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Can prisoners be role models?

Unveiling potential behind the bars. The journey of transformation and influence.

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Concept of a role model

Anyone may be a role model. If we consider celebrities, politicians or sportsmen/-women as role models, people who are not always crystal clear and morally intact, why cannot it be a person serving their time in prison?

Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia provides us with the following definition of the term “role model”:

“a person whose behavior in a particular role is imitated by others”.

Do / Did you have a role model in your life?



- parents
- siblings
- peers
- teachers
- colleagues
- friends
- superior at work
- politicians

It all depends on the moment of our life we are at, place we live in, with whom we spend time, where we learn or with whom we work.

A role model in a prison environment

There are two sides of this concept.

1. From a point of view of a convicted person. It is difficult to have an impact on a prisoner. They do not want to listen to others and they simply “know better”. A role model for prisoners could be a prison guard, a penitentiary tutor, a teacher in a prison school, etc.
2. Prisoners can also make good role models. Not necessarily a crime world role model to follow (which in fact is inspiring other inmates to commit more evil deeds).



Preventive inspiration



- Can we be inspired by prisoners?
- By people who committed crimes?
- By someone who spent many years being isolated from the rest of the society?
- We should remember that not all of those who are serving their time behind bars, are only degenerates.
- Many convicts are the ones whose lives were very negative.
- Certain sequence of events led them to the place where they are.
- Many of them are ready to share their life stories to preventively inspire others to avoid mistakes which brought them to prison.
- Preventive inspiration proves itself to be best among young people who are most prone to negative influence of their peers.

Voice from behind the bars



Voice from behind the bars

- Many young do not have proper patterns to follow.
- Life style is very dynamic.
- Many of those young people are lost in their lives.
- Very often they are rejected which makes them make wrong choices.
- This, on the other hand, may lead to very disastrous results.

As a result „*Busola*” association created a project named “*Voice from behind the bars*”.

- The objective of the project is to send prisoners to schools to have lessons with youngsters.
- The form of the lesson is a talk and the “teachers” of the lessons are inmates.
- The target group of the lessons are students of secondary schools.
- The main idea of the project is to organize meetings between with young people, during which inmates share their negative life experiences.
- The aim of the meetings is to show how a wrong choice may have extremely negative results in future life.

Voice from behind the bars

A film with English subtitles.



„An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” – Benjamin Franklin



- Prisoner role models can have huge impact on youth.
- "Voice from Behind the Bars" resonates deeply with young audience.
- These interactions offer more than theoretical lessons - they provide vivid, personal narratives.
- Real-life stories and experiences shared by prisoners serve as powerful deterrents against criminal behavior for young people.
- They can alter perceptions, influence decisions, and inspire positive life choices.
- It has got immeasurable influence in preventive education.

Closing remarks



Thank you for your attention

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