
This Reentry Packet has been customized for: Blount County Sheriff's Office TN

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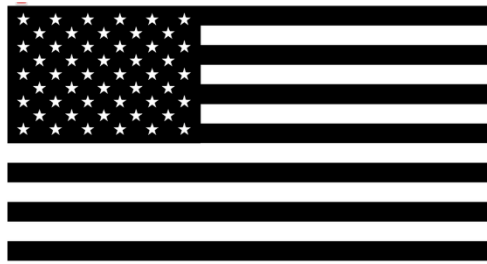
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Just a few resources from our

Veteran's Page

Thank you for your service!

fairshake.net/veterans



This page was created to assist veterans who are, or have been, incarcerated. There are several resources on this page that may help reduce the pressures associated with reentry. Sadly, very few organizations provide mailing addresses any more. Fair Shake's Veteran's page is actually pretty large, but it has very few mailing addresses. Fair Shake continues to hold the Resource Guides that were available from 2012 -2016. Many of the organizations are still in operation so it's worth it to check them out. Resource guides like that are just not available anymore. (They are in the software application, too, which is FREE to all prisons and jails.)

VA | Vets.gov

Get the VA benefits you've earned

www.vets.gov

All resources available online only.

Disability Benefits, Health Care Benefits, Education Benefits, Housing Assistance, Careers and Employment, Life Insurance, Pension Benefits, Burials and Memorials, Family and Caregiver Benefits (Links to the forms are available on the Fair Shake website.)

Wounded Warrior Project

The WWP mission is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors who incurred a physical or mental injury, illnesses, or wound, co-incident to your military service on or after September 11, 2001.

Wounded Warrior Project
4899 Belfort Road, Suite 300
Jacksonville, FL 32256

ph: 877-832-6997

www.woundedwarriorproject.org



Other resources found on the Veteran's Page:

Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Initiative www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) www.benefits.va.gov/vow/tap.asp

How Incarceration Affects Eligibility for VA Benefits
www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-incarcerated.asp

VA Benefits for Homeless Veterans

www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-homeless.asp

VETNET: A Career Service for Those Who've Served

www.vetnethq.com

Helmets to Hardhats: helmetstohardhats.org

Note: very few organizations offer mailing addresses any more. Much more information, including brochures and forms, can be found on the Fair Shake website and in the FREE software. (It's free for all prisons and jails to load onto any computer and share with you.)

Fair Shake is an OPEN resource. It is FREE for everyone to use!

Find A Job

Finding employment is one of the top priorities of most people in society. Finding employment after incarceration is not only pivotal for reentry success, it can also be a requirement for parole or a halfway house.

It is important to find satisfaction in our jobs, but sometimes we must temper our wishes with our needs.

When we have to take a job that we are not excited about now, we can leverage the feelings of dissatisfaction to push us toward whatever it is that we need to do to find satisfaction. These things may include: submitting applications for jobs that we really want but may not be available now, or trying to work in an organization that has a similar philosophy to our own so we can move within the organization to a job that is more fulfilling, or perhaps we need to get the education required for certain positions, or maybe what we really want is to start our own business but need to work a 'day job' until our idea provides enough income for us to thrive.

Knowing there are many avenues to employment, Fair Shake offers several ways for you to engage within our website.

Remember: most jobs get filled without ever being listed on a website!

When searching for employment, remember to consider what it is you want to do. What type of business would you like to work in, and in which positions do you think you would dowell? What kind of jobs might you enjoy doing? Keep your eyes on the prize! Even if you must work in a job you don't care for now, remember that you are building character, patience, tolerance and REFERENCES. The image to the right is what our "Get A Job" page looks like today. This page, like all pages on the Fair Shake website, is constantly evolving. Please let us know what you think!


Fair Shake Employment Pages

Find a Job

Find a Job (or Start Your Own Business)


Job Search Engines

All search engines available online only



job-applications.com

#1 Independent Online Job Application Website


We offer links to online application pages and printable job application forms from our comprehensive database. We feature information on 1,500 popular companies in major industries such as fast food, retail, grocery stores, hotels and restaurants. Each company listed has a page which includes company history, service offered and common job opportunities. <https://www.job-applications.com/>


[WayUp](https://www.wayup.com/)


We feel strongly that opportunity belongs to all, and that an individual should never be limited by their economic status, race, sexual orientation, gender, who you know, where you went to school, or where you're from.


[Glassdoor](https://www.glassdoor.com/)

Glassdoor is one of the fastest growing jobs and recruiting sites. It holds a growing database of millions of company reviews, CEO approval ratings, salary reports, interview reviews and questions, benefits reviews, office photos and more. No other site allows you to see which employers are hiring, what it's really like to work or interview there according to employees, and how much you could earn.



[Jobs for Felons Hub](http://jobsforfelonshub.com/)

A resource website created by a few folks who have personally watched their loved ones struggle to get a job due to having a felony. They share their free reentry employment guide here. Check out their website or their Facebook page for more information! <http://jobsforfelonshub.com/start-here/> or Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jobsforfelonshub>



[Successful Release](https://successfulrelease.com/)

We have personally contacted each company for information regarding jobs for felons. <https://successfulrelease.com/jobs-for-felons/>

Guide to Finding a Job Through Networking <https://successfulrelease.com/who-hires-felons-where-to-network-to-find-jobs-for-felons/>



[Formerly Incarcerated College Graduate Network](https://www.ficgn.org/job-leads)

Discover career-related jobs that welcome formerly incarcerated applicants and see the value in your lived experience.




Jobline

Toll-Free Number: 1-800-414-6748 If you are looking for employment, Jobline is a free public service available on the telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. New jobs are listed on the system each day, and jobs that are filled are removed. All that is required is a touch-tone telephone to establish your personalized job-search profile. The system is designed for you to use each day during your job search.



USA Jobs

An official website of the United States government <https://www.usajobs.gov/>




O*Net

Occupation Search! <https://www.onetonline.org>

All of these websites have thousands of jobs available at different employability levels:


Indeed.com Simplyhired.com Monster.com Linkedup.com

Non-profit Job Search Engines:



Idealist


www.idealists.org Jobs, Internships and Volunteer Opportunities (that can sometimes turn in to jobs...)



Jobs That Help

<https://www.jobsthathelp.com/>


WISCONSIN JOB SEEKERS! Looking for a meaningful career that makes a positive difference in your community? Whether you are an experienced professional or an enthusiastic newcomer, you have come to the right place!



Encore


www.encore.org

Jobs for people 50+ yrs of age



Philanthropy News Digest

Philanthropy News Digest: all levels of non-profit jobs. <http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/jobs>



GIGS: Single or multiple day opportunities

For an interesting temp option, you can check out the Craigslist in your area under 'Gigs'. You'll find opportunities that include moving furniture, doing yard work for a few hours, car dismantling, CDL temporary jobs, staff for weekend events, handyman, cleaning, carpentry, welding, electrical, plumbing, painting, brand ambassadors (reps) and much more. Many of these gigs have opportunities that can turn into jobs.

Keep the author's intent in mind when searching on Craig's list. Beware that some listings are quite sketchy...

<https://newyork.craigslist.org/>

Gary's Job Board: Truck Drivers wanted!

Gary can find you a better truck driving job, with or without a CDL.

Website: <http://www.garysjobboard.com/>

More information about trucking / driving jobs:

<https://www.fairshake.net/employment-trucking-driving-jobs/>

Prepare For Work!

www.fairshake.net/prepare-for-work/

- Resume Writing Ideas
- Letter of Explanation
- Prepare For Your Interview
- ... and much more!

Employer Support

Give employers tools and information to help them hire you.

Share this document with your potential employers to help them hire you.


Bonding, WOTC, and EEOC filers

- You are bondable
- Federal Bonding Filer
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit Filer
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Background Checks
- More on Background Checks: What Applicants Need to Know
- Formerly Incarcerated Individuals' Job Restrictions (US and Wisconsin) Created by the WI-DDC

US Department of Labor CareerOneStop

Formerly Incarcerated Reemployment

<http://www.careeronestop.org/ExOffender/index.aspx>



Watch The Video!

1-877-348-0502 TTY: 1-877-348-0501

Career OneStop Locations:

Alabama Louisiana Ohio

Start Your Own Business

It's not easy, but for the creative, courageous and tenacious, it's often the right thing to do. Here are a few documents to help you get started.

From the Small Business Administration

Business Plan Template

Prepare For Work

There are many ways to approach employment. Some people 'know somebody', sometimes we get lucky and meet our new boss or coworkers where we volunteer or through a recreational activity...but most of us will write resumes, find available jobs online or through an employment agency, fill out applications and then endure one or many job interviews.

Thanks to the generosity of several resume' writing professionals and job readiness coaches, we've assembled what we've found to support you as you build your resume', your interview skills, and your confidence!


While the information here addresses several of the concerns of job seekers, we want to encourage you to also consider topics from the "Free School" section of this book, the website or the software, to support you through the inevitable challenges that will occur as you create desirable outcomes.

Please remember: many employers want to hear more about how you built yourself up while you were incarcerated than they do about your past. Keep the conversation positive!

They want to know that you care. That you will be a good listener and team member, if you can embrace the company culture, learn, follow through and get things done. They want to know that you are interested and motivated.

Prepare for Work

Everyone prepares for work in a different way. Fair Shake offers many tools for you to use in the way that you choose to prepare for temporary jobs or long-term careers.



O*Net
Occupation Search! <https://www.onetonline.org>

The Resume Writing Academy

www.resumewritingacademy.com

Resume Writing This document generously shared with Fair Shake by The Resume Writing Academy thanks to: Wendy Enelow, MRW, CCM, CPRW, JCTC and Louise Kursmark, MRW, CCM, CPRW, JCTC

- Resume Examples
- Top Tips & Techniques for Writing Best-in-Class Resumes
- Free 78-minute resume writing audio webcast with printable handouts.
- Best Resumes and Letters for Ex-Offenders

A resume guide that addresses special employment issues facing ex-offenders.

Raw Resume

<http://www.rawresume.com/write-resume-definitive-guide>

How to Write a Great Resume: The Definitive Guide This guide will take you from start to finish through all the aspects of a great resume and help you transform your current one into an interview-winning resume. Written for beginner and intermediate job seekers. Print or read The Complete Guide to A Winning Resume - Cheat Sheet to get started. Here I am - Resume Writing That Gets Noticed. The Complete Guide to a Winning Resume Cheat-Sheet

Discussing Your History in the Interview

- Discussing Criminal History in the Interview

Other Employment Support

Jails to Jobs

http://www.jailstojobs.org/html/help_with_new_entry.html

Jails to Jobs is an organization that gives ex-offenders the tools they need to find employment. On this website you'll find a step-by-step plan to follow as you carry out your job search.

Livecareer.com

Livecareer.com offers great tools and resources for exploring careers, whether you're searching for a new job or considering a career change. - See more at: <https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/career-exploration>

how2become.com

How2become.com offers a resource guide that provides detailed insight into how to answer certain questions, body language and more.

