, "there's nothing new under the sun," which relates to the fact these specific things have been around and part of humankind forever. They have also brought countless men to their demise. So do you want to be great or forgotten? You are gradually evolving into a man, which by definition consists of an extensive list of elements- integrity, character, self-reliance, strength, morals, and principles- seen you'll truly understand. You love your mother right? Before anything else she is first a woman. In honor of her treat women accordingly reflective of how she raised you to be respectful, munnereble, compassionate, and understanding. Never compromise your standards, future, or freedom by reaching without thinking. Be slow to anger and remain in your character. Avoid violence. There is no such thing as a perfect relationship because we are all only "perfectly imperfect" at best. Love and hate can't relate so never hurt the people you care about. You will surely make numerous mistakes and have regrets and so will everyone around you, so don't be judgemental or critical of others. You must be willing to forgive those that ask or deserve forgiveness in order to be forgiven yourself. This will always be challenging because hurt, betrayal, and disrespect are all strong emotions with lingering effects. Be strong and persevere in the event of adversity. Believe and you will achieve as long as you put God, your family, and good health first. Be smart!

From me  
to You,  
Yourself

Dear Younger Self,

Hey kid! Do you know who this is? It's YOU at the age of 31 years old speaking to you from your future that wasn't destined. It sounds strange but listen up this is news you can use! I think we really need to have this heart-to-heart conversation for your sake to prevent you from ending up with a 29 year prison sentence as projected. The penitentiary is a place you grew up fearing similarly to the graveyard because it was always referenced for the sole purpose to scare you. Well you believe me don't you? It is not where you want to be! Ever! Why? It is emasculating, full of suffering, restrictive, populated with the worse people, there's no females, you have no true friends, your family can only visit or write you, the food is subpar, and you will diminish as a person unconsciously if you don't guard your mind, heart, and psyche. I want to deter you from traveling a destructive path that endly will lead to disaster and ultimate self destruction. Don't you enjoy your freedom.. making your own choices?.. eating what you like.. going wherever you want, etc?! In a mere moment you could react without thinking properly and jeopardize all those liberties. There's a beautiful world you will one day want to travel and fully explore that's filled with interesting people and meaningful opportunities. Of course I am aware of your great potential, natural talents, and attributes that are hardly unnoticeable despite your adolescence; but you're wreckless, stubborn, and negatively influenced by your peers and environment to the point you foolishly reject wisdom, warning, and valuable guidance. Nobody is so smart they have all the answers to life's lessons Geoffrey.. "A smart man learns from his own mistakes but a wise man learns from the mistakes of others." Learning things the hard way is sometimes best but not usually the best way, it comes with a price that's damaging. Your inability to think beyond the present will prove to be detrimental eventually- think before you act or react... some actions or words spoken you'll regret and cant take back! It's important that you understand the importance of the morals, principles and integrity instilled in you by your parents and embrace them. Furthermore, it is imperative you learn to love those that love you and learn to use great measure in discernment. Carefully judge the character of the people you surround yourself with (especially women). They can hurt

