

SECTION I

PREPARING FOR SUCCESS AFTER PRISON

Welcome to our course: Preparing for Success after Prison.

As readers will find in this course, it's never too early, and it's never too late to begin preparing for success after prison.

Why?

Lots of reasons, including recidivism rates.

No one believes that they will return to prison after release. Unfortunately, statistics show that many people going into the system face enormous hurdles when they get out. From the time of an initial arrest, a person's life changes in unanticipated ways:

- » They must interact with criminal defense lawyers, prosecutors, and a judicial system they don't understand.
- » If a prison term follows, people get separated from those they love. Friends and family move on, which causes anxiety.
- » While living in the system, constant challenges can complicate an adjustment—regardless of security level.
- » Upon release, people face challenges finding housing, securing credit, or keeping up with an ever-changing society.

On the other hand, some people leave prison and thrive. Take the case of Weldon Long. His struggles with addiction influenced his behavior as a young man. Weldon participated in armed robberies that led to three separate prison terms. During his first two terms, he adjusted to the culture of confinement. Decisions inside led to further problems outside. After his third conviction, Weldon decided to transform his life. Now he leads a company that provides sales training to major corporations, such as Wells Fargo, Federal Express, Home Depot, and others.

What made the difference?

During his third term, Weldon decided he didn't want to live a criminal lifestyle any longer. He chose to prepare for success after prison. Regardless of what went on inside the penitentiary, he could always work toward improving himself by:

- » Enhancing his vocabulary,
- » Improving his writing skills,
- » Becoming a better verbal communicator,



- » Evolving his critical-thinking skills,
- » Developing a self-directed work ethic.

Like many other people in prison, Weldon eventually learned that regardless of what went on around him, he bore the responsibility to prepare for success upon release.

Many people in prison believe that while living inside, they should focus on the culture of confinement and forget about the world outside. People who succeed upon release understand that an urgency exists. The sooner they start sowing seeds for success, the more effective they become at opening opportunities.

Our course on Preparing for Success after Prison urges participants to pursue a self-directed strategy. We offer the course in three sections:

Section 1:

- » Lessons 1 through 5 offer an introduction, showing the power that comes from leading a values-based, goal-oriented adjustment.

Section 2:

- » Lessons 6 through 15 provides guidance on how any person in prison can use this strategy to begin sowing seeds for a better outcome.

Section 3:

- » Lessons 16 through 30 offer stand-alone lessons on personal development.

Each lesson should require about one hour to compete. Participants who work through the 30-hour course should engineer a personal release plan that will allow them to:

- » Define the best possible outcome,
- » Create a release plan that will lead to success,
- » Put priorities in place,
- » Develop their tools, tactics, and resources,
- » Create personal accountability metrics, and
- » Motivate them to work relentlessly at executing the plan.

Our entire team at Prison Professors believes that anyone can work toward becoming extraordinary and compelling. It all starts with a personal release plan. Iterate the plan over time and document the incremental steps necessary to prepare for success.

For people in federal prison who want ongoing support, please send us a Corrlinks invite to get our newsletters.

We believe in you.



AFTERWORD

Build a Record of Your Progress

On behalf of everyone at Prison Professors Charitable Corporation, thank you for working through this course.

Our nonprofit provides free educational resources to help justice-impacted people prepare for success. We encourage participants to use their time intentionally, develop useful skills, and create a written record of their growth.

During the 26 years I served in federal prison, I learned that personal development becomes more powerful when we document it. I earned academic degrees, wrote books, developed release plans, and preserved evidence of the work I completed. That record helped others understand how I was preparing for success.

You can build a similar record through a free Profile on PrisonProfessors.org.

What to Include in Your Profile

Use your Profile to document:

- » Biography: Describe your background, the lessons you have learned, and how you are preparing for success.
- » Journal Entries: Record the decisions, habits, and actions that demonstrate continued growth.
- » Book Reports: Explain what you learned from each book and how you will apply those lessons.
- » Release Plan: Describe your plans for housing, employment, education, finances, health, family responsibilities, and community support.
- » Accomplishments: Record courses, work assignments, certificates, commendations, and other evidence of progress.



A Profile does not guarantee any particular outcome. It gives you a way to show the work you are doing and the person you are becoming.

How to Create Your Profile

Ask a family member or trusted friend to: Visit PrisonProfessors.org.

Select Profiles.

Follow the instructions to create your Profile.

Save the login information securely.

Add the written work you send to them.

Your family member or trusted contact may update the Profile on your behalf.

Points and Leaderboards

Participants may earn points when they add written work to their Profiles. The leaderboards recognize people who consistently document their progress.

Profile participation is optional. Profile points do not determine First Step Act eligibility or the award of First Step Act time credits. Building a Profile is separate from completing Preparing for Success After Prison under the supervision of an authorized facilitator.

When You Need Assistance

If you do not have a family member or trusted friend who can help, contact our team. Email: Interns@PrisonProfessors.org. Or use the US Post office:

Prison Professors Charitable Corporation

1205 BMC Drive, Suite 706

Cedar Park, TX 78613



When writing, include:

- » Your full name
- » Your registration or identification number
- » Your institution
- » Your return mailing address
- » A clear explanation of the assistance you need

You may also send biography updates, journal entries, book reports, release-plan sections, and other written material for your Profile. Keep copies of everything you send whenever possible.

Continue Building

Your past will always remain part of your story, but it does not have to control your future. The decisions you make today can influence how others perceive you and what opportunities may become available later.

Do not wait for an opportunity before beginning to prepare. Build the record now.

With hope and respect,

Michael Santos

Founder

Prison Professors Charitable Corporation

1205 BMC Drive, Suite 706

Cedar Park, TX 78613

