

## *Getting Back on the Right Path*



*Freedom*



*Success*

***Empowering the 12 - 17 year old***

*Youth Empowerment Six-Part Series:  
Preparing our youth for a positive future*

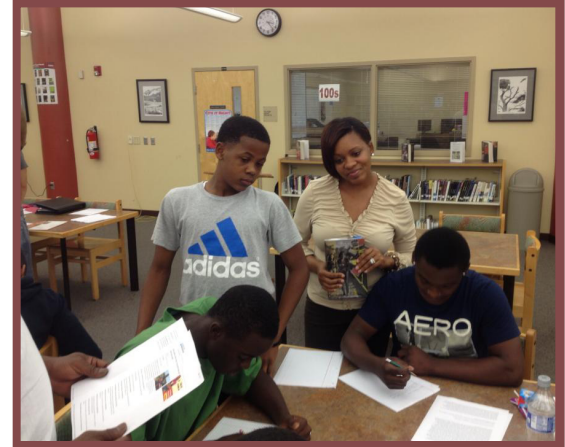
# Success is a Choice YOU Make

**FACT:** There is nothing you can't accomplish. If no one has ever told you that before, then hear it now. There is nothing you can't do. There's nothing in your life that you can't go beyond or get over, there's no amount of your past that can keep you from finding peace within yourself and success in the world. Once you believe that, the rest will be easy. Why? Because you're stronger than you think you are.

## Preparation is Key

Of course, you can't just show up unprepared (for anything) and expect to come out on the other side with much of anything. The truth is, to do this and do it right, you do have to prepare yourself... to commit.

You also have to prepare yourself mentally to stretch and change and grow into a different version of you that you perhaps haven't been in a long time, if ever. You have to be prepared to humble yourself and learn alongside others who will know different things than you do. Once prepared, once committed, and once convinced you will succeed, you're ready for the next step.



**Looking glass:** So, what do you really want?

- \_\_\_\_\_

Before you even get a chance to look at what you just wrote down and say something negative to yourself about how impossible it is or you ruined that or whatever, stop. Tell yourself right now:

- I can achieve this
- I can make this happen
- There is an amazing life out there for me

*You have no control over [The cards of Life] that are dealt to you. But it's up to you how the game is played.*

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One thing is certain: If nothing changes, NOTHING changes. Happiness is a choice, your choice.

Change takes action.

Change is something you do.

Change is not something that happens without effort.

**Visualization**: If you could make one change in your life, what would it be (keep it real)?

- \_\_\_\_\_

**Visualization**: On the first line below, detail where you WILL be one year after high school graduation. On the remaining two lines, detail what you are going to do to make sure it happens.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

The most difficult form of change comes from within the self and for that reason, our first workbook examines the self, including attitude, how we see the world, how the world sees us, and how visualization and action are the secret to YOUR success.

**Key terms defined:**

Active: Engaged, participating, energetic, causing change

Passive: Not participating, often considered as lazy, not putting forth any effort

**Looking glass**: When it comes to choosing your future, are you passive or active? Besides attending classes, what are you doing to make your dreams come true?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



As these pages belong to you, responses remain yours... no shake-down or judgement here.

Throughout the series, you'll be introduced to:

- **Three individuals who have gone through (or currently going through) the system**: From their words, experiences, and challenges, recognize you are not alone.
- **Looking glass**: Questions for you to take a hard look at the person looking back. As responses are yours alone, be honest; there's no one to fool but yourself.
- **Affirmations and Visualizations**: Accomplishments begin by picturing and planning positives in the mind. From the mind, we choose to become active agents in our own destiny.
- **Consciousness IQ**: Examines how our mind interacts with the world through thoughts, feelings, emotions, actions, and reactions.
- **Doing time**: Straight-forward moments of life behind bars summarized by two ex-cons, Duck and Stick.

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Spotlight: Cheryl, Legend, Evelyn



Barriers or obstacles are opportunities for us to grow and learn.