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From me to You,

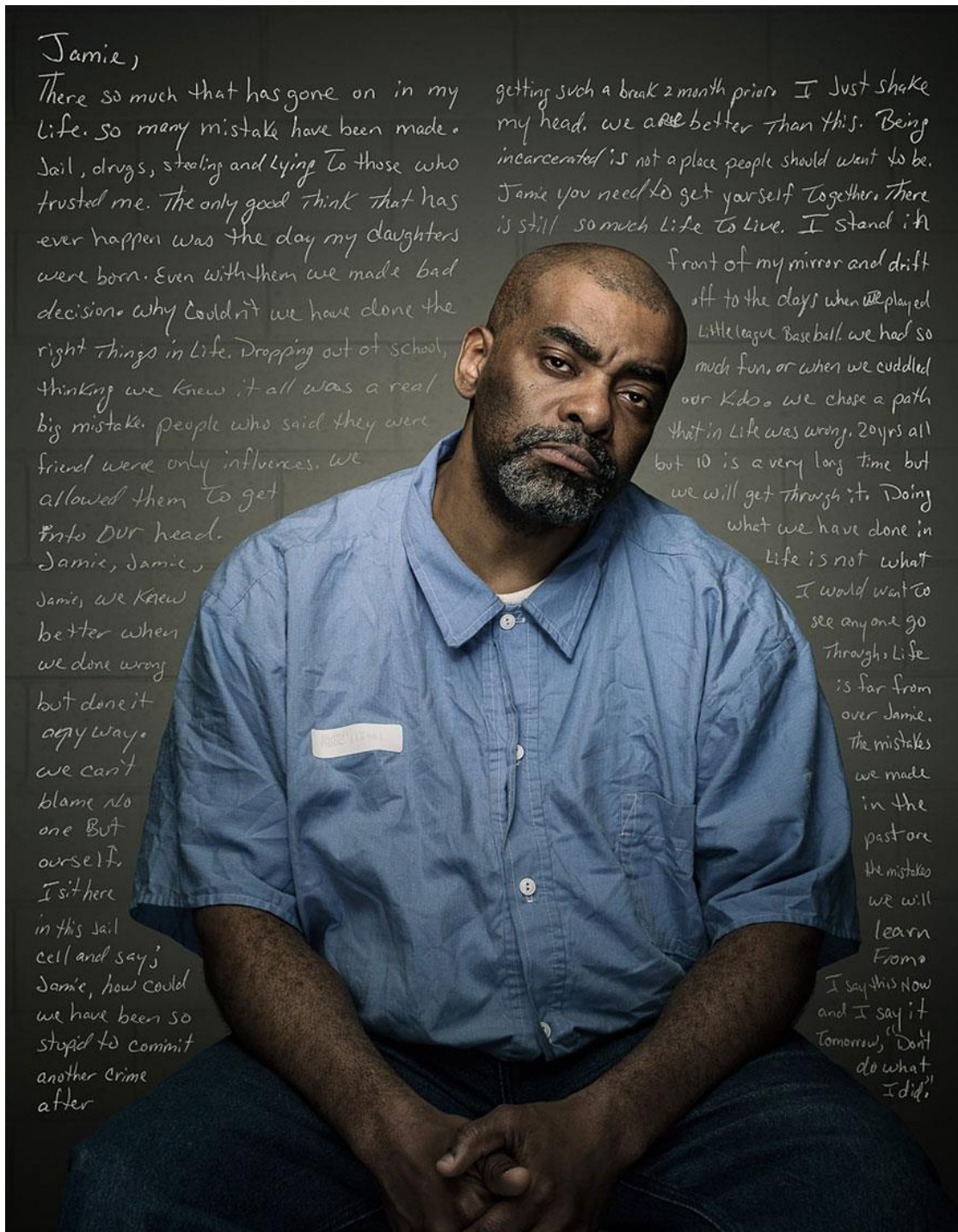
Yourself





William,

Looking back on how my life has turned out I want to give a little insight about how my decisions have impacted myself and the people around me. When you turn sixteen years old your parents get a divorce and this forces you to take on an unfamiliar role as a parent as well as an older sibling. You quit school to work full time and you will do the honorable thing. You will help support your younger siblings by buying them food and providing them with clothes. Not only will you sacrifice your schooling but your free time as well. You will be there at sporting events and all school activities. As the summer season came to a close and your job ends things will once again become very hard. The thought will run through your mind for an opportunity to come up with another way to get money. Please think twice before you turn to stealing from a guy who ripped off your brother. This is a fork in the road and I have chosen the wrong way. I choose to steal this guys stuff and got caught. I received six months in jail and from there had a hard time finding work after that. There is always another choice and you must fined it. I have spent most of my life behind bars and you are worth much more than that.



Jamie,

There so much that has gone on in my life. so many mistake have been made. Jail, drugs, stealing and lying to those who trusted me. The only good think that has ever happen was the day my daughters were born. Even with them we made bad decision. why couldn't we have done the right things in life. Dropping out of school, thinking we knew it all was a real big mistake. people who said they were friend were only influences. we allowed them to get into our head.

Jamie, Jamie,

Jamie, we knew better when we done wrong

but done it anyway.

we can't blame no one but ourself.

I sit here in this jail cell and say; Jamie, how could we have been so stupid to commit another crime after

getting such a break 2 month prior. I just shake my head. we are better than this. Being incarcerated is not a place people should want to be.

Jamie you need to get yourself together. There is still so much life to live. I stand in

front of my mirror and drift off to the days when we played

Little league Baseball. we had so much fun, or when we cuddled

our kids. we chose a path that in life was wrong. 20yrs all

but 10 is a very long time but we will get through it. Doing

what we have done in life is not what

I would want to see anyone go

through. Life is far from

over Jamie. The mistakes

we made in the past are

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learn from.