<https://www.how2become.com/resources/interview-skills/>

Fair Shake Employment Documents

Available Offline and Online

- Employment Tips
- Resume Guide
- Interview Tips
- Interview Questions for You to Ask
- Sample Interview Questions
- Computer and Internet Tips
- Letter of Explanation
- Functional Resume Example
- Accomplishments and Skills Worksheet
- Employer Support
- Resume Examples
- Favorite Verbs for Your Resume
- Sample Employment Application
- Cover Letter | Thank You Letter
- Self Employment

Employer Support!

Share this document with your potential employers to help them hire you.

Bonding, WOTC, and EEOC fliers

- You are bondable | Federal Bonding Flier
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit Flier
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Background Checks
- More on Background Checks: What Applicants Need to Know
- Formerly Incarcerated Individuals' Job Restrictions (US and Wisconsin) Created by the WI-DOJ

Start Your Own Business

It's not easy, but for the creative, courageous and tenacious, it's often the right thing to do. Here are a few documents to help you get started.

- From the Small Business Administration
- Small Business Administration: Start A Business!
- From the Consumer Information Center: Planning and Goal Setting for A Small Business
- Minding Your Own Business
- How to Write a Business Plan
- From the Fair Shake Reentry Packet
- Self Employment

US Department of Labor Career Onestop

Formerly Incarcerated Reemployment

<http://www.careeronestop.org/ExOffender/index.aspx>

careeronestop

Watch The Video!

1-877-348-0502 TTY: 1-877-348-0501

Career Onestop - Locations:

Alabama	Louisiana	Ohio
Alaska	Maine	Oklahoma
Arizona	Maryland	Oregon
Arkansas	Massachusetts	Pennsylvania
California	Michigan	Rhode Island
Colorado	Minnesota	South Carolina
Connecticut	Mississippi	South Dakota
Delaware	Missouri	Tennessee
Florida	Montana	Texas
Georgia	Nevada	Vermont
Hawaii	New Hampshire	Virginia
Idaho	New Jersey	Washington
Illinois	New Mexico	West Virginia
Indiana	New York	Wisconsin
Iowa	North Carolina	Wyoming
Kansas	North Dakota	
Kentucky		

Career Onestop

Put together a successful job search with resources on resumes, interviewing, networking and finding job openings.

<https://www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/job-search.aspx>

Everything in this section available Online Only

- America's Service Locator** connects individuals to employment and training opportunities available at local American Job Centers. www.ServiceLocator.org
- America's Career InfoNet** occupation and industry information, salary data and career exploration assistance. www.CareerInfoNet.org
- mySkills myFuture** helps career changers find new occupations to explore. www.mySkillsmyFuture.org
- Veterans ReEmployment** is a one-stop website for employment, training, and financial help after military service. www.CareerOneStop.org/ReEmployment/Veterans

About The Fair Shake Personal Web Page

Personal Web Page Example

- Members differentiate themselves from other applicants!
- Members share information easily. No need to carry documents; they are stored in their account.
- Shows dedication to reentry success and provides a place to demonstrate interest in taking a proactive approach by sharing skills, character traits, and intentions.
- Employers and property managers can get to know members comfortably, reducing likelihood of auto-dismissal based on felony history.
- Fair Shake Member Card provides member information, url and password to the member's page.
- Member Web Page password is changeable! Access only given to current password holders.
- Fair Shake can verify references, even for volunteer work. Check out our example Personal Web Page | Personal Web Page Flyer | Fair Shake Brochure

Also available to Fair Shake members is a free email account, data storage and tutorials to learn to use electronic tools.

National Resources and Information

Advice from a Senior U.S. Probation Officer Workforce Development Coordinator

<http://community.ncdo.gov/forums/p/46711/85165>

- Federal Bureau of Prisons Employment Information Handbook
- Background Checks - EEOC

Veterans Employment Assistance: The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was established to meet the needs of veterans during their period of transition into civilian life by offering job-search assistance and related services. The guide books below were created specifically to support you by applying

Working Through Depression

Depression *noun* Severe, typically prolonged, feelings of despondency and dejection, typically felt over a period of time and accompanied by feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy. (source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)

As Americans, it is common to feel like we are supposed to be happy. TIME magazine* recently announced “Americans are wired to be happy”, and reminded us that we made the pursuit of happiness “a central mandate of the national character” when we declared it a basic human right.

With so much emphasis placed on feeling good, it should come as no surprise that when we don’t feel happy, we may feel like something is wrong.

In fact, when we feel lonely, inadequate or disheartened as we search for meaning in our lives, our friends and family and even professionals often encourage us to strive to feel good again - as soon as possible - whether through distractions (shopping, media and superficial social connections, etc) or pain relievers (drugs, alcohol, food). It is rare to receive sympathy and support to simply *feel* our discomfort as we reflect, contemplate, grow, and become stronger and more capable through a natural and important process.

When we experience painful emotions we often feel alone. Sometimes we think we are the only person who feels this sad, hurt, alone or lost. However, people all over the world experience these difficult feelings.

Painful emotions are not bad; they are actually powerful guides to self-fulfillment.

- They help us clarify our values.
- They help us find meaning in our lives and see our unique perspective and qualities.
- They allow us to stop moving forward for a moment so we can reflect and think critically.
- They can motivate us through tough spots to more deliberately plot out our life course.
- They help us understand the suffering of others; and realize that we are not alone when we suffer.

All of our emotions - the pleasant ones *and* the difficult ones - are vital for our well-being!

We will most likely feel grief, loss, powerlessness, disrespected, compromised, inauthentic, abandoned, anxious, overwhelmed, unworthy, melancholy, or even a sense of hopelessness at some point in our lives, yet none of us will experience depression in the same way as anyone else. The good news is: we can work through most forms of depression without drugs. Everything we need is either already in our possession or can be found in the natural world around us.

There are many books, classes, groups, articles, and television shows on depression. The content of this brief document does not support or refute any existing information. Our sole intention here is to reinforce a positive and enabling perspective about growing through tough emotions rather than denying them through distractions or pain relievers. We grow in important ways through our human challenges.

Depression is related to our thinking; our perception of our memories, our fears, our failures, our hopes. It’s mostly a modern illness and has been growing consistently since the industrial age which, paradoxically, is celebrated for making our lives easier. According to Dr. Stephen Ilardi, author of *The Depression Cure*, indigenous cultures – who are dedicated to living in connection to their environment and to each other – do not experience depression.

When we feel sad, hopeless or depressed, we often feel like we don’t have a choice in how we experience these feelings....but we almost always do. We can’t eliminate depression by pretending we can ‘let it go’ without effort. We begin to rise out of it by looking at our situation through a different perspective. We can see different perspectives by considering philosophical, psychological and sociological concepts. This sounds rather ‘academic’, but we’ve been using techniques identified in these fields of study everyday since we were very young.

* TIME magazine: July 8, 2013

Below are just a few of these perspectives that we use everyday:

Pessimism vs Optimism: (inspired by Dr. Martin Seligman)

Optimism *noun* Hopefulness and confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something. (source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)

Pessimism *noun* A tendency to see the worst aspect of things or believe that the worst will happen; a lack of hope or confidence in the future.

(source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)

Optimists believe that tough times are temporary, that hurdles build character and that most problems are surmountable. An optimistic perspective uses a Specific, External and Temporary lens (see below). We are optimists when we can see solutions, and also when we realize situations will change and beneficial opportunities will again present themselves.

Optimism is a tool with a certain clear set of benefits: it fights depression, it promotes achievement and produces better health. ~ Dr. Martin Seligman

Pessimists focus on what's wrong and what's difficult; they believe they are victims. They blame others for their situation. They believe that they are inadequate to fend off tough times, which are constantly threatening. A pessimistic perspective looks through a Permanent, Personal, and Pervasive (PPP) lens. We are pessimists when we believe we are incapable of doing whatever it is we need / want to do, when we blame outside forces for our situation or experience, when we want to give up, and when we believe we cannot create the life we want.

The difference between Optimistic (SET) vs. Pessimistic (PPP) perspectives:

Pervasiveness: Specific (*I'm great at fixing bikes.*) vs. Universal (*I can fix things.*)

Personal: External (*I have no luck.*) vs. Internal (*I have no talent.*)

Permanence: Temporary (*I am not good at this right now.*) vs. Permanent (*I am bad at this.*)

Hope: Hopeful (*I'll be able to fix this.*) vs. Hopeless (*It can't be fixed, I have to buy a new one.*)

Each perspective can be interpreted as a personal belief system, a self-fulfilling prophesy. Most of us are both pessimists *and* optimists, depending on the situation and our perception of our capabilities. Just as we can pick up good habits and let go of bad habits, so, too, can we learn to be optimistic and to drop pessimism.

And as with any habit, we can improve our ability and change our perspective over time by staying focused on meaning, values, and the long-term results.

To lift ourselves out of depression, and switch from a pessimistic to an optimistic perspective, we need to have faith.

Filters of Faith:

Faith *noun* Complete trust or confidence in someone or something
(source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)

We have faith when we believe in something even when we don't have proof.

Example: I have faith that I will get to the grocery store without getting into an accident.

Faith itself does not require belief in a particular religion; but belief in any religion requires *faith*!

To switch from a pessimistic perspective to an optimistic one, we need to have faith that optimism will help us reach our goal; and that pessimism is not how things really are. Remember *The Little Engine That Could?* "I think I can, I think I can." We are capable of doing very difficult things!

Can you **believe**

- that you have inherent worth, and that you are as important and valuable as everyone else?
- that your situation, problem or feeling is temporary?
- that a series of complex circumstances is what brought you to this point; not who you are?
- that all things change?...and that your situation is temporary and you will be able to get through it?
- that you have the power to change your attitude, your perception and your opportunities?

Dr. Stephen Ilardi, author of *The Depression Cure*, has been inspired by studying the resilience found in aboriginal groups who rarely suffer from depression. He suggests we integrate the following six elements into our lifestyle. Try the item that feels the most comfortable for you...and after a while add another. After a week or so, reflect on how you feel. Then add a 3rd and reflect on that experience, etc.

1. The Omega-3-Rich Diet: Sources of omega-3 essential fatty acids include fish, kidney and pinto beans, soybeans, canola and flaxseed oils, walnuts and vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, spinach, and salad greens.

2. Exercise: Dr. Stephen Ilardi says: *Even moderate physical activity - brisk walking three times a week - has been shown in two landmark studies to fight depression as effectively as Zoloft. Simply put: exercise changes the brain.* You can start with small increments of time. Make exercise one of your healthy habits!

3. Plenty of natural sunlight: Get outside, even when it's cloudy. Sunlight supports the creation of vitamin D, a necessary nutrient for mental health and strong bones.

4. Quality Sleep: Sun, fresh air, exercise, and fully engaging in life will help you get a good night's sleep.

5. Social Connections: One of our most basic human needs is belonging. Calls and letters with family and friends, participating in team sports and/or book clubs, volunteering and helping others all contribute to the feeling we belong and are cared about. Another basic need is independence. Remember to take thoughtful and creative time just for you, then you can share your thoughtful and creative self with others!

6. Participation in Meaningful Tasks: This leave little time for negative thoughts. Consider concepts in philosophy. Another basic human need is having a sense of purpose, self-worth, and meaning. We determine these by our thoughts; we demonstrate them through our actions.

