

# The Pros Of Incarceration

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Just my opinion

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# The Pros Of Incarceration

## PROS OF IMPRISONMENT

By: Gregory Slates

This is a very controversial topic. Society considers imprisonment as a deterrent and punishment to crime, while the criminal views imprisonment as a consequence of his/her actions. I don't personally wish imprisonment on any one although there are circumstances where imprisonment is justified.

I've spent about a third of life in prison for various crimes. Without getting into what those crimes were, I can say that for a long time prison wasn't a deterrent for me. For me fast money and living in the so-called fast lane over shadowed the potential consequences of my actions. For years the money that I made from my criminal activities became so addictive, that I convinced myself that I was justified in committing crime because I had to support a lifestyle that I had grown accustomed to.

There are no natural born criminals. Criminals are born out of choices, circumstances, and sometimes due to mental defect. None of these reasons serve as excuses, just an explanation of why and how criminals sometimes come about. (My opinion only)

### PROS OF IMPRISONMENT

The obvious pros of imprisonment is that it removes criminals from society, which in turn makes its citizens feel safer. For the prisoner seeing the positive side of being imprisoned isn't all that obvious at first. As time goes on and the prisoner accepts his predicament and accepts the role they played in creating that predicament his thinking becomes somewhat clearer. (For some that is, not all are willing to accept their circumstances without pointing the finger at everybody else but themselves.)

When faced with an considerable amount of time to reflect about ones actions the prisoner's views sometime change. (Not always for the best, but that's on an individual bases.) Once those cells doors close

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and you are alone, all you can do is think. Think about how you got to where you are at. You think about your family, friends and things that you have lost as a result of your imprisonment. For some imprisonment is an awakening.

The time a prisoner spends in prison can at times be viewed as wasted time (by the prisoner). The days, months or years that are taken out from his/her life can never be retrieved, because time doesn't stand still just because of your circumstance. Prison's main purpose is to rehabilitate its inhabitants. This is where the prisoner now has a choice to make. Do I do my time bitching and moaning about being imprisoned. Or do I try to turn a negative into a positive. Meaning I have to be here, so what can I do while I am here to possibly lessen my chances of coming back and enhance my choices when I return to the so-called free world?

There are a great number of prisoners that don't possess a high school diploma or have any marketable work skills. For those that are willing to apply themselves prison can be their stepping stone to greater things. If you don't have a diploma, go to school and get one. If you don't have a workable trade take a shop class and learn one. If you have a diploma and a work skill, then go to college and get a degree. If college isn't an option then volunteer and share your knowledge with your fellow prisoner.

These are some of the options that imprisonment offers the prisoner. Earning that diploma, learning a trade or earning that degree can be infectious. It's a sense of accomplishment, a self pat on the back and the realization that I do can better. It can be instrumental in the choices the prisoner makes upon returning to society. Armed with a renewed sense of self-worth the prisoner now has different choices at his disposal that weren't available before going to prison. This can be a life saving and life changing experience if utilized wisely. This is a prime example of imprisonment having a positive effect on the prisoner.

A great number of criminal acts are committed by individuals that suffer from some sort of substance abuse (cocaine/crack, heroine, alcohol, etc.) . This isn't an excuse, but a reason why some prisoners do what they do. It's now widely accepted that substance abuse is a disease. There's no known cure for it but it can be treated. For some criminal offenders treatment opposed to incarceration is available, where the offender is honest enough and/or humble enough to ask for help. For others this exact option isn't available, but there are alternatives.

Many of the prison offer a CSAT program for the prisoner to address their substance abuse problem. If during the commission of said criminal act the prisoner was under the influence of some sort of substance and admits it, this program is mandatory. For other prisoners this is an optional program for those honest enough to admit that they have a problem and want the opportunity to address it.

Getting clean from substance abuse and maintaining sobriety is crucial to the prisoner who faces this challenge. If the prisoner is successful at arresting this disease he/she is no longer driven with the need to commit criminal acts for the purpose of supporting their habit. This freedom from active addiction now affords the prisoner another chance to reclaim their lives in an positive manner. He/she now has a clearer choice of which path to pursue in their goal of becoming a productive member of society.

When a person is sent to prison the possibly of losing current relationships and family ties is sometimes probable and inevitable. It's a proven fact that incarceration strains family ties and has been the cause of breakups in current relationships, be they romantic or friendly. Where there's a positive where there is always a negative and where there's a negative there's always a positive.

There are many occurrences where imprisonment has brought families closer, old relationships are rekindled and sometimes new relationships are forged. Prison may not be the ideal place for this happen, but if it works, if it helps then what does it matter where it happened. Sometimes filling that void of loneliness or

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reconnecting with family and friends is pivotal in a prisoner's life. This change can be inspirational in how a prisoner's thinking changes. All criminal acts are born out of a thought and then action on that thought. Reconnecting with family members, maintaining current relationship or the unknown possibilities of a new relationship can give the prisoner a new sense of responsibility. A renewed way of thinking. The desire to enhance these relationships can serve as a deterrent for future criminal acts. The knowledge that these new relationships can be jeopardized if he/she returns to his/her criminal ways may be sufficient for reform. Imprisonment was crucial in bringing about this change, one that may not have happened if the prisoner had never been sent to prison.

Every person that has ever had to endure imprisonment has a very valuable story to tell. Experience is said to be the best teacher. So who else better qualified to reach out to our troubled youth. It is a well known fact that most criminals start out at a young age. The youth of our present generation comprises a large number of the prisoners in our prison facilities.

Many programs have been developed such as the most famous one is Scared Straight, in order to deter our youth from following the destructive footsteps of their prior generation. Family members, older/younger friends, people they admire that have gone down the wrong path are impressionable upon our youth today. Good parenting and upbringing sometimes is not enough to deter our youth from wanting to wade in the pool of corruption. For most they think it's glamorous, they're excited by the prospects of fast money and some are led to believe it's fun being a criminal.

Prisoners/ex-prisoners reaching out to our youth by means of straight talk or scare tactics have been very successful in deterring a great many of our youth from heading to a criminal path of destruction. The rewards of this type of program are twofold. Society is rescued from a potential criminal. The prisoner/ex-prisoner is given a boost to their self-worth and morale by perhaps saving a youth from heading down a path they once traveled.

There are over 70 state correctional facilities in the state of New York. These prisons house thousands of prisoners. Due to these facts the prison system has become very profitable to the city and state. It brings a new meaning to the phrase it's not personal, it's just business!! Big, big business. There are many towns and counties of New York State that most people aren't even aware exist. Today those once unknown towns and counties have a reputable name now because they're host to a state correctional facility.

Once a decision to build a correctional facility is established trade workers, laborers, road workers, etc. are now on high demand. New jobs for everyone involved with this new construction. With the opening of these correctional facilities many more needed jobs were created and filled. Correctional officers, food workers, maintenance workers and variety of other positions now available. Town and county revenues increase radically. Local businesses flourish; the more money made the more money spent by residents. Whatever level of prosperity or lack of these towns and counties formerly endured were suddenly propelled to the next level. Prisons; big business. New York State probably has the largest prison system, which means the most profitable. For a New York State Correction Officer Trainee, the hiring rate is \$34,329, the 6-month rate is \$36,111 and after one year the salary is \$41,348.

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