I say this now and I say it

tomorrow, "Don't do what I did."

Jamie,

There is so much that has gone on in my life. So many mistake have been made. Jail, drugs, stealing and lying to those who trusted me. The only good think that has every happen was the day my daughters were born. Even with them we made bad decision. Why couldn't we have done the right things in life. Dropping out of school, thinking we knew it all was a real big mistake. People who said they were friend were only influences. We allowed them to get into our head. Jamie, Jamie, Jamie, we knew better when we done wrong but done it anyway. We can't blame no one but ourself. I sit here in this jail cell and say; Jamie, how could we have been so stupid to commit another crime after getting such a break 2 month prior. I just shake my head. We are better than this. Being incarcerated is not a place people should want to be. Jamie you need to get yourself together. There is still so much life to live. I stand in front of my mirror and drift off to the days when we played little league baseball. We had so much fun, or when we cuddled our kids. We chose a path that in life was wrong. 20 yrs all but 10 is a very long time but we will get through it. Doing what we have done in life is not what I would want to see anyone go through. Life is far from over Jamie. The mistakes we made in the past are the mistakes we will learn from. I say this now and say it tomorrow, "Don't do that I did."



Dear Bob,

In the first few months after graduation in '64 you allowed three job opportunities to slip through your fingers. Any of them had the potential to be a career, most notably a career in the Canadian R.C.M.P. equivalent to the F.B.I. here in the USA.

It took you coming to prison and having time to reflect on your past to make you realize just how good you had it as an only child living in the country on a 150 acre farm. You were not smart enough to appreciate all the good things you had in life till it was too late.

You lived for tomorrow not for today. As you started hanging with the wrong crowd, namely a cousin 7 years older. He'd take me along with his friends on overnite salmon fishing trips.

Liquor was always present and wanting to feel like you fit in your drinking began. You looked up to your cousin like a big Brother, which turned out to be a poor choice on my behalf. I rarely spent time with anyone who didn't drink. It took another 10 years for your life to

start spiraling out of control. Driving 18 wheelers and the bright lights of Montreal and other cities dazzled you. Booze, drugs and all nite parties made trucking and home life a living hell. You sabotaged 2 marriages and as a result I'm here