Inspiration from great thinkers:

"Participating in meaningful tasks" has been a central theme to many philosophers, psychotherapists and other great thinkers, and has played an important role in of the process of reducing or transforming suffering for thousands of years.

Buddhism, a 2500 year old philosophy practiced like a religion, focuses on creating a meaningful life to alleviate suffering. By studying Buddhist ideas, we can learn to understand why we suffer. People can participate in any religion and still benefit from The Four Noble Truths:

First Noble Truth: To live is to experience physical and psychological suffering. We have to endure physical suffering like sickness, injury, tiredness, old age and eventually death; we have to endure psychological suffering like loneliness, frustration, fear, embarrassment, disappointment, anger, etc.

Second Noble Truth: All suffering is caused by craving. (Getting what you want does not guarantee happiness / satisfaction). Rather than constantly struggling to get what you want, try to modify your wanting. Wanting deprives us of contentment and happiness.

The Third Noble Truth: Suffering can be overcome and happiness attained.

The Fourth Noble Truth: This is the path leading to the overcoming of suffering. This path is called the Noble Eightfold Path and consists of Perfect Understanding, Perfect Thought, Perfect Speech, Perfect Action, Perfect Livelihood, Perfect Effort, Perfect Mindfulness, and Perfect Concentration.

It's easy to find out more about Buddhism. Hundreds of books are available.

Some Buddhist authors include: Thích Nhất Hạnh, Pema Chodron, the 14th Dalai Lama and Alan Watts

Friedrich Nietzsche, the late 19th century German Philosopher offers some bolstering quotes:

- *To live is to suffer; to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering.*
- *He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.*
- *That which does not kill us makes us stronger.*

Victor Frankl – Psychiatrist, neurologist, Holocaust survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning* has many empowering thoughts on this topic. Frankl observed that depression is a person's 'warning light' that something is wrong and needs to be worked through. He believed that each of us needs to identify a purpose in life to feel positively about (meaning), and then immersively imagine that outcome. According to Frankl, the way a prisoner imagined the future affected his longevity.

*The one thing you can't take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me.
The last of one's freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance.*

He believed that meaning can be found through:

- Creativity and self-expression
- Interacting authentically with others and with our environment
- Changing our attitude when we are faced with a situation or circumstance we cannot change

More recently, **Dr. Martin Seligman**, considered the father of the Positive Psychology movement, professor emeritus at Pennsylvania State University, and author of many books on improving one's quality of life, believes that meaning and character play an important role in creating a satisfying life. Seligman articulated an account of the good life, which consists of five elements called the PERMA model:

P: Positive Emotion

For us to experience well-being, we need positive emotion in our lives. Any positive emotion like peace, gratitude, satisfaction, pleasure, inspiration, hope, curiosity, or love falls into this category – and the message is that it's really important to enjoy yourself in the here and now, just as long as the other elements of PERMA are in place.

E: Engagement

When we're truly engaged in a situation, task, or project, we experience a state of flow: time seems to stop, we lose our sense of self, and we concentrate intensely on the present. This feels really good! The more we experience this type of engagement, the more likely we are to experience well-being.

R: Positive Relationships

As humans, we are "social beings," and good relationships are core to our well-being. Time and again, we see that people who have meaningful, positive relationships with others are happier than those who do not. Relationships really do matter!

M: Meaning

Meaning comes from serving a cause bigger than ourselves. Whether this is a specific deity or religion, or a cause that helps humanity in some way, we all need meaning in our lives to have a sense of well-being.

A: Accomplishment/Achievement

Many of us strive to better ourselves in some way, whether we're seeking to master a skill, achieve a valuable goal, or win in some competitive event. As such, accomplishment is another important thing that contributes to our ability to flourish.

Quotes by Dr. Seligman:

- *We're not prisoners of the past.*
- *Just as the good life is something beyond the pleasant life, the meaningful life is beyond the good life.*
- *We deprive our children, our charges, of persistence. What I am trying to say is that we need to fail, children need to fail, we need to feel sad, anxious and anguished. If we impulsively protect ourselves and our children, as the feel-good movement suggests, we deprive them of learning-persistence skills*
- *Self-esteem cannot be directly injected. It needs to result from doing well, from being warranted.*
- *Habits of thinking need not be forever. One of the most significant findings in psychology in the last twenty years is that individuals can choose the way they think.*

Positive self-talk you can try on to see if it fits: *Life is meaningful and engaging and human, even when it's hard. I will get through this, just like I've been able to get through so many other difficult things.*

We need: Food, air, water. These components will help to keep our bodies running, but our mind is a necessary part of our bodies and our mind is programmed with needs of its own.

We also need: To feel we are valuable. We need to be around others and to feel like we belong. At the same time, we need our independence! Being on our own helps us feel strong, capable, creative and unique.

Depression can happen when we don't believe we can change the course of our lives.

It can also happen when we feel we are incapable of doing things for ourselves.

Sometimes the source of suffering can come from our relationships to others. We may feel we don't fit in, or we are being used, or we feel like we are not valuable to others.

Sometimes we feel like all we need is a partner/lover/other intimate relationship to feel better about ourselves, but others cannot fill our inner void. Relationships can be supportive and beneficial; and they can also deplete our power and resources and challenge our self-worth. We must consider: *what must I give* and *what do I gain* by maintaining this relationship? Is it worth the cost? Am I valued, honored and respected? Can I offer the same? Remember:

- All relationships involve choices, compromises, and commitments (investments).
- We must weigh the degree to which we are willing to give up our authenticity and individuality to belong to a group or commit to an intimate relationship:
 - Do we raise the bar so high that no one is 'good enough' to be around us?
 - Do we drop the bar so low that we find we are involved with people who don't share our values, don't value us, or even abuse us or take us for granted?

Manufactured Desires

An especially tricky part to all of this is recognizing when marketers, TV personalities and even close family and friends try to influence our values, needs and desires to fit their motives or goals.

If we look deeper into our suffering we can find that some of the things we suffer from do not originate from our values, our needs or our desires, but are manufactured 'needs' as a result of the media's attempt to homogenize our fears and desires through news, TV shows, slick advertising and emotionally appealing marketing.

We are told we are inadequate, unsafe, unhealthy, and unattractive unless we purchase certain products, desire to look and think a certain way, or buy into fear. TV 'experts' are often just sales people wearing lab coats.

We take command of our lives when we raise our awareness and think critically about their intent. Do they really know what's best for us? When we know our core values, we can refer to them and hold them up to their attempts to influence our decisions. When we maintain control of our lives we feel strong, and when we feel strong, it is much harder to feel depressed and powerless. We are too busy driving our ship!

When we examine our core values, we realize that we know what's best for us. Our core values are necessary for healthy living; they help us make good decisions, gain confidence and fully engage our abilities.

Getting through...moment by moment...can be the hardest part. But we can do it!

Tips to encourage you during depression:

- Try to remember that how you are feeling is temporary and just your momentary perception, like a cloudy day seems to have no sun. The sun is there; we can have faith it will again brighten our day.
- Read uplifting and motivating books, articles, and Daily Motivators (www.greatday.com)
- Drink lots of water
- Start with small achievable goals and stay focused
- Talk with someone about your experience. Remember: you are not alone.
- Eat fruit, vegetables, and food high in Essential Fatty Acids
- Exercise outdoors! Get fresh air, sunlight and breathe deeply!
- Get involved in a meaningful, social activity such as volunteering to support your community.
- Have FAITH in yourself! You can conquer your depression and engage in life in a positive way!

Recommended reading:

Man's Search for Meaning.....Viktor Frankl PhD
"Learned Optimism" and "Flourish".....Martin Seligman, PhD
The Depression Cure.....Stephen Ilardi, PhD
Plato, not Prozac!.....Lou Marinoff, PhD
Books on Buddhism.....Thích Nhất Hạnh, Pema Chodron, Allan Watts
and many more

Managing Anger

Flying off the handle sometimes causes hammers and humans to lose their heads...as well as their effectiveness. ~ William Arthur Ward



Everyone gets angry.

We are all familiar with anger; we see it demonstrated frequently. We see angry people in TV shows and movies; we hear angry politicians and radio hosts. Sometimes we experience anger with others around us, and we also experience anger in ourselves.

People sometimes try to use anger to solve problems or to relieve stress...but that often creates more problems, more stress and even more anger.

We can't eliminate anger, but we can manage it. We can make it a useful tool instead of one that demolishes relationships and other things.

Anger is often glorified as a key to unlock hidden strength and passion. Anger *feels* powerful.

Power alone is not good or bad. We need to feel powerful to feel capable. Feeling powerful is an important element of our American cultural self-image. But power alone...without caring emotions such as reflection, kindness, and humility...can cloud our perception of situations, others, and ourselves.

When we feel painful emotions such as sorrow, or hurt, because we've been rejected, disrespected, offended, forgotten, etc., we can find ourselves feeling like we have a loss of power. To try to reduce our discomfort, sometimes we respond with a powerful emotion like anger.

It's hard for us to feel pain! We are 'wired' to go toward pleasure and away from pain. Anger feels like it stops pain - at least momentarily.

The process of dealing with painful emotions is very hard and requires a great deal of strength and self-control. We become more powerful, capable and intuitive as we develop deeper problem-solving skills and tools for life's constantly challenging situations. Used positively, anger can help us realize deeper feelings about things so we can construct ways to avoid anger in the future.

Processing anger-energy through 'venting' (to ourselves; not others!) can be beneficial for focusing on and clarifying a problem. If we can be critical and clear about what is going wrong, we can then drive ourselves to go deeper to get the picture of what it would look like to go 'right', and then we can make changes to turn the situation around. Once we deeply reflect on the situation, other people's points of view (if applicable), and our deeper feelings, then we can see what we can do to make things better. We can then show others how we'd like to be treated!

Many of us experience a great deal of discomfort when we disagree with others. Many of us were not taught the value of listening or engaging in friendly arguments or debates. We say we believe that another person's opinion can be as valid and 'right' as our own, but do we mean it? For *every* person? Believe it or not, it's possible for people with opposing view points to work together to create the best possible solutions!

Anger needs to be expressed, yet aggressive displays of anger can result in violent eruptions that further hurt us socially, mentally, and physically. We need to find ways to process our emotions effectively. An out-of-control outburst could cost us a job. Or worse.

A hammer is a great symbol for anger because hammers can demolish....and they can build!

When we feel our anger building we need to stop and recognize triggers that can seize control of our power.

When you feel anger building, try to remember to:

- Take a breath (or many!)
- Identify
 - o your TRIGGER (what upset you? And then look again...was it something deeper?)
 - o your FEELING (how do you feel about what is upsetting you?)
 - o your REASON (why does it bother you and what is the best way to resolve this?)

Then ask yourself some questions about how and when you get angry. Questions like:

- Do I always get angry about this issue?
- Could I have seen this coming?
- Could I have avoided feeling angry by taking a different approach to this situation?
- What is my goal here? What do I hope to achieve?

Blaming others for our anger or frustration seems like an easy way to solve our problem: we want to say that someone or something “did this to me”. But blaming leaves us powerless and ineffective! How can we expect a situation to improve - in the way we would like to see it improve - if we put the task on someone else?

