

Education and Change

One day Ronald stopped to think about what it means to be in prison. These were the exact words he wrote later when he paused for a moment of reflection:

I was sitting in the prison yard playing cards when it hit me. I asked, what am I doing in a place like this, and what am I going to do about it? Am I going to keep on coming here or am I going to do something to keep from coming back? This is what I asked myself. So I thought it's about time for me to make something out of my life. So I went to school.

Education in prison is one of the most important factors that leads to authentic change in life. There have been many studies that indicate educational advancement has a direct effect on the rate of recidivism. This is especially true when any level of higher education has been achieved. Many men and women have indicated that authentic change began when there was significant educational achievement in their lives.

More than just statistical factors education often opens new avenues that have life-giving qualities. Men like Malcolm X have indicated that it was prison education, which of course involved more than just books and numbers, that led to a whole new world view and made possible the move from being a victim to an intentional human being.

Prison education can certainly lead to power and choice. Instead of standing before only one avenue that leads back to prison – there are now many that hold the promise of a future life without prison. Ronald discovered this. He finished high school and one year of college before he was released. A few years after release he established his own business and got his family back together. As far as I know he never came back to prison.