

## LESSON 22: EMBRACING DILIGENCE

### Vocabulary Word:

Diligence — Careful and persistent work or effort.

### Lesson Content:

Diligence is a virtue that speaks to the quality of our work and our commitment to carrying tasks through to completion. For most people in prison, a time will come when the gates open. Even people who serve life sentences have an opportunity may argue for a higher level of liberty at some point.

For that reason, each person should be diligent about preparing for success after prison.

A lack of diligence can lead to cascading problems after release. Consider the example of James and Juan, people with contrasting stories. At one point, they were on a similar path. But they took vastly different approaches to their circumstances.

Both James and Juan served time in prison for similar offenses. During their incarceration, they each had the opportunity to access self-study programs to enhance their knowledge and skills. However, their reactions to this chance set them on contrasting journeys. One chose to be diligent in his preparations for success, and the other didn't care about preparing.

Juan, an optimistic and determined individual, recognized the importance of diligent self-improvement, and took full advantage of available resources. He didn't wait for the system to offer courses or credits. Juan immersed himself in various self-directed study materials. He learned to communicate better, and he learned better math skills. Those efforts led to studies ranging from entrepreneurship to finance. Juan dreamed of creating a brighter future for himself and others.

After he got out, Juan had a solid foundation of knowledge and skills. He combined his newfound understanding of business with his passion and creativity, eventually founding a successful company. Juan created a



thriving business through hard work, dedication, and the ability to adapt. He also became an inspiration to others who faced similar challenges.

On the other hand, James held a more cynical perspective during his time behind bars. Rather than engineering a diligent adjustment strategy, he complained. He argued that the system didn't allow him to improve his situation. He dismissed the idea of self-study programs, believing they were a waste of time.

Upon his release, James faced a series of difficulties. Without the skills and knowledge necessary to secure stable employment, he struggled to find suitable work. His lack of preparation during his time in prison left him ill-equipped to reintegrate into society. His failure to prepare diligently led to further problems, such as homelessness and brushes with the law, which only compounded his challenges.

The divergent paths of Juan and James highlight the significance of personal initiative and diligent self-improvement, even in the face of adversity. While Juan embraced the opportunity to grow and acquire valuable knowledge and skills, neglect perpetuated problems for James.

The story of James and Juan reminds us that, regardless of circumstances, we make daily choices. Our actions can profoundly impact our lives. It is a testament to the transformative power of determination, resilience, and personal growth.

Consider the valuable lessons contained within this tale. Just as Juan built a successful future through his diligent preparation and perseverance, so can you overcome challenges and create a path toward prosperity.

If you're diligent, you'll do things carefully, consistently, and to the best of your ability. In personal development, particularly while incarcerated, embracing diligence can be transformative.

The following steps may foster diligence for personal development:

## **Set Clear Goals:**

Start by outlining what you want to achieve. Master a new skill, improve physical fitness, or nurture emotional well-being.



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## **Create a Plan:**

Once you set your goals, create a plan to achieve them. Break down each goal into smaller, manageable tasks, and commit to completing these tasks diligently.

## **Set Priorities:**

As Stephen Covey wrote in *The Seven Habits*, ensure you put first things first. You've got to take little steps to open new opportunities later.

## **Consistency:**

Be consistent in your efforts. Diligence isn't about making one significant effort; it's about the small, regular steps that lead to substantial change over time.

## **Focus:**

Concentrate on the task at hand. Maintaining focus in an environment full of distractions is an act of diligence that can significantly enhance your personal development.

## **Patience:**

Practice patience. Achieving goals takes time, and diligence means persisting despite slow progress.

If you follow this path and memorialize your efforts, others will notice when you begin to self-advocate in the future.



**QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES: IN ONE HOUR, ANSWER AS YOU DEEM APPROPRIATE.**

How do you understand the concept of diligence?

Why do you think diligence can lead to personal development?

Share a recent example when you demonstrated diligence in accomplishing a task or pursuing a goal.

How did your diligence contribute to your personal growth?

How can practicing diligence help you prepare for a successful life after release?

What specific tasks or goals are you pursuing diligently during your time in prison?

**Activity:**

Reflect on a recent task or goal you've worked on. Write down how you demonstrated diligence in this process and what you learned from it. Identify one new approach you could adopt to enhance your diligence further.

Remember, diligence is about the journey, not just the destination. It's about embracing the process, being committed to your tasks, and doing them to the best of your ability. As you continue to grow and develop in prison, the diligence you cultivate now will form a strong foundation for your success upon release.