Did you know that no one else can *make* us feel angry? We choose to respond with blame and/or anger...and we can choose a different response. We are FREE to improve our relationships and live without rage when we decide to deal with our feelings in effective and purposeful ways.

Consider deeply what makes you angry and why. DIG for the answer that will transform anger!

Here are a few examples:

Why do I feel angry when others try to tell me what to do?

- Do I feel disrespected? As if they think I haven't thought about something carefully?

Why do I feel angry when it feels like others don't listen to or acknowledge me?

- Do I believe they think that my opinion is not valid or important?

Why do I feel angry when others are not respectful of an agreement we made?

- Do I feel like they think I am less important than they are?

Why do I feel angry when I stub my toe?

- Am I embarrassed because I missed something right in front of me?

Why do I feel angry when other drivers make travel difficult?

- Do I feel they are selfish, dangerous, disrespectful, and not paying attention?

Can you find the solutions you are looking for in your answers?

Be aware of your temper: your 'anger energy'.

Here are some ideas to help you keep your temper under control:

- **Try the Thermometer Technique** - Imagine your temper is red mercury in a large thermometer. When you're HOT, don't react! Wait until you are 'cool' to respond.
- **Count to 10, or 100!** – Count...and think of a time when you were calm and relaxed....to take your mind out of the immediate situation. Counting is an anger management tip that has worked for centuries! The Roman poet Horace (65 - 8 BCE) said, "When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, one hundred."
- **Inhale deeply** - Can you breathe so deeply that you get clean air deep down into your belly? Walk outdoors if possible! Your brain and your body work better with fresh air and plenty of water. Be sure to communicate with anyone you might be in a confrontation with that you are not leaving the problem; you're just clearing your head.
- **Exercise!** - Daily exercise allows you to work out stress. When you have less stress, you will feel angry less often. Regular exercise, including yoga and meditation, help you stay centered and keep things in perspective.
- **Vent** - Finding a safe spot to articulate your feelings...and maybe even yell (I find this particularly effective when I hammer my finger) can relieve enough stress to see the problem - and the solution - more clearly. Do not 'blow off steam' when anyone is nearby. Instead, go to the basement alone, or ride your bike and talk to the wind, or even stomp on a few aluminum cans to relieve frustration.

Our best way of dealing with anger is to find ways to make it useful. A powerful example is when someone uses the energy from anger to find the courage they need to protect someone who is being harmed!

Be Careful - When anger turns into poison: Sometimes we think that being angry and bitter all the time means we are smart, savvy and aware of the ways in which people and the media want to persuade us; as if it shows we are 'on to them'. Soon we are cynical, crabby people and, although people may think we are smart, they also think we are 'haters' and don't want to hang out with us. It's hard to have fun with angry people.

Sue's Anger Story

I live in a small town. We see our neighbors out and about and everyone knows I frequently ride my bike on the nearby bike trail. My dentist has an office just across the street from our bike trail and sees me on it all the time. He also likes to exercise outdoors; he runs.

One day I went to see my dentist for a routine check up. I enjoy talking with the staff when I'm there. When he checks my teeth we often 'catch up' for a minute, too.

After one of these friendly little chats, my dentist stood up and told me that his white coat identifies him as a health authority and said: "in the interest of health I have to tell you that I think you should wear a helmet".

I told him that I consider wearing a helmet sometimes, but most of the time I am comfortable - and prefer riding – without one.

I wish our discussion would have stopped right there.

Instead, he continued by saying "It's not like you're going to find a date out there." *WHAT?* I sat there, stunned, and thought: *Did you just say that? To a paying customer??? Is that sexist, or just stupid?*

Apparently he did not think that was enough because he went on to say: "My wife just broke her pelvis riding her bike. Of course, the helmet did not protect her, but if she would have hit her head it would have." *REALLY???* Well, now I was outraged!!! I yelled at him in my mind: *Your wife's injury has NOTHING to do with wearing a helmet! You don't even know what kind of a rider I am! You don't know that I have fallen a lot and I know HOW to fall!*

Out loud I said "I know that you think you are showing me that you care..." but in my mind I thought: *but I will never sacrifice my ability, confidence or strength to pander to your controlling and unjustified fears.*

Even though I was piping mad, I held my tongue and went out for a bike ride. I talked sternly to myself - out loud - in to the wind. I may have cussed. I talked and talked ...to him...to me...to really work through my frustrations to understand WHY I was so angry and upset.

It all came flooding in: I was disrespected! I was treated like I was stupid! Like somehow being a dentist makes him a 'health authority' over me? Like I've never considered wearing a helmet before. Looking for a date? Really? He did not ask what I thought, he just told what he thought and expected me to comply.

So...what did I do? Well, it took me until my next appointment to decide.

I considered going in and talking with him. I also considered sending a letter stating that I was so offended that I will no longer be a patient. I considered making a point to have a talk with him the next time I go in for a check up. And then I considered saying nothing and just letting it go.

But wait! That answer was clearly *not* an option. I realized I needed to tell him that I want to be respected.

I mean, if I really want to resolve my anger - to eliminate this frustration of disrespect - well, then I must talk with him; to help him realize how to understand that 'caring' can feel an awful lot like 'controlling'. How could he know if he didn't hear my point of view? I realized he needed to hear how thin and lame his arguments were so he could see things differently, *and* respect that I am also a health authority...of me! I have been healthy for nearly all of my 50 years. So I resolved to discuss this with him during my next appointment.

I have also realized that the *KA-BAM* burst of 'anger energy' from my frustration would be best reserved for bike rides, walks and other forms of physical release.

I've been working on using my "angry energy" appropriately for most of my life. Every year my new year's goals are 'be kinder and more patient'. I will not need another resolution; I still have a long way to go. This is big, tough, complicated work!

The first step to managing your anger is to decide that your anger will no longer be used for demolition; that your feelings of anger will only be used to construct new, better alternatives to challenges! Then you're ready to fully utilize the many great anger management resources available to you.

I wonder if my dentist would have told me I needed a helmet if I rode to his office on a Harley.

Motivation Tips

From the Fair Shake Ownership Manual:

Self Motivation - While managers often try to find ways to motivate people from the outside, the best way to get things done is simply by wanting to do them. The more we align ourselves with our goals, values and interests, the more easily we can find the necessary motivation to carry out our tasks. Sometimes we have to keep our 'eyes on the prize' and work through things we really don't like – and sometimes we have to wait patiently - to get to the ultimate goal that we value the most.

"Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right." - Henry Ford

"He is able who thinks he is able." – The Buddha

Often people use - and many people want - **EXTRINSIC MOTIVATORS** (outside forces) to get us to do things we don't desire to do. Do we want to be lured by a Carrot? Do we prefer to be scared by a Stick? Bribe... or... threat? Encourage you to buy a gizmo with a coupon or make you worry that you will not be hip if you don't have the gizmo? Do you recognize these *extrinsic motivators*? You will find more examples of extrinsic motivators all around you once you start to take notice. Alas, extrinsic motivators work well to get us to do some things, but not everything.

We cannot always be pulled or pushed. Sometimes we just want to be interested in what we're doing!

The forces that can energize us through our most challenging and creative tasks are often our **INTRINSIC MOTIVATORS** (inside forces) that bring satisfaction when we do tasks we don't care for but can find meaning in. For example, hanging laundry may be your least favorite thing to do, but you need clean clothes. This mundane task can transform to something beautiful when it happens on a warm, sunny day in the early spring. Just knowing that a beautiful day of hanging laundry is possible makes it easier to hang laundry on less desirable days. Intrinsic motivators make the tough stuff tolerable and can even connect us to the rest of the people on the planet who are going through tough stuff. And also to the people who are enjoying the spring sun while hanging out their laundry.

When we have an inner goal, a desire to solve a puzzle, the wish to work out something by ourselves, we are often motivated with speed, stamina, determination and creativity! Often our values and beliefs provide the fuel for our intrinsic motivation motors.

Motivation Tips:

1. **Systematically and deliberately create success.** Decide what you want to do and what you will do when you get there. Now explore the steps you need to take to get you to where you want to be. Remember to anticipate the hurdles!
2. **Don't let your excuses get in the way.** You will come up with every excuse in the book to not move forward. You will even believe many of your excuses are legitimate. When you believe your excuses you can become stuck. Are you a victim or are you a creative thinker who can solve a problem?

3. **Change habits and behaviors that lead you to procrastinate.** Are you doing things that are holding you back? Schedule time to do nothing and other than that time, stay on track with your goals.
4. **Several small jobs done over short periods of time are more manageable than one large task.** Instead of focusing on the difficulty of the large task, break it into smaller jobs and create a timeline for finishing them.
5. **Try tackling the more undesirable tasks early** so that you can pursue more pleasant activities later in the day.
6. **Exercise self-discipline.** Say 'no' when you need to...to yourself and to others. Keep your "eyes on the prize!"
7. **Overcome procrastination and block out human and media obstacles.** Sometimes we have to just get started, even when we don't feel like we're ready, or even up for the task. Often just the ACT of getting started is enough to get engaged and encouraged. Refuse to let others divert you from your path! Procrastination is a self-defeating behavior that develops - in part - due to the fear of failure and paradoxically, the fear of success!
8. **Reward yourself.** Your self-motivation will increase enormously if you give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done. It feels great to accomplish tasks!
9. **Have fun!** Learning to enjoy yourself keeps you enthusiastic and motivated and helps you keep stress to a minimum. After all, good vibes create more good vibes!
10. **Imagine what the rewards will be when you finally reach your destination** and keep that thought foremost in your mind. You can also imagine the bad consequences (pain, frustration, the feeling of defeat) that may occur if you don't, if you prefer to look at it that way. Carrot or stick?
11. **Tell someone about your goals.** Show them or mark stages on a calendar to emphasize and visualize your goal. Check in with them periodically to tell them of your progress.
12. **Review your habits; do you see yourself accomplishing your goals?** You must change the habits that lead you to procrastinate in the first place. Lose, shorten or refuse to participate in demotivating habits during inappropriate times of the day (watching TV, disengaging from your goals) and replace them with habits that lead to engaging in and control of your life.
13. **Find your true interest.** If you dislike certain tasks, just look at them in the big picture...they are character building steps on the path of getting you to your greater goal.
14. **Make lists of the smaller jobs then tick off the work that you have completed.** Prepare a list of the things you have to do. Prioritize the list and then start ticking off tasks as they are completed. If you do this right, you may become motivated to complete them all!

Dealing With Rejection

When we put ourselves in a position to be vulnerable to another person's opinion, we risk rejection.

Sometimes the risk is very small. Example: I tell a joke but my audience doesn't laugh. They look at me like I am speaking a language they don't understand. What does this mean? Do they reject my joke? Do they reject me? Maybe they don't share my sense of humor. Maybe they don't understand the joke. Maybe it's just not a good joke or maybe I need to learn how to deliver jokes. There are so many variables!

When I'm standing there in the silence, however, I find it hard to think of anything but "I'm not funny." or "I failed." I may even internalize these words and start to feel pretty rotten, as if I am incapable or unappealing. I told the joke to have fun and win approval; instead I feel deflated and rejected.