doing 55 years After

17 years in here

I now know when choosing friends

whether it be family or others

be careful of those

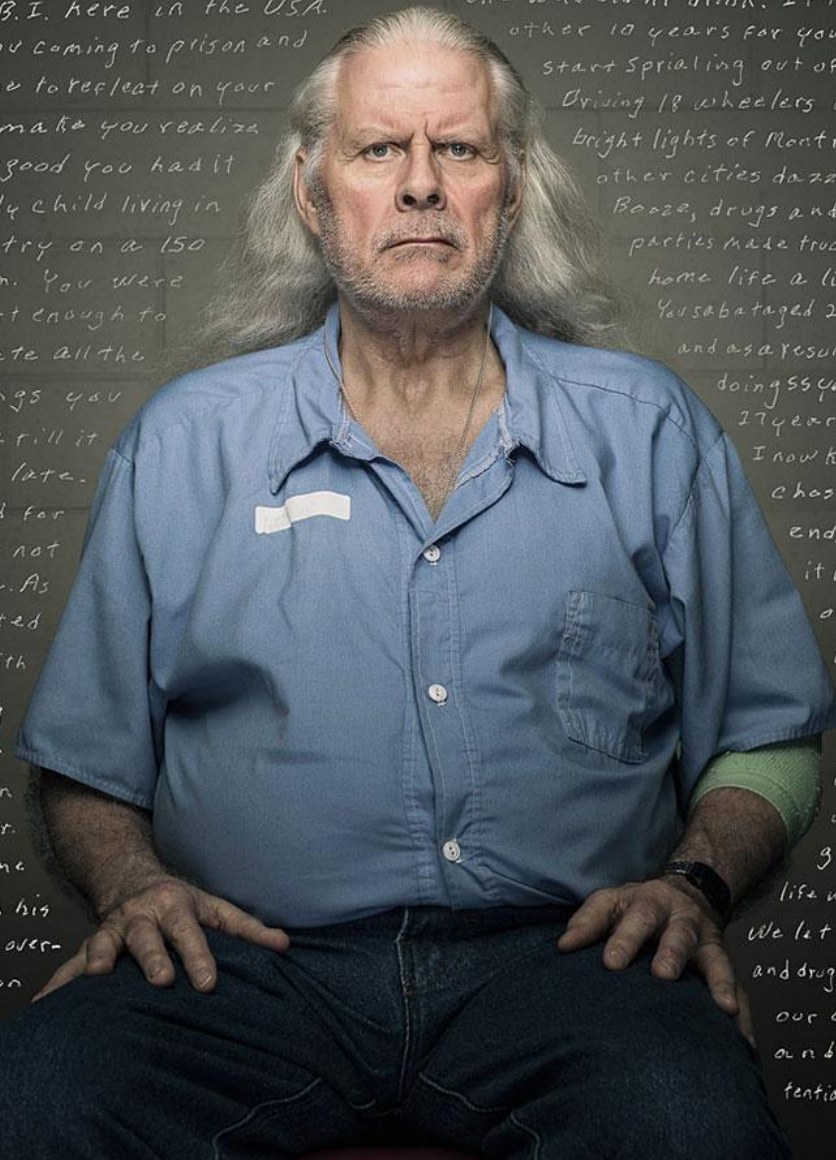
choices. Do we have

similar goals in

life with them? We let drinking

and drugs shatter our dreams

and our potential future.



Dear Bob,

In the first few months after graduation in '64 you allowed three job opportunities to slip through your fingers. Any of them had the potential to be a career, most notably a career in the Canadian R.C.M.P. equivalent to the F.B.I. here in the USA. It took you coming to prison and having time to reflect on your past to make you realize just how good you had it as an only child living in the country on a 150 acre farm. You were not smart enough to appreciate all the good things you had in life till it was too late. You lived for tomorrow not for today. As you started hanging with the wrong crowd, namely a cousin 7 years older. He'd take me along with his friends on overnite salmon fishing trips. Liquor was always present and wanting to feel like you fit in your drinking began. You looked up to your cousin like a big Brother, which turned out to be a poor choice on my behalf. I rarely spent time with anyone who didn't drink. It took another 10 years for your life to start spiraling out of control. Driving 18 wheelers and the bright lights of Montreal and other cities dazzled you. Booze, drugs and all nite parties made trucking and home life a living hell. You sabotaged 2 marriages and as a result I'm here doing 55 years. After 17 years in here I now know when choosing friends