**Looking glass:** Beside your current sidetrack, explain where you want to be and the barriers(s) standing in the way. Then explain how you will **actively** overcome each one.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

For our journey, I've asked three classmates to join in, knowing their experiences will benefit us along our way. Their stories will be shared throughout the workshops and five books.



*Name's Cheryl. Don't bare the loads of secrecy, it will weigh you down. I was molested or forced to do provocative things between the ages of 4 to 10 by 10 people I encountered in my life. Growing up my parents were hard working, they worked for every dime they made. My mom went through a lot when she was growing up so she didn't want me going through that same struggle. She was molested when she was younger and she never wanted me to go through any of that. We don't always get what we want.*



*I'm Legend. Everybody is not dealt a fair hand from the deck of cards. Therefore everybody's situation could be different. But giving my input on how things turned out for me might be the worst of the worst in my eyes cause of not having that father/mother figure needed.*



*Diversity and its discontents, finding the real me "Baby remember, everyone else is here because they can afford to be here, you are here because they want you here."*

*Those were the words my mother would say to me everyday as we drove a hour from Opa-Locka, Fl, to my school that cost roughly twenty three thousand dollars a year. That school was the first of the several schools whose tuitions would exceed my mother's yearly income on most years. It was also the first of many that would make me feel out of place at times. I'm Evelyn.*

**Looking glass:** What advice do you have for the three above?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking glass:** Now is the time to share your story... how are you going to begin?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# I am worthy

## My Personal Success Plan Commitment



Name: _____		Date Committed to Success: _____
<b>Success Mission Statement</b> (Intentions and Why):		
No game-playing here, I CHOOSE to succeed and here's how I AM going to do it:		
Throughout each workshop and beyond, I accept success is MY choice and I accept responsibility Success affects not just me, but also the following people in my life:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul> Through focus and single-mindedness, I am committed to success and now make an affirmation to myself and others that I <b><i>will do whatever it takes to be the person I am meant to be.</i></b>		
<b>Road to Success</b> (What you need to accomplish your mission)		
Goal: _____	Target Date: _____	Actions to be taken: _____
Goal: _____	Target Date: _____	Actions to be taken: _____
<b>Family Goals</b> (What needs to be done to reestablish or tighten your family unit)		
Goal: _____	Target Date: _____	Actions to be taken: _____
<b>Professional Goals</b> (What you need to further your mission)		
Goal: _____	Target Date: _____	Actions to be taken: _____
Goal: _____	Target Date: _____	Actions to be taken: _____
<b>Affirmations Guiding Freedom's Journey</b> (Detail POSITIVE commitments/promises to yourself)		
• _____		
• _____		
• _____		
• _____		
<b>I AM WORTHY</b>		
I am committing to these goals and will review My Personal Success Plan on a regular basis, updating as necessary.		
Signed: _____		
Date: _____		

**Affirmation:** I am worthy (commit by writing on line below).

• \_\_\_\_\_



**Why Are You Here?**

Though we have different reasons for being in a not-so great situation, we all have one common goal: finding respect, acceptance, and success (we're not so different than anyone else).

**Looking glass:** By way of introduction, detail (and explain why) three things most important to you."

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Here's the situation, what's important and what defines success is different things to different people.

**Legend:**

- "Success is day to day. If I make today without getting into trouble, that's what I'm talking about."

**Evelyn:**

- "Success is about feeling good with my life. I'm looking to find a decent job when I graduate where I'm treated with respect, and take things slow. I want my mom to be proud of me. To me, that's success."

**Looking glass:** To make sure we're on the right path, what three things do you need to feel successful?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Hard Truth:** Success is NOT a guarantee. Success is not given. Success is active. **Success is earned. Success is created.**



Consciousness IQ: Success IS created. Success can be about growing personally and should not be defined by rigid standards of wealth, fame, or power.

**Looking glass:** To you, what is meant by "success can be about growing personally and it should not be defined by rigid standards of wealth, fame, or power?"