When I take a much larger risk, such as applying for a job, an apartment or a loan - where I've invested so much more of myself (time, information, hope, dedication) - the stakes are much higher. I may become discouraged when I hear 'we've chosen another applicant', 'we've rented the apartment to another person', or just plain 'no'. Again, it's hard for me to not internalize it. But just as in the case of the joke, there may be many variables that I am not considering. At this crucial time, I must remember to believe in myself and continue to pursue my goal.

It is hard to stay positive when we internalize rejection, and yet that is exactly what we need to do to persevere toward what we want. When we feel defeated, we would be wise to remember that we have taken many risks in the past and we have been successful. We must risk failure and rejection to feel the power of success. It is both scary and exhilarating!

Consider using these tools to keep your perspective as favorable as possible:

- First, remember you are important! Do not let rejection from any person or group lead you to believe you are not important, valuable, creative and necessary to the well-being of everyone.
- Be open to the possibility of rejection or criticism as the push you need to improve your approach, consider making other changes. Find ways to be positive. Positivity is magnetic!
- Consider the source. If you are doing what you believe is the right and best thing for you, keep doing it. It's okay to be rejected by people or groups that we do not wish to be a part of. Perhaps it's not a good fit and our view is clouded by a fog of unrealistic hopefulness. Try to remember to not take feedback or rejection personally.
- Keep focused on the big picture! Don't let minor set backs keep you from achieving your goals.
- Persevere! Keep doing what you are doing. Remember that you are the pilot of your goal, challenge, or position and you will not let rejection hold you back.
- Believe in yourself! If you don't believe in yourself, how can you expect others to believe in you? There are so many things that are special and incredible about you; don't forget what they are!
- This is an opportunity to build resilience. Getting through difficult challenges makes you stronger and more capable for your next challenges. Summon your fighting spirit that says "I will not quit"!
- Find your gratitude. Be grateful for the opportunity. Be grateful for allowing yourself to FEEL. Be grateful for the freedom to create your life, even though it may be very challenging. Be grateful for your critics. If it wasn't for them, we would not learn about ourselves.

Desmond Tutu: On Why We Forgive

By letting go of past hurts, we can heal not only ourselves, but our families, our communities, and our world.
Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu: from spiritualityhealth.com and theguardian.com 2014 (edits by sk)

There were so many nights when I, as a young boy, had to watch helplessly as my father verbally and physically abused my mother. I can still recall the smell of alcohol, see the fear in my mother's eyes, and feel the hopeless despair that comes when we see people we love hurting each other in incomprehensible ways. If I dwell in those memories, I can feel myself wanting to hurt my father back, in the same ways he hurt my mother, and in ways of which I was incapable as a small boy. I see my mother's face and I see this gentle human being whom I loved so very much and who did nothing to deserve the pain inflicted upon her.

When I recall this story, I realize how difficult the process of forgiving truly is. Intellectually, I know my father caused pain because he was in pain. Spiritually, I know my faith tells me my father deserves to be forgiven as God forgives us all. But it is still difficult. The traumas we have witnessed or experienced live on in our memories. Even years later they can cause us fresh pain each time we recall them.

Are you hurt and suffering? Is the injury new, or is it an old unhealed wound? Know that what was done to you was wrong, unfair, and undeserved. You are right to be outraged. And it is perfectly normal to want to hurt back when you have been hurt. But hurting back rarely satisfies. We think it will, but it doesn't. If I slap you after you slap me, it does not lessen the sting I feel on my own face, nor does it diminish my sadness as to the fact you have struck me. Retaliation gives, at best, only momentary respite from our pain. The only way to experience healing and peace is to forgive. Until we can forgive, we remain locked in our pain and locked out of the possibility of experiencing healing and freedom, locked out of the possibility of being at peace.

Without forgiveness, we remain tethered to the person who harmed us. We are bound with chains of

bitterness, tied together, trapped. Until we can forgive the person who harmed us, that person will hold the keys to our happiness; that person will be our jailor. When we forgive, we take back control of our own fate and our feelings. We become our own liberators. We don't forgive to help the other person. We don't forgive for others. We forgive for ourselves.

The Science of Forgiveness

The discussion of forgiveness was once left to the religious. It is now studied by philosophers, psychologists and physicians. The findings show that forgiving transforms people mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Psychologist Fred Luskin writes, "In careful scientific studies, forgiveness training has been shown to reduce depression, increase hopefulness, decrease anger, improve spiritual connection, [and] increase emotional self confidence."

As more and more scientists document the healing power of forgiveness, they also look at the mentally and physically corrosive effects of not forgiving. Hanging on to anger and resentment, living in a constant state of stress, can damage the heart as well as the soul. In fact, research has shown that failure to forgive may be a risk factor for heart disease, high blood pressure, and chronic stress-related illnesses. Medical and psychological studies have shown that a person holding on to anger and resentment is at an increased risk for anxiety, depression, and insomnia, and is more likely to suffer from high blood pressure, ulcers, migraines, backaches, heart attack, and even cancer.

In the end, science will prove what people have known for millennia: forgiving is good for you. Health benefits are only the beginning. To forgive is also to release yourself from whatever trauma and hardship you have experienced and reclaim your life as your own.

Healing the Whole

When we are uncaring, when we lack compassion, when we are unforgiving, we will always pay the price for it. It is not, however, we alone who suffer. Our whole community suffers, and ultimately our whole world suffers. We are made to exist in a delicate network of interdependence. We are sisters and brothers, whether we like it or not. To treat anyone as if they were less than human, less than a brother or a sister, no matter what they have done, is to contravene the very laws of our humanity.

In my own family, sibling squabbles have spilled into intergenerational alienations. When adult siblings refuse to speak to each other because of some offense, recent or long past, their children and grandchildren can lose out on the joy of strong family relationships. The children and grandchildren may never know what occasioned the freeze. They know only that "We don't visit this aunt" or "We don't know those cousins." Forgiveness among the members of older generations could open the door to healthy and supportive relationships among younger generations.

Freeing Ourselves

Unconditional forgiveness is a grace; a free gift freely given. In this model, forgiveness frees the person who inflicted the harm and it also frees the one who forgives. The one who offers forgiveness as a grace is immediately untethered from the yoke that bound him or her to the person who caused the harm. When you forgive, you are free to move on in life, to grow, to no longer be a victim. When you forgive, you slip the yoke, and your future is unshackled from your past.

Our Shared Humanity

Forgiveness is a choice we make, and the ability to forgive others comes from the recognition that we are all flawed and all human. We all have made mistakes and harmed others. We will again. We find it easier to

practice forgiveness when we can recognize that the roles could have been reversed. Each of us could have been the perpetrator or the victim.

In some situations, we have been harmed, and in others we have harmed. And sometimes we straddle both camps, as when we trade hurts with our partners. Not all harms are equivalent, but this is really not the issue. Those who wish to compare how much they have wronged to how much they have been wronged will find themselves drowning in a whirlpool of victimization and denial.

People are not born hating each other and wishing to cause harm. It is a learned condition. I do not say this because I am a saint. I say this because I have sat with condemned men on death row, I have spoken with former police officers who have inflicted torture, I have visited child soldiers who have committed acts of nauseating depravity, and I have recognized in each of them a depth of humanity that was a mirror of my own.

The Invitation to Forgive

The invitation to forgive is not an invitation to forget. Nor is it an invitation to claim that an injury is less

hurtful than it is. It's not okay to be injured. It's not okay to be abused. It's not okay to be violated. It's not okay to be betrayed.

The invitation to forgive is an invitation to find healing and peace. In my native language, Xhosa, one asks forgiveness by saying, Ndicel' uxolo—"I ask for peace." Forgiveness opens the door to peace between people and opens the space for peace within each person.

If I traded lives with my father, if I had experienced the stresses my father faced, if I had to bear the burdens he bore, would I have behaved as he did? I do not know.

My father has long since died, but if I could speak to him today, I would want to tell him that I had forgiven him. What would I say to him? I would begin by thanking him for all the wonderful things he did for me as my father, but then I would tell him that there was this one thing that hurt me very much. I would tell him how what he did to my mother affected me.

Since I cannot speak to him, I have had to forgive him in my heart. If my father were here today, whether he

asked for forgiveness or not, and even if he refused to admit that what he had done was wrong or could not explain why he had done what he did, I would still forgive him. Why? Because I know it is the only way to heal the pain in my boyhood heart.

Forgiving my father frees me. When I no longer hold his offenses against him, my memory of him no longer exerts any control over my moods or my disposition. His violence and my inability to protect my mother no longer define me. I am not the small boy cowering in fear of his drunken rage. I have a new and different story. Forgiveness has liberated both of us. We are free.

A human life is a great mixture of goodness, beauty, heartbreak, love, cruelty, indifference and so much more. The simple truth is, we all make mistakes, and we all need forgiveness. There are times when all of us have been thoughtless, selfish or cruel. No act is unforgivable; no person is beyond redemption. Yet, it is not easy to admit one's wrongdoing and ask for forgiveness. "I am sorry" are perhaps the three hardest words to say.

Meditation: Opening to the Light

1. Close your eyes and follow your breath.
2. When you feel centered, imagine yourself in a safe place.
3. In the center of your safe space is a box with many drawers.
4. The drawers are labeled. The inscriptions show hurts you have yet to forgive.
5. Choose a drawer and open it. Rolled or folded or crumpled up inside it are all the thoughts and feelings the incident evokes.
6. You can choose to empty out this drawer.
7. Bring your hurt into the light and examine it.
8. Unfold the resentment you have felt and set it aside.
9. Smooth out the ache and let it drift up into the sunlight and disappear.
10. If any feeling seems too big or too unbearable, set it aside to look at later.
11. When the drawer is empty, sit for a moment with it on your lap.
12. Then remove the label from this drawer.
13. As the label comes off, you will see the drawer turn to sand. The wind will sweep it away. You don't need it anymore.
14. There will be no space left for that hurt in the box. That space is not needed anymore.
15. If there are more drawers still to be emptied, you can repeat this meditation now or later.

Clothing - Interview and Career Clothing

The mission of Dress for Success is to empower women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire, and the development tools to help women thrive in work and in life.

<https://dressforsuccess.org/affiliate-list/>

Employment - Employment Services

We are dedicated to helping you find your next career! The National Urban League is a historic civil rights organization dedicated to elevating the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities. Founded in 1910, the National Urban League spearheads the effort of its local affiliates through the development of programs, public policy research and advocacy.

<http://www.nuljobsnetwork.com/>

Employment - Employment Services

440 Goodys Lane
Knoxville, TN, 37922
865-671-4848
865-671-1510

<http://www.coworxstaffing.com/>

Employment - Employment Services

America Works includes work readiness training, vocational training, career placement, career advancement, and employment retention services. Our mission is to equip each individual who comes to our offices with the right tools so that they are able to provide for themselves and their loved ones. People find employment, and employers find talent! Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, you must contact the office first before you can engage in in-person services. Click on the link above to find the location nearest to you.