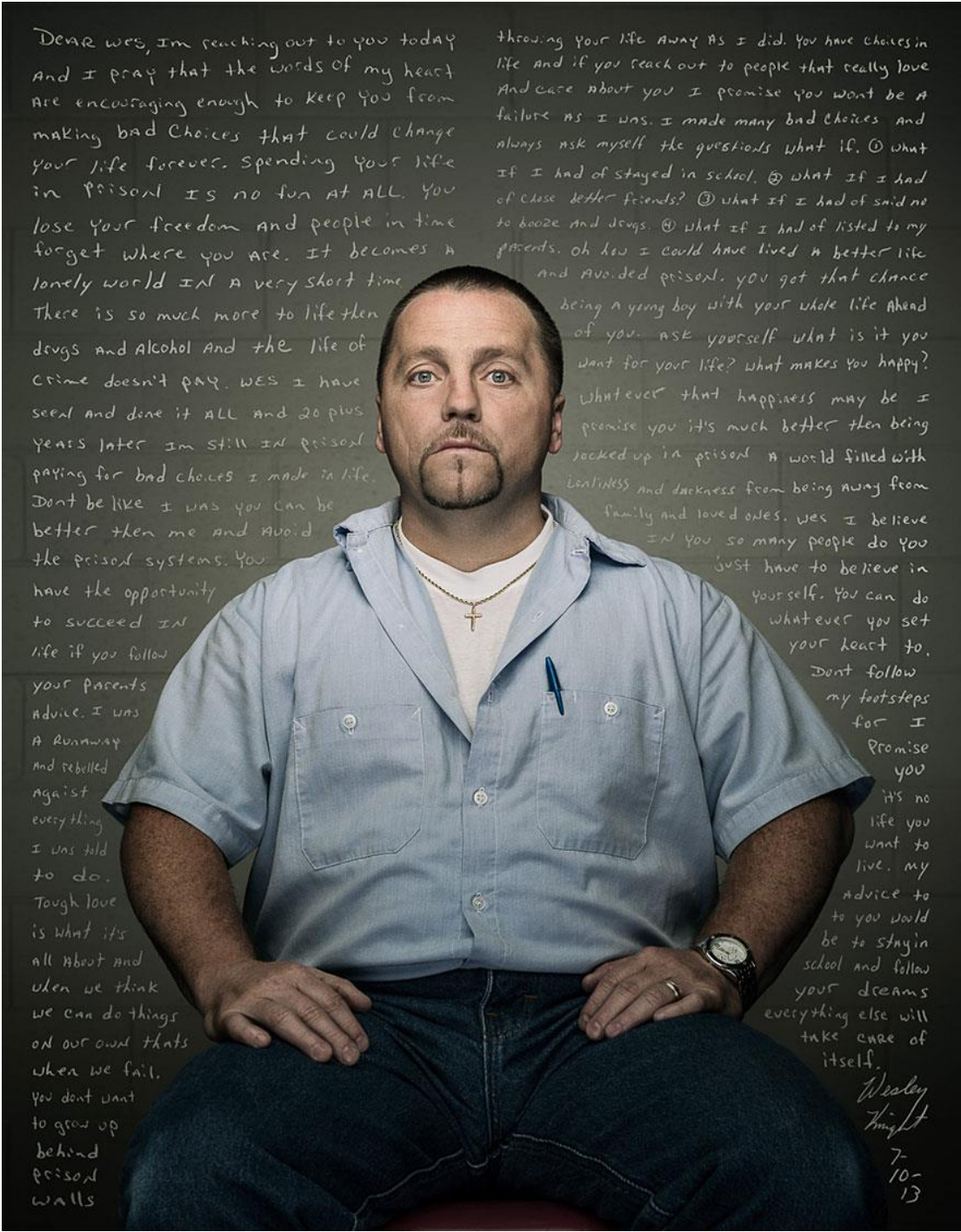
Robert Payzant

wether it be family or others be careful of those choices. Do we have similar goals in life with them? We let drinking and drugs shatter our dreams and our potential future.

A letter to the younger me,

Hello. This is the older, future you. I want to reach out to you and hopefully help save you from becoming me- a veteran of the prison system for over 20 years. If you pay attention to me & consider my advice, you just might avoid this particular future & maybe you will decide to create something special with your life. First things first, accept the fact that you are special. You were born that way. Be yourself and you will attract good people to you. When you try to be different, in order to fit in, you will lose more and more of your true identity. Always recognize that you need to be a friend to yourself first. Also know that your family loves you and will always love you. Don't over-analyze their love or compare it with the love of other families. They do the best they can with the tools that they have. Love them back without expectations and without condition, and the bonds will remain strong. Finally, no matter what negative experiences you suffer, they do not have to define you. You have the power of choice... always. Be quick to smile, slow to anger, and treat all people with the respect they deserve. That is how you will avoid becoming me.





Dear Wes,

I'm reaching out to you today and I pray that the words of my heart are encouraging enough to keep you from making bad choices that could change your life forever. Spending your life in prison is no fun at all. You lose your freedom and people in time forget where you are. It becomes a lonely world in a very short time. There is so much more to life than drugs and alcohol and the life of crime doesn't pay. Wes I have seen and done it all and 20 plus years later I'm still in prison paying for bad choices I made in life. Don't be like I was you can be better than me and avoid the prison systems. You have the opportunity to succeed in life if you follow your parents advice. I was a runaway and rebelled against everything I was told to do. Tough love is what its all about and when we think we can do things on our own that's when we fail. You don't want to grow up behind prison walls throwing your life away as I did. You have choices in life and if you reach out to people that really love and care about you I promise you won't be a failure as I was. I made many bad choices and always ask myself the questions what if. 1. What if I had of stayed in school. 2. What if I had of chose better friends? 3. What if I had of said no to booze and drugs. 4. What if I had of listed to my parents. Oh how I could have lived a better life and avoided prison. You got that chance being a young boy with your whole life ahead of you. Ask yourself what is it you want for your life? What makes you happy? Whatever that happiness may be I promise you it's much better than being locked up in a prison a world filled with loneliness and darkness from being away from family and loved ones. Wes I believe in you so many people do you just have to believe in yourself. You can do whatever you set your heart to. Don't follow my footsteps for I promise you its no life you want to live. My advice to to you would be to stay in school and follow your dreams everything else will take care of itself.

Wesley Knight

7-10-13