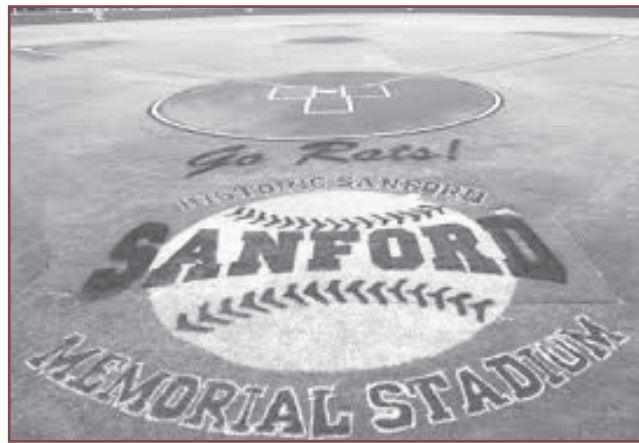
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Getting out of prison is success, as Duck knows, but that was just the beginning.

**Doing time:** "Nothing was more intense than approaching the door for the final time. I grabbed mis-matched clothes, got a bus voucher, and held my head high. No greater feeling at the time. Looking back, I don't see release as a success. Release meant I let people down. After all, If I had done right, I would have never been sent to prison in the first place. This failure will haunt me every moment of my life."

**Duck**





Getting out makes life harder by throwing choices at you by the second. In prison, choices were easier and usually made for you: Staying in the block for hours just to go to the commissary and then standing in another line for hours to purchase a pint of ice cream, two cans of spam, and a loaf of day-old bread? Life was simple... boss man made sure choices were not an option.

Duck

**Looking glass:** Choices are an option. What choices do you want to make in life? Explain.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

On commissary day I'd stand in line for hours just for a chance to get in the commissary line. It was XXXX most the time, hurry to stop. But it sure was a good downing a bluebell once back in the cell.

Duck

**Looking glass:** Other than the obvious, what brought you here? *The real reasons.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Truth is, getting out of prison or getting out after an arrest means life never will be the same .



Here's YOUR reality, in case you thought otherwise, **society doesn't owe you a new chance.** Matter of fact, right or wrong, society is not looking too kindly at you right now; accept it.

**Looking glass:** We'll go into this deeper as we go, but for now, what are three things you can do NOW to shape the story of your success?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Affirmation:** I control MY success (commit by writing on line below).

- \_\_\_\_\_

*I control MY success*





**Standing at the Counter**

Imagine you were working at a bus terminal. One morning a person comes up to the window to purchase a ticket. There are many buses heading out so you ask this person where he is going or if this a one way trip.

*“Don’t care, anywhere but here. Just give me a ticket.”*

Unsure how to respond, you ask this person about his destination once again.

*“Anywhere will do,”* he responds without showing any interest about where he may end up.

You hesitate, stare at this person with disbelief and say. *“I’m sorry sir, I need some details as to which city you plan on heading out to, what time, or at least what day, and will you be coming back?”*

*“I don’t care,”* this person repeats several times and adds *“I just want to get away, you choose for me.”*

Two minutes later, this person walks away with a ticket to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, a place he’s never been.

The next person in line walks to your window and says: *“I’d like a ticket to San Diego, California for this 1:35 pm, returning on the fourth at 5:30 pm. If possible, a window seat and with as few stops as possible.”*

**Looking glass:** In your opinion, which person is more likely to end up where he always wanted to go and has envisioned how his life will be? Why?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

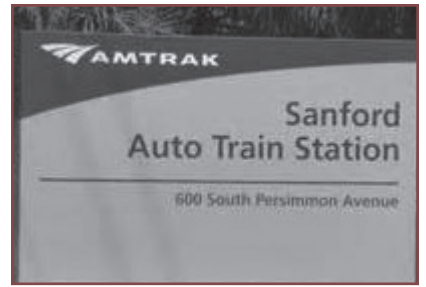
**In life, knowing where you want to go increases the chances that you will get there.**

**Looking glass:** Comparing the two people above to your destiny, which do you identify with and why?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Discovering and bringing dreams to life takes action on your part. Truth is, no matter what brought you here, to this place, cannot be changed. What can be changed is where you go from here.