<https://americaworks.com/virtual-contact-info/>

Family - Family Services

All services can be found on the website.
<https://www.tn.gov/children-and-families.html>

Family - Parenting

Call us at 855-427-2736 - English and Spanish 8 am - 8 pm Pacific Standard Time

We offer free emotional support through innovative, evidence-based programs proven to strengthen the empowerment journey of parents, children, youth, and communities. Parents Anonymous is now a Free Evidence-Based family strengthening program for Parents or anyone in a parenting role, and Children and Youth, to address personal, psychological, peer, mental health, or substance abuse concerns.

<https://www.raisingfuture.org/>

Family - Parenting

1-855-427-2736

Weekdays: 10:00 am pst to 7:00 pm pst

The National Parent Helpline is here for you and is open to parents and caregivers of children and youth of all ages. They offer Resources, a Helpline and Printable Materials!

<https://www.nationalparenthelpline.org/find-support>

Education - Higher Education

A university that works for you. Our 100% online, tuition-free degree programs are designed to fit your life.

Programs: Business Administration, Computer Science, Health Science, Education, Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree, Master Degree

<https://www.uopeople.edu/>

Employment - Employment Services

Office of Reentry
220 French Landing Drive
Nashville, Tennessee 37243
(844) 224-5818

<https://www.state.tn.us/workforce.html>

Employment - Employment Services

Our management team has the ingenuity and human resources experience necessary to provide creative solutions to hiring problems (and the track record to prove it) and an employee placement expertise built over nearly three decades.

Maryville Office
P: 865-977-5477
1427 William Blount Dr
Maryville, TN 37801
<http://www.lifestylestaffing.com/>

Employment - Workforce Development

All services can be found on the website.
<https://www.tn.gov/residents/workforce-services.html>

Family - Family Support

On any given day, an estimated 2.7 million children in America have at least one parent in prison or jail.

NRCCFI is the oldest and largest organization in the U.S. focused on children and families of the incarcerated and programs that serve them. Disseminating accurate and relevant information Guiding the development of family strengthening policy and practice Training, preparing, and inspiring those working in the field Including the families in defining the issues and designing solutions

<https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/>

Family - Parenting

<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/>

Food - Food Pantry

WhyHunger Hotline: 866-348-6479
Call, text or click on the link to their website to find food pantries, soup kitchens, summer meals sites, government nutrition programs and grassroots organizations.

<http://www.whyhunger.org/find-food>

Food - Food Pantry

Ample Harvest works to reduce food waste by connecting gardeners to their local food pantries so that excess garden bounty can be shared with those in need. Use the search tool to look for a local food pantry near you.

Food - Food Pantry

Find a food bank near you! The Feeding America nationwide network of food banks secures and distributes more than 3 billion meals each year. Contact your local community food bank to find food.
<http://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-food-bank/>

Food - Food Pantry

Find local pantries, soup kitchens, food shelves, food banks and other food help.
<https://www.foodpantries.org/st/tennessee>

Health - Alcoholics Anonymous

There are over 118,000 Alcoholics Anonymous groups around the world. To find a local AA meeting today you can search by state, city, and day of the week. Can't find one close enough? Consider online AA meetings which offer the same wonder community from the comfort of your own home.
https://findrecovery.com/aa_meetings/

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic

1,400 Free and Charitable Clinics and Pharmacies provide access to healthcare for uninsured and underinsured people in communities across the U.S. Find one near you!
<https://nafcclinics.org/>

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Dental Clinic

We continuously update our website with new information on dental clinics. Many of the resources for dental care are free, but many are based on income and/or discounted in other manners. Please review the listings and contact the dental clinics through the websites provided (and/or phone numbers listed), to obtain full details. We do not offer guidance. If you find any of our information improper, or if you have any question, please email us at support@thedentistsnearme.com. We will immediately reply to your email.
https://www.usdental-service.com/?gclid=EAlaIqobChMIyaH1p9_k9gIVWZcAAB0lrg1FEAEYASAAEgK7c_vD_BWE

Health - Narcotics Anonymous

Join the millions who have found comfort and hope within these nonjudgmental communities and have successfully freed themselves from the struggles of addiction. Find local NA meetings by location, day of the week, and time.
<https://findrecovery.com/na-meetings/>

Health - Reduced Cost Medication

(888) 311-6224 x115
Save an average of 15-55% on your prescriptions! Print a free card or download the app to your phone.
<https://www.americasdrugcard.org/index.aspx>

Money - Social Security Benefits after Incarceration

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Benefits
Individuals released from incarceration may be eligible for Social Security retirement, survivors, or

<https://ampleharvest.org/find-food/>

Health - Addiction Recovery

English Mountain Recovery is dedicated to providing the highest quality of recovery services to individuals and their families at the most affordable costs. We are committed to client service, while emphasizing a spiritual foundation, true to the original concept of the 12 Steps, promoting awareness and understanding in a supportive environment, so that our clients can experience freedom from active alcoholism and addiction.

English Mountain Recovery

1096 Alpine Drive

Sevierville, TN 37876

877-459-8595

<http://www.emrecovery.org>

Fee: Insurance, Self Pay, Financial Loans, Credit Cards, Discounts Available, (ATR-Access To Recovery)

<http://englishmountainrecovery.org/>

Health - Crisis Hotline

Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233(SAFE)
StrongHearts Native Helpline 1-844-7NATIVE

(1-844-762-8483)

Runaway Safeline 1-800-RUNAWAY /

1-800-786-2929

Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-373-7888

Child Abuse Hotline - 1-800-4-A-CHILD

(1-800-422-4453)

Substance Abuse Treatment - 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Hotline - 800-8435678

Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline - 800-656-HOPE (4673)

Suicide Prevention Lifeline Hotline - 800-273-8255
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/acf-hotlines-helplines>

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic

Clinics listed on our website offer services for free or at a reduced rate. Many clinics are operate under a sliding scale schedule. This means that costs to patients are calculated based on income.
<https://www.freeclinics.com/>

Health - Health Department

All services can be found on the website.
<https://www.tn.gov/health.html>

Health - Narcotics Anonymous

Find Tennessee NA Meetings Near You

<https://www.narcotics.com/na-meetings/tennessee/>

Health - Reduced Cost Medication

HELPLINE (800) 503-6897 in English or Spanish. Find help with the cost of medicine! We offer a free drug discount card that may help you obtain a substantially lower price on your medications.
<https://www.needymeds.org/drug-discount-card>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

Search for benefits in Education, Grants, Loans, Social Security, Housing and Utilities, Employment and Career Development, Financial Assistance and

disability benefits if you have worked or paid into Social Security enough years or Supplemental Security Income benefits if you are 65 or older, or are blind, or have a disability and have little or no income and resources.

If you believe you qualify, call our toll-free telephone number, 1-800-772-1213.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call TTY 1-800-325-0778.

<https://www.ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

Our findhelp technology powers Americas leading social care network. Our network features more than 300,000 free and reduced-cost programs in all 50 U.S. states, territories, and Puerto Rico, powering social care systems for hundreds of customers nationwide.

<https://www.findhelp.org/find-social-services/tennessee>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

Scroll down the page to find your state. Titles in the left column will lead you to resources available nationwide.

If you scroll down the page to find your state name, you can click on that for statewide resources.

<https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/index.html>

Shelter - Homeless Shelter

The Homeless Shelter Directory provides listings for Homeless Shelters and Homeless Service Organizations around the country. This includes supportive resources.

<http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org>

Shelter - Housing Authority

Find a HUD location near you.

<https://www.hud.gov/states>

Shelter - Low Income Housing

Mercy Housing Gives a Home to Low-Income Families, Seniors, Individuals, and People with Special Needs Nationwide. Our mission is to create stable, vibrant and healthy communities by providing affordable, service-enriched housing.

<https://www.mercyhousing.org/regional-offices/>

Shelter - Shelters

We provide an online directory of shelters in Tennessee.

<https://www.shelterlist.com/state/tennessee>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

HELP House

Male only. Program length 6-months. Earlier completion considered on an individual basis. HELP House is devoted to changing the way a criminal thinks through focusing on the whole person. Emphasis is placed on both the outward and inward person and provides the opportunity for a new way of thinking and living outside of crime.

One on one counseling, group meetings, AA participation, relapse prevention, encouragement and support is given to all. Must attend church of

more.

<https://www.benefits.gov/categories>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

211 connects you with thousands of nonprofit and government services in your area. If you want personal assistance call the three-digit number 211 or 877-947-2211. A friendly voice to talk with you 24/7/365.

<https://tn211.myresourcedirectory.com/>

Shelter - Financial Counseling

HUD sponsors housing counseling agencies throughout the country that can provide advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, and credit issues. This link sends you to a page that allows you to select a list of agencies for each state. You may search more specifically for a reverse mortgage counselor or if you are facing foreclosure, search for a foreclosure avoidance counselor.

<http://hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm?weblistaction=summary>

Shelter - Housing and Community Development

All types of housing services can be found on the website.

<https://thda.org/>

Shelter - Low Income Housing

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

451 7th Street S.W.

Washington, DC 20410

Telephone: (202) 708-1112 TTY: (202) 708-1455

Find the HUD office near you!

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD>

Shelter - Low Income Housing

Housing Works fights for funding and legislation to ensure that all people living with HIV/AIDS have access to quality housing, healthcare, HIV prevention, and treatment, among other lifesaving services.

<http://www.housingworks.org/>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

1-855-860-3119

Transitional, sober housing provides supportive housing along with drug and alcohol treatment for selective locations

<https://www.transitionalhousing.org/state/tennessee>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

Transitional housing is supportive housing that helps fight homelessness. Find transitional housing in your state by clicking on the link! We have over 6,864 transitional housing locations in our database. We also provide as much information on each housing location along with pictures.

<https://www.transitionalhousing.org/>

Special Considerations - Veteran Support

24/7/365 Support - Call 800-273-8255 and Press 1 Or text 838255.

choice each Sunday. Curfew 6:30 P.M.
4531 Old Broadway
Knoxville, TN 37918
865-689-5833
<http://www.jesusinprison.com>
Fee: \$230 non-refundable deposit
<http://jesusinprison.publishpath.com/>

Special Considerations - Veteran Support

Thank you for your service to our country!
This page was created to assist veterans who are, or have been, incarcerated. There are several resources on this page that may help reduce the pressures associated with reentry.
<https://www.fairshake.net/veterans-page/>

Special Considerations - Veteran Support

Veterans in crisis can call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (Press 1) or the Tennessee Statewide Crisis Line at 855-CRISIS-1.
All other services can be found on the website.
<https://www.tn.gov/veteran.html>

Connect with a real person who serves Veterans, Their Families, and Friends

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

Volunteer - Volunteer Opportunities

We make it easy for good people and good causes to connect. We are a community that believes in the power of volunteering to enrich our lives and the world around us. Find locations to volunteer near you!

Virtual volunteer opportunities are also available -
<https://www.volunteermatch.org/virtual-volunteering>
<https://www.volunteermatch.org/>

Employment Tips

We often have to work our way up to the job we want; either because it is not available when we go to find it or we need more experience, education, preparation or time to get ready. Although we will spend time working at jobs that are not our preference, we can enjoy the interim more when we stay focused on our goals.

Start by asking yourself:

- What kind of job or career do I want?
- What am I willing to do, learn or sacrifice to get that job or career?

