

## **CHAPTER 17: BUILD YOUR PROFILE**

By the time you reach this chapter, you have already worked through the core ideas of the Straight-A Guide.

You have considered what it means to define success, set goals, develop the right attitude, aspire to something better, take disciplined action, hold yourself accountable, strengthen awareness, live authentically, earn incremental achievements, and live with appreciation. Those principles can change the way a person thinks. They can change the way he uses time. They can change the way he prepares for the future.

But a lesson becomes much more useful when a person turns it into action.

In this final chapter of the workbook, we want to show best practices on how to start and develop your profile. If the lessons in this workbook remain only in your thoughts, they may still help you. Likewise, if your responses remain in a notebook that you keep in your locker, then you may have created some value in your life.

Yet in our view, each person can do better by building a profile. With a profile, he creates something more useful. He creates a record, or tool that may help him advocate for himself at different stages of the journey ahead. That is why I encourage people to build a profile through Prison Professors.

The profile is a place to document the ways that you are using time to prepare for success upon release. It allows you to show the work you are doing over time. Instead of saying that you want to change, you can show what you are doing to change. Instead of hoping that someone will believe in your future, you can create a record that allows others to see your effort, your discipline, your growth, and your preparation.

That record can become useful in many ways.

It may help a probation officer understand that you are taking preparation seriously. It may help a judge see that you are building a life with intention. It may help family members, mentors, or other supporters understand how to advocate for you more effectively. It may help Bureau of Prisons officials, halfway house staff, or a future

probation officer see that you have spent time building a record rather than merely waiting for time to pass. It may help a prospective employer see that you are more than the worst decision of your life.

Most importantly, it can help you.

A profile helps you move from private intention to visible action. It gives you a place to develop a biography, publish journal entries, write book reports, and strengthen a release plan. It helps you create a body of work that shows how you are thinking, what you are learning, what you are building, and why you are worthy of consideration for higher levels of liberty and opportunity later.

That process aligns directly with the Straight-A Guide.

The Straight-A Guide is not a theory for sounding better. It is a framework for living better, as if you are the CEO of your life. Each principle pushes a person to become more deliberate, more disciplined, and more responsible. The profile gives a person a place to document what that framework looks like in practice.

- » If you define success, the profile gives you a place to explain what success means to you.
- » If you set goals, the profile gives you a place to show how you are pursuing those goals.
- » If you develop the right attitude, the profile gives you a place to reveal that attitude through your writing and your consistency.
- » If you take action, the profile gives you a place to document what you did.
- » If you hold yourself accountable, the profile gives you a place to measure progress.
- » If you build awareness, live authentically, earn achievements, and strengthen appreciation, the profile gives you a place to show how those principles are shaping the life you are building.

In that sense, the profile is not separate from the workbook. It is the place where your preparations for success become self-evident.

Many people talk about change. Fewer document the work of change. Many people say they are preparing for success. Fewer create a record that shows what they are doing to prepare. Many people hope that others will recognize their effort. Fewer build a body of work that allows others to verify the effort for themselves.

I want readers of this workbook to understand that documentation is part of preparation.



The profile becomes an asset, a place where your biography can show accountability, your journals can show consistency and intrinsic motivation, your book reports can show self-directed learning, and your release plan can show that you are preparing for the next stage with intention. Over time, those entries become a living record of the person you are becoming.

No one can build that record for you. Not your lawyer. Not your family. And certainly not anyone in the Bureau of Prisons.

Other people may help you. Family members may support you. Friends may encourage you. Mentors may guide you. Staff members may recognize your effort. Our team at Prison Professors may provide the platform and the lessons. But you must do the work.

That truth reflects one of the central ideas in the Straight-A Guide: live as the CEO of your life.

A CEO does not wait for someone else to solve the company's problems. He identifies the mission, studies the obstacles, builds the plan, and executes it with discipline. He measures progress. He adjusts when necessary. He creates systems that support the results he wants. In the same way, a person in prison should not wait passively for someone else to engineer a better future. He should begin building that future now, with the tools available to him.

The profile is one of those tools. It helps a person transform time into an asset for self-advocacy.

That phrase deserves emphasis because too many people in prison allow time to pass without creating a record of how they used it. Then, when the day comes to advocate for more liberty, they have very little to show beyond words. They may say they have changed. They may say they are ready. They may say they have learned from the experience. But if no record exists, others have little basis for evaluating those claims.

A strong profile gives the person a place to show that he has been building for months, years, or even decades. It allows him to demonstrate that his effort has not been random. He has been intentional and preparing with discipline.

## **PRISON PROFESSORS CHARITABLE CORPORATION**

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That record can influence how others see a person, and it also can influence the larger mission of Prison Professors.

Every profile contributes to something bigger than one individual. When thousands of people build visible records of self-directed learning, preparation, and accountability, they create evidence that people in the system are willing to work toward better outcomes when they have structure, tools, and incentives. That evidence strengthens our argument for expanding opportunities tied to earning freedom through merit. It strengthens our effort to show that preparation should count. It strengthens our mission of opening more pathways to liberty and freedom through merit.

For that reason, when you build a profile, you do more than help yourself. You become part of a broader movement. You show that many people in prison are worthy of opportunities.

I do not work for the government, and do not have any power to tell the system what to do in an individual's case. For that reason, I cannot promise that building a profile will lead to any specific result. The only promises I make are these:

- » I will always be truthful,
- » I will never ask anyone to do anything that I didn't do.
- » No one will ever pay a penny for the resources that I provide through Prison Professors.

I built this system because I learned that a person who lives as the CEO of his life can create opportunities, even in difficult circumstances, by building a body of work that others can see. I hope this workbook encourages you to build your record. Become the CEO of your life.

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