Take a few moments and on the space below, draw (using pictures) an image of a person standing at the bus terminal. Once you draw this person, place a huge X across the image and then draw the destiny YOU have chosen.



Society doesn't care if you're sorry.  
Society only cares that you've changed.  
Society doesn't care if you've paid your dues.

Now that we got that in the open, time to deal with it and survive, recognizing acceptance and approval MUST come from yourself before anyone or anything else.



Consciousness IQ: Gratitude is the key to happiness. It allows you to see what you have in life and focuses your energy on creating more gratitude in life.

What does the concept of gratitude mean to you? How can gratitude be a key to happiness?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

The first topic in this book discussed the issue of change... Let's take a look at you and change.

For the record, do you want change? If so, why? If not, why not?

- \_\_\_\_\_

For the record, are you willing to change?

- \_\_\_\_\_

For the record, what are you willing to do to change?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

For the record, change isn't cheap... but it IS the gift you give yourself that keeps you successful and free.

**Cheryl:**

- *"When I got into trouble the first time, I gamed myself into thinking I could go back to the same things and would make it. I was smarter out of juvi. I didn't change the way I lived or how I looked at myself."*

**Legend:**

- *"I know I can't go back to a life before the getting into trouble, so what's the use of letting it control me now. I'll be who I will always be. I'm making a commitment to not XXXX up. That's the change that will change my life."*



**Looking glass:** The person looking back is not the me I want my family to see. Here's two things I will change and those around me will see who I have become.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



To move ahead, you need to be fully aware of exactly where you are, where you want to go, and what's it going to take to get there.

**Looking glass:** To get where I want to go, I'll have to change these two habits:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



The answers to the previous questions say a lot about you. One of the most important things to think about is **“what got you here?”** Truth is, if you don't know what got you to where you are at this moment, you are bound to earn a Blue-Bird ticket soon enough...

**Looking glass:** What do you think are three main things that got you here? Don't be sly and say getting caught, bad luck, or the man was out to get you... be real.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Doing time:** *“In Harris County, Texas, I was classified to Double Door Lock Down, Segregation. We got out of our cells for 1 hour a week for recreation and 5 minutes every night for a shower in the middle of the cell block. Everyone could see you. It was my first introduction to how hard time was going to be; it sucked.”*

**Stick**

**Looking glass:** What are three things (other than yourself) holding you back from being your best?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking glass:** How are excuses keeping you from being the person you want to be?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking glass:** What things “should” I do but put off until another day? What do you do instead?

- Should have done: \_\_\_\_\_
- What I did instead: \_\_\_\_\_
- Should have done: \_\_\_\_\_
- What I did instead: \_\_\_\_\_
- Should have done: \_\_\_\_\_
- What I did instead: \_\_\_\_\_

I'll Get to it Tomorrow



Consciousness IQ: True success is creating a positive reaction to life no matter what the circumstances are. Many people learned to overcome and this attitude is what made them who they are today.

Key terms defined:

Procrastination: Putting off what one should do NOW until a later time.

Evelyn:

- *"I refused to go outside for over five weeks after the arrest. I knew I had to but all I could think about was my shame. After another three weeks, I knew I had to forgive myself and accept what needs to be done. My pastor helped and carried me at first. Now I have courage and forgiveness."*



**Looking glass:** Procrastination has a range of causes. What do you think are the two most common reasons to hold off doing what needs to be done until a later time (especially for youths in a similar situation)?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

If you said "**fear of failure**," you are right. Truth is, what could be more intimidating than deciding what to do and then actually reaching out to grab that dream? And unlike your probation schedule, working on your dream has no deadline, so dream planning (and dream doing) can slide from week to week unnoticed.