Before venturing out into the world of work you will have to obtain necessary documents.

The most frequently requested documents are:

- Birth Certificate
- Driver's license or Basic Identification
- Social Security Card

The birth certificate and driver's license forms offered in our Employment Documents are samples. You can find links to the applications that you need in our Resource Directory!

Next, ask yourself the following questions

- What occupations or industries in your area are in need of employees?
- What are your employment limitations due to your particular crime?
- What is the income you need in order to pay for housing, food, energy, phone, child support, restitution, transportation, etc? (check out our [Build a Budget Worksheet](#))
- Which strategies do you think would be most effective for "selling" your attributes?

To prepare to apply for a job you may want to create the following worksheets:

- Inventory your work history in and out of prison
- List your training, skills, limitations, and health considerations
- Gather all the information you will need to fill out employment applications. Are you ready to fill them out online? (Several companies only accept online applications.)

Considerations and Preparation

What are your employment resources?

- Classified ads (in the paper or locally found on-line)
- Applying for jobs with companies you want to work for
- Job Assistance and Job Training centers
- Craigslist, Monster.com, other job-search websites

Skills Assessment and Personal Strengths Evaluation

Consider taking a free online self-assessment test help us see what careers we are suited for. If you type the phrase 'self-assessment test' into any search engine, several options will be available for you to check out.

Do you need clothes for your interview or new job?

Check out Dress for Success, a global program that may have a location near you!

(www.dressforsuccess.org)

Resume' and Interview tips:

Two good places where you get the chance to show a company why they cannot afford NOT to hire you. Keep these tips in mind as you write your application or resume', and prepare for job interviews:

- Be cheerful in your in-person or telephone job interviews.
- Talk about the benefits of your experience and the relevant expertise you offer.
- Speak about the value you would bring to the company.
- Share stories in the job interview about success in prior assignments.
- Talk about your ability to work with a diverse group of people.

Typical Barriers to Employment:

- Lack of updated resume
- Appropriate clothing for job search
- Transportation
- Stable housing
- Substance abuse
- Poor interview skills
- Poor job search skills
- Not a high school graduate
- No documentation (ID, Social Security card)

SMART: What is your strategy for overcoming barriers and creating success?

You can create a clear strategy by following SMART guidelines:

Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Timely (or Tangible)

Specific – what is the specific goal you wish to achieve?

Can you answer these questions?

- Who do you need to be involved?
- What do you really want to accomplish?
- When do you want to accomplish it?
- Where do you need to be to accomplish it?
- Why do you want to achieve this goal?
- Which things do you need to get in order and which are the constraints to achieving your goal?

Measurable – How will you know when you've achieved your goal? What criteria have you set up to measure your progress and reach your target dates?

Attainable – Can you see yourself achieving this goal? Can you see the path to get there and then see yourself in that place of having reached the goal?

Realistic – Are you willing and able to achieve the goal?

Timely – How long do you need to achieve your goal? Work out your goal date and then the smaller goals that must be met to meet that goal date?

Tangible – Imagine: can you taste, touch, smell, see or hear the results of achieving your goal?

Sample Interview Questions

The interview is your chance to show an employer your unique qualities and it is also the time you can ask more about the employer, the company culture and the job you are applying for. Before you interview be sure to find out all you can about the company so you understand who they are, and also so the interviewer knows you care.

Interviews can be stressful; the best way to manage that stress is to be prepared. If you are ready to answer the questions below you will be prepared for most of the questions that might come up.

There are many variables that make finding a job even more complicated if you have a criminal record. How much should you disclose and when should you disclose it? How do you explain your criminal record and still land a job? How do you address it during an interview? We explore these questions and more at the end of this document.

Possible Interview Questions: About the Job and the Company

- Why did you apply for this job?
- What experience, skills and characteristics do you possess to do the job?
- Why do you think you are the best person for this job?
- Why should we hire you?
- What have you learned about our company?
- How do you see your role in joining this or any company?
- Describe good customer service.
- Describe handling a challenge with a co-worker
- Are you willing to travel?
- Do you have any limitations that would inhibit you from doing this job?
- How long do you think you would like to be employed by this company?

Possible Interview Questions: About You

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are you passionate about?
- What is your greatest strength? What is your greatest weakness?
- What do you do when you're angry?
- If you know your supervisor is wrong about something, how would you handle it?
- Describe a difficult work situation and how you dealt with it.
- Describe your work style.
- How would you describe the pace at which you work?
- How do you handle stress and pressure?
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.
- What motivates you? Are you self-motivated?
- What are your salary expectations? (if it is not listed with the job posting)
- What types of decisions are difficult for you? What types are easy?
- If you could relive the last 10 years of your life, what would you do differently?
- If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?
- Do you prefer to work independently or with others?
- Tell me about your ideal work environment.
- How do you evaluate success?
- What are your career goals? How do you plan to achieve these goals?
- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Give an example of a goal you didn't meet and how you handled it.
- Give an example of how you set goals and achieve them.
- How do you handle a challenge?

Possible Interview Questions: Your Work History

- Tell me about ____ company listed on your resume.
- What were your duties, responsibilities, expectations...for the position and as an employee?
- What challenges did you face? How did you handle them?
- What did you like about this job? What did you dislike about this job?
- What was your biggest accomplishment at this job? At any job?
- What were your favorite and least favorite aspects about the people you worked with, including supervisors?
- What attributes to you like to see in a supervisor?
- What do you expect from a supervisor?
- Tell me a little about your favorite and least favorite supervisor.
- Why did you leave this job? (why did you quit or why were you fired?)
- Have you been in a position when you did not have enough work to do? What did you do with your time?
- Have you made a mistake? How did you handle it?
- Have you ever dealt with company policy you weren't in agreement with? How?
- Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?
- When you worked on multiple projects how did you prioritize?
- How did you handle meeting a tight deadline?
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Tell me about a difficult situation with a co-worker? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about your experience working with a team.
- Have you motivated employees or co-workers? Tell me about it.
- Give me an example of when you did and when you didn't listen.
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a supervisor? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with another department? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a client or vendor? How?

Possible Interview Questions: Incarceration

- Why were you incarcerated?
- What did you learn from that experience?
- Do you have challenges or limitations that could affect your work schedule?
- What have you been doing to prepare for employment since you came home?
- Were you employed or in school when you were incarcerated? If so, tell me about your work. Tell me about your education.

Illegal questions:

- What is your age?
- How many children do you have? Are you pregnant?
- How much do you weigh? How tall are you?
- Do you live with anyone? Who?
- Are you married or in a relationship?

Legal alternatives:

- Are you over 18 years old?
- Can you lift 60 pounds?
- Is there anything that might interfere with your work schedule?

Related to Your Criminal Record

An employer may not ask questions about a previous arrest or conviction. They may ask if you have been convicted of specific crimes if they are relevant to the position being applied for. An employer may not refuse employment to someone just because they have a criminal record.

Lisa Pollan, site coordinator at LIFT-DC, says they encourage formerly incarcerated clients to collect "evidence of rehabilitation." This evidence should prove to employers that the client has changed since their offense and is now a responsible member of society. Evidence of rehabilitation can include:

- letters of recommendation from employers or advocates
- proof of training program completion/certificates (including during incarceration)
- participation in a mentoring or support group

For Job Applications, LIFT-DC counsels clients to do the following:

- **Only answer what is asked:** If a question asks if you have been convicted of a felony, you can say no if you only have misdemeanors. If a question asks if you have been convicted of a felony in the last seven years, and you were convicted 10 years ago, answer no.
- **Answer truthfully:** A company may hire ex-offenders but have a policy of terminating anyone who lies on an application.
- **Demonstrate change:** If you answer a question about your record by writing, "Yes, but I got my GED while I was incarcerated," you show that you are educated, focused and want to make positive changes in your life. You can also attach a written explanation of your situation, and proof of your rehabilitation.

Check out LIFT-DC for more tips on interviewing! <http://www.liftcommunities.org/>

From the National Reentry Resource Center:

<http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/faqs/employment-and-education#Q8>

How should job-seekers respond to questions regarding past convictions?

- Acknowledge the previous mistakes in a concise and businesslike way
- mention any relevant skills or interests developed while in prison or prior to entering prison
- reinforce a commitment and an interest in the new job, by stating, for example, "I'm more mature now and my top priority is to work at [company] to use my abilities, focus on the work, and make a fresh start."

Applicants should be familiar with their criminal history to answer accurately specific questions on job applications and in interviews.

Race/Religion

An employer may not ask you about your religion but it may come up if they ask you what days/times you are available. An employer may not judge you for being a part of any race or religion but may decide not to hire you if you are unavailable for any crucial time for the position you are applying.

Resume Guide

A good resume will open the door for an interview. But do you need a resume? Some employers prefer a resume and others require an application form. That depends on the kind of job you're applying for.

RESUME REQUIRED

- Professional, technical, administrative and managerial jobs.
- Sales positions.
- Secretarial, clerical, and other office jobs.

RESUME SOMETIMES REQUIRED

Professional positions: Baker, Hotel Clerk, Electrician, Drafter, Welder

RESUME NOT REQUIRED

Unskilled, quick turnover jobs: Fast Food Server, Laborers, Machine Loader, Cannery Worker

The Rockport Institute has generously donated the resume guide below. It is a shortened version of their full resume guide ***How to Write a Masterpiece of a Resume*** which can be found here:

<http://www.rockportinstitute.com/resumes>

WRITE A RESUME THAT GENERATES RESULTS

Before you begin, ask yourself: Why do you have a resume in the first place? What is it supposed to do for you? How can you differentiate yourself from hundreds of other applicants with qualified resumes? The prospective employer has the overwhelming task of looking over many resumes to find the special person that is right for the position and a great fit for the culture of the company. You are facing a great deal of competition.

The resume is a tool with one specific purpose: to win an interview. If it doesn't, it isn't an effective resume. A resume is an advertisement; nothing more, nothing less. A great resume doesn't just tell them what you have done but makes the same assertion that all good ads do: If you buy this product, you will get these specific, direct benefits. It presents you in the best light. It convinces the employer that you have what it takes to be successful in this new position or career.

Other reasons to have a resume:

- To pass the employer's screening process (requisite educational level, number years' experience, etc.), to give basic facts which might favorably influence the employer
- To establish yourself as a professional person with high standards and excellent writing skills, based on the fact that your resume is so well done (clear, well-organized, well-written, well-designed, of the highest professional grades of printing and paper).
- To use as a covering piece or addendum to another form of job application
- To put in an employer's personnel files. (which they may check out later for other openings)
- To help you clarify your direction, qualifications, and strengths, boost your confidence, or to start the process of committing to a job or career change.

It is a mistake to think of your resume as your work history, a personal statement or some sort of self expression. Sure, most of the content of any resume is focused on your job history. But write from the intention to create interest, to persuade the employer to call you. If you write with that goal, your final product will be very different than if you write it just to catalog your job history.

Most resumes are quickly scanned, rather than read. Ten to twenty seconds is all the time you have to persuade a prospective employer to read further and the decision to interview a candidate is usually based on an overall first impression of the resume, a quick screening that so impresses the reader and convinces them of the candidate's qualifications that an interview results. The top half of the first page of your resume will either make you or break you. You hope it will have the same result as a well-written ad: to get the reader to respond. You are selling a product in which you have a large personal investment: you.