Consciousness IQ: It is not failure that defines us, but our attitude, how we internalize life, and how we allow it to show us personal growth and character.

**Looking glass:** Describe a time when you were told "failure" defined who you were. How did that make you feel and what did you do about it?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking glass:** Are you ACTIVELY reaching out to grab your dream? Explain your answer:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Visualization:** What's holding you back from total commitment? What's biggest fears?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Doing time:** *"Never in a hurry to get things done in prison. Nothing couldn't wait until tomorrow. Seems like now that I'm out, I don't have time to get anything done because things are going fast. Kicking back and waiting is how I catch up. Just the way it is."*

Stick





Overcoming procrastination is an action (you take).

**Looking glass:** What’s your plan to stop stopping and getting what needs to be done, done?

- I will \_\_\_\_\_
- I will \_\_\_\_\_
- I will \_\_\_\_\_
- I will \_\_\_\_\_
- I will \_\_\_\_\_

It’s common to hold off doing things that are uncomfortable, too hard, or just not on our list of things to do. Problem is, ignoring or not doing what needs to be done does not make the issue or problem go away. More often than not, putting things to the side makes the problem worse.

**Looking glass:** Detail two things you typically hold off doing even though you know it must be done and then explain why you put these things off (could be studying, house chores, volunteering).

- Hold off doing: \_\_\_\_\_
- I hold off because: \_\_\_\_\_
- Hold off doing: \_\_\_\_\_
- I hold off because: \_\_\_\_\_

One of the reasons we tend to hold off doing things that we should be doing is a lack of self-discipline.

**Looking glass:** What does the term self-discipline mean to you? Give an example of a time/situation when a lack of self-discipline resulted in a not-so great outcome.

- Self-discipline means: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- A not-so-great outcome due to my lack of self-discipline was: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



Consciousness IQ: Personal responsibility is key to owning our lives.

**Looking glass:** Describe a time where you refused to take personal responsibility even though you were really responsible for what happened. What was the result?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



*My mother is an alcoholic and my father till this day is still in prison. As a youngin in the hood, all I knew was what they portrayed to be cool. That was getting money, and the way to do so was to sell drugs. Which in my eyes I want now because my father sold drugs and made a lot of money. However, he always explained to me "this aint what it is" and at a young age I was able to acknowledge it. So with that being said on my mother's behalf she wasn't able to be there for me like she could have been because she was either too busy making sure bills were paid so me and my little sister had a roof over our head or she was too drunk to be awake.*

**Legend**



**Visualization:** What is YOUR Dream?

- My dream is to: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Being human means we dream of how we want our future to be while having a tendency to use the past as a way to justify not being able to reach our dreams. For many, being arrested has a way of chaining our hopes and desires for a successful future... but that's just an excuse and lack of self-discipline.

Good news, throughout these workshops we will be looking at ways to break these excuses while finding paths to dream fulfillment. It won't be easy but it can become YOUR reality.

**Visualization:** What is the meaning of life?

- \_\_\_\_\_

**Looking glass:** What do you think your purpose is?

- \_\_\_\_\_

**Deal with It:** If you are consistently anxious, bored, frustrated, etc., consider the underlying cause. Are you afraid of failure? Are you involved in too many activities, not leaving enough time to succeed in any of them? Do you have the information and tools you need? If you find patterns of behavior, set specific plans for dealing with them...and get help if you need to!

**Doing time:** *"First time I got out, it was easy not to do things I didn't want to do. I told myself I deserved a break from it all and kicking back was what I needed. After a couple months of kicking back, I got caught in the excuse and couldn't get out. Seemed to easy to do nothing; fooled myself into believing."*

**Stick**

At the end of the day, we all need to stand up and complete tasks we don't enjoy. Beat the procrastination habit and you'll at least get through it with as little discomfort as possible, and with a sense of achievement for beating down the procrastination demons!

**Looking glass:** An effective way of completing tasks we don't enjoy is to put the task on paper; place two tasks you are avoiding and the reasons for the procrastination:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