The person who is doing the hiring often cares deeply how well the job will be done. You need to write your resume to appeal directly to them. Ask yourself: What does the employer really want? What special abilities would this person have? What would set a truly exceptional candidate apart from a merely good one? How can I demonstrate that I am the perfect candidate? Put yourself in their shoes.

Loosen up your thinking enough so that you will be able to see some new connections between what you have done and what the employer is looking for. You need not confine yourself to work-related accomplishments! Use your entire life as evidence of your character, skills and talents. If Sunday school or your former gang are the only places you have had a chance to demonstrate your special gifts for leadership, fine. What are the talents you have to offer the prospective employer? A great resume has two sections. In the first, you make assertions about your abilities, qualities and achievements. You write powerful, but honest, advertising copy that makes the reader immediately perk up and realize that you are someone special.

The second section, the evidence section, is where you back up your assertions with evidence that you actually did what you said you did. This is where you list and describe the jobs you have held, your education, etc. This is all the stuff you are obliged to include.

Most resumes are just the evidence section, with no assertions. The 'juice' is in the assertions section. When a prospective employer finishes reading your resume, you want them to reach for the phone to invite you in to interview. The resumes you have written in the past have probably been a gallant effort to inform the reader. You don't want them informed. You want them interested and excited.

THE OBJECTIVE SECTION

Ideally, your resume should be pointed toward conveying why you are the perfect candidate for one specific job or job title. Good advertising is directed toward a very specific target audience.

Targeting your resume requires that you be absolutely clear about your career direction—or at least that you appear to be clear. You would be wise to use this time of change to design your future career so you have a clear target that will meet your goals and be personally fulfilling. With a nonexistent, vague or overly broad objective, the first statement you make to a prospective employer says you are not sure this is the job for you.

Imagine the position of a software manufacturer looking at a sea of resumes. They all look so much alike until they come across a resume in the pile that starts with the following: "OBJECTIVE - a software sales position in an organization seeking an extraordinary record of generating new accounts, exceeding sales targets and enthusiastic customer relations". They are immediately interested! This first sentence conveys some very important and powerful messages: "I want exactly the job you are offering. I am a superior candidate because I recognize the qualities that are most important to you, and I have them. I want to make a contribution to your company." This works well because the employer is smart enough to know that

someone who wants to do exactly what they are offering will be much more likely to succeed than someone who doesn't. And that person will probably be a lot more pleasant to work with as well.

Secondly, this candidate has done a good job of establishing why they are the perfect candidate in their first sentence. They have thought about what qualities would make a candidate stand out. They have started communicating that they are that person immediately. What's more, they are communicating from the point of view of making a contribution to the employer.

Here's how to write your objective. First of all, decide on a specific job title for your objective. Go back to your list of answers to the question "How can I demonstrate that I am the perfect candidate?" What are the two or three qualities, abilities or achievements that would make a candidate stand out as truly exceptional for that specific job? Having an objective statement that really sizzles is highly effective. And it's simple to do. One format is:

OBJECTIVE: An xxx position in an organization where yyy and zzz would be needed (or, in an organization seeking yyy and zzz).

Xxx is the name of the position you are applying for. Yyy and zzz are the most compelling qualities, abilities or achievements that will really make you stand out above the crowd of applicants.

If you are applying for several different positions, you should adapt your resume to each one. Have an objective that is perfectly matched with the job you are applying for. Remember, you are writing advertising copy, not your life story.

If you have a limited work history, you want the employer to immediately focus on where you are going, rather than where you have been.

Examples of an Objective section:

OBJECTIVE: An entry-level position in the hospitality industry where a background in advertising and public relations would be needed.

OBJECTIVE: A position teaching English as a second language where a special ability to motivate and communicate effectively with students would be needed.

THE SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

The "Summary of Qualifications" consists of several concise statements that focus the reader's attention on the most important qualities, achievements and abilities you have to offer. Those qualities should be the most compelling demonstrations of why they should hire you instead of the other candidates.

This may be the only section fully read by the employer, so it should be very strong and convincing. Include professional characteristics (extremely energetic, a gift for solving complex problems in a fast-paced environment, exceptional interpersonal skills, committed to excellence, etc.) helpful in winning the interview.

How should you write to write a Summary of Qualifications? Look for the qualities the employer will care about most. Then look at what you wrote about why you are the perfect person to fill their need. Pick your qualities that best demonstrate why they should hire you. Assemble it into your Summary section.

The most common ingredients of a well-written Summary are as follows. Do not use all these ingredients in one Summary - use the ones that highlight you best.

- A short phrase describing your profession
- Followed by a statement of broad or specialized expertise
- Followed by two or three additional statements related to any of the following:
 - breadth or depth of skills
 - unique mix of skills
 - range of environments in which you have experience
 - a special or well-documented accomplishment
 - a history of awards, promotions, or superior performance commendations
- One or more professional or appropriate personal characteristics
- A sentence describing professional objective or interest.

Notice that the examples below show how to include your objective in the Summary section. If you are making a career change, your Summary section should show how what you have done in the past prepares you to do what you seek to do in the future.

A few examples of Summary sections:

- Highly motivated, creative and versatile real estate executive with seven years of experience in development and construction. Especially skilled at building effective, productive working relationships with clients and staff. Excellent management, negotiation and public relations skills. Seeking a challenging management position in the real estate field that offers extensive contact with the public.
- Health Care Professional experienced in management, program development and policy making in the United States as well as in several developing countries. A talent for analyzing problems, developing and simplifying procedures, and finding innovative solutions. Proven ability to motivate and work effectively with persons from other cultures and all walks of life. Skilled in working within a foreign environment with limited resources.
- Performing artist with a rich baritone voice and unusual range, specializing in classical, spiritual, gospel and rap music. Featured soloist for two nationally televised events. Accomplished pianist. Extensive performance experience includes television, concert tours and club acts. Available for commercial recording and live performances.

SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In this final part of the assertions section of your resume, you do exactly what you did in the previous section, except that you go into more detail.

In the summary, you focused on your most special highlights. Now you tell the rest of the best of your story. Let them know what results you produced, what happened as a result of your efforts, what you are especially gifted or experienced at doing. Flesh out the most important highlights in your summary.

Here are a few ways you could structure your "Skills and Accomplishments" section:

SELECTED SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Raised \$1900 in 21 days in canvassing and advocacy on environmental, health and consumer issues.
- Conducted legal research for four Assistant U.S. Attorneys, for the U.S. Attorney's office
- Coordinated Board of Directors and Community Advisory Board of community mental health center. Later commended as "the best thing that ever happened to that job."

FUNCTIONAL RESUME FORMAT

The functional resume highlights your major skills and accomplishments. It helps the reader see clearly what you can do for them. It helps target the resume into a new direction by lifting up from all past jobs the key skills and qualifications to help prove you will be successful. The functional resume is a must for career changers and for those returning to the job market.

THE EVIDENCE SECTION - YOUR WORK HISTORY, EDUCATION, ETC.

Most resumes are not much more than a collection of "evidence," various facts about your past. By evidence, we mean all the mandatory information you must include on your resume: work history with descriptions, dates, education, affiliations, list of software mastered, etc. If you put this toward the top of your resume, anyone reading it will feel like they are reading an income tax form.

EXPERIENCE

List jobs in reverse chronological order. Don't go into detail on the jobs early in your career; focus on the most recent and/or relevant jobs. (Summarize a number of the earliest jobs in one line or very short paragraph. Put dates in italics at the end of the job; don't include months, unless the job was held less than a year. Include military service, internships, and major volunteer roles if desired! Because the section is labeled "Experience," it does not need to mean that you were paid.

EDUCATION

List education in reverse chronological order, degrees or licenses first, followed by certificates and advanced training. Set degrees apart so they are easily seen. Put in boldface whatever will be most impressive. Don't include any details about college except your major and distinctions or awards you have won.

- Do include advanced training, but be selective with the information.
- If you are working on an uncompleted degree, include the degree and afterwards, in parentheses, the expected date of completion.
- If you didn't finish college, start with a phrase describing the field studied, then the school, then the dates (the fact that there was no degree may be missed).

Other headings might be "Education and Training" or "Education and Licenses".

And then add your Awards, Civic and Community Recognition and Comments from Supervisors.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Only list these if your personal interests indicate a skill or knowledge that is related to the goal, such as photography for someone in public relations, or carpentry and wood-working for someone in construction management. This section can create common ground in an interview.

REFERENCES

You may put "References available upon request" at the end of your resume, if you wish. This is a standard close (centered at bottom in italics), but is not necessary. You can bring a separate sheet of references to the interview, to be given to the employer upon request.

A FEW GUIDELINES FOR A BETTER PRESENTATION

The resume is visually enticing, a work of art. Simple clean structure. Very easy to read. Symmetrical. Balanced. Uncrowded. As much white space between sections of writing as possible; sections of writing that are no longer than six lines, and shorter if possible.

There are absolutely no errors. No typographical errors. No spelling errors. No grammar, syntax, or punctuation errors. No errors of fact.

All the basic, expected information is included. A resume must have the following key information: your name, address, phone number, and your email address at the top of the first page, a listing of jobs held, in reverse chronological order, educational degrees, in reverse chronological order.

Jobs listed include a title, the name of the firm, the city and state of the firm, and the years employed. Jobs earlier in a career can be summarized and extra part-time jobs can be omitted. If no educational degrees have been completed, it is still expected to include some mention of education (professional study or training, partial study toward a degree, etc.) acquired after high school.

It is targeted. First you should get clear what your job goal is, what the ideal position would be. Then you should figure out what key skills, areas of expertise or body of experience the employer will be looking for in the candidate. Gear the resume structure and content around this target, proving these key qualifications.

Strengths are highlighted / weaknesses de-emphasized. Focus on whatever is strongest and most impressive. Make careful and strategic choices as to how to organize, order, and convey your skills and background.

Use power words. For every skill, accomplishment, or job described, use the most active impressive verb you can think of (which is also accurate). Begin the sentence with this verb, except when you must vary the sentence structure to avoid repetitious writing.

Show you are results-oriented. Wherever possible, prove that you have the desired qualifications through clear strong statement of accomplishments

Writing is concise and to the point. Keep sentences as short and direct as possible.

Make it look great. Use a laser printer or an ink jet printer that produces high-quality results. A laser is best because the ink won't run if it gets wet. It should look typeset. Use a standard conservative typeface (font) in 11 or 12 point. Use off-white, ivory or bright white 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper, in the highest quality affordable. Use absolutely clean paper without smudges, without staples and with a generous border.

Shorter is usually better. Your resume should be just long enough to keep the reader's interest, and create psychological excitement that leads prospective employers to pick up the phone and call you.

Telephone number that will be answered. Be sure the phone number on the resume will, without exception, be answered by a person or an answering machine Monday through Friday 8-5pm.

WHAT NOT TO PUT ON A RESUME

- The word "Resume" at the top of the resume
- Fluffy rambling "objective" statements
- Salary information
- Full addresses of former employers or names of supervisors
- Reasons for leaving jobs
- References