

## UNDERSTANDING WEB3

# **PREFACE: PREPARING TODAY FOR SUCCESS TOMORROW**

A Prison Professors Self-Directed Course

### **A PERSONAL NOTE FROM ME TO YOU**

If you are working through this course in a prison, you may be studying without an instructor and with limited access to books, technology, or people who can answer your questions. I understand the frustration that can come from those conditions. I also know that meaningful learning can begin with a printed lesson, a pen, and a decision to use time deliberately.

My name is Michael Santos. I am the founder of Prison Professors, a nonprofit organization that provides educational resources to people in prison. I created Prison Professors to share lessons that leaders taught me while I served 26 years in federal prison. Those lessons helped me prepare for release, build trust, create opportunities, and become financially independent.

After reaching financial independence, I devoted the rest of my life to this mission. I want to show people in prison how they can use time today to prepare for success tomorrow. I cannot promise that a course will produce a job, an income stream, a sentence reduction, or a particular institutional decision. I can promise that disciplined learning and a documented record of preparation can give other people more evidence to consider when they evaluate you.

I began my journey with introspection and questions. I studied people who had built lives of meaning and contribution. Then I compared the decisions they made with the decisions that had brought me to prison. I understood that the system would not change on my behalf. If I wanted a different future, I had to change the way I thought and acted.

I read, wrote, reflected, and kept records of what I learned. I tried to connect each lesson with a decision I could make. Over time, those small choices became a body of work. I shared much of that journey in *Earning Freedom: Conquering a 45-Year Term*, which is part of our curriculum at Prison Professors.

The work I completed while serving my sentence helped people see more than my conviction and prison record. They could evaluate the goals I set, the books I studied, the projects I completed, and the commitments I kept. Some people began to

trust me before they ever met me. Their trust created relationships and opportunities that helped me build several income streams after release.

Your path will be your own. Still, you can begin using the same process: learn, think, write, document, and improve. We want every member of our community to become a Prison Professor. Write your own curriculum and show how you are using time today to prepare for higher levels of success tomorrow.

## **WHY I FOUNDED PRISON PROFESSORS**

People in prison do not have access to the same learning resources that exist in society. Internet access may be restricted or unavailable. A person may not be able to watch a video, join an online class, or practice with a digital tool. Lockdowns, transfers, work assignments, health problems, and other conditions may interrupt a study plan.

Prison Professors exists to help close that gap. We create self-directed courses that people can use in print and offline. We provide those resources without charging the government or the people completing the courses. A participant does not need to purchase anything to learn from the self-directed courses we offer.

Our work rests on a simple belief. When people invest time and effort in themselves, they can develop knowledge, judgment, communication skills, and confidence. When they memorialize what they learn by writing, they create evidence of their commitment to personal development. That record can help them prepare for employment, entrepreneurship, community service, and lawful income opportunities.

No document guarantees an outcome. Yet a strong record can strengthen conversations with family members, mentors, employers, program staff, and other decision-makers. We believe that greater preparation can help families build stability and can contribute to reducing intergenerational cycles of poverty and recidivism.

## **THE THREE PROMISES I MAKE**

I make three promises to every member of the Prison Professors community.

### **1. I WILL ALWAYS BE TRUTHFUL.**

» If I do not know an answer, I will not pretend that I do.

### **2. I WILL NEVER ASK YOU TO DO ANYTHING THAT I DID NOT DO.**

» I pursued self-directed learning while serving my sentence. I wrote about what I learned. I documented goals, progress, setbacks, and revised plans. I



reached out to people and invited them to evaluate my work. The exercises in this course follow that same discipline.

### **3. YOU WILL NEVER PAY PRISON PROFESSORS FOR THE RESOURCES WE PROVIDE.**

- » We do not charge participants or government agencies for these educational resources. Supporters who believe in the mission help us continue. Their support allows us to distribute courses and encourage people who are preparing for law-abiding, contributing lives.
- » These promises create accountability for me. I encourage you to create promises for yourself as well. A personal code can guide decisions when motivation is low, circumstances change, or no instructor is present.

### **EDUCATION CAN BEGIN FROM WHERE YOU ARE**

Some participants have enjoyed school for years. Others may have left school early, struggled with reading, lost confidence, or spent more time surviving than studying. If education has not been part of your history, you do not need to hide from that history. You can start from your present position.

Self-directed learning does not require you to know everything before you begin. It requires you to take responsibility for the next step. You can read one section. You can circle an unfamiliar term. You can write a question in the margin. You can explain an idea in your own words. You can complete one dated response and then return for the next lesson.

Progress may feel slow at first in this course on Web3. Technical words such as blockchain, wallet, token, smart contract, and decentralization may be unfamiliar. The lessons define those words and use examples to build understanding. If a paragraph is difficult, read it again. Break it into smaller parts. Use the vocabulary section. Write what you think the passage means before checking another explanation.

The purpose is not to memorize every definition. The purpose is to strengthen the way you learn, question claims, compare choices, identify risks, and communicate your reasoning. Those abilities can transfer to many fields, including fields that do not use Web3.

### **YOUR PROFILE CAN BECOME AN ASSET**

At Prison Professors, we established the Profiles component so that any participant can build a public or shareable record of preparation. A Profile gives you a place to show more than a criminal charge or a sentence. It can show how you are using time, what you are learning, how your thinking is changing, and what you intend to contribute.



### **YOUR PROFILE MAY INCLUDE:**

- » A biography that explains the experiences, values, and decisions that shaped you.
- » Journal entries that record what you learned and how you intend to apply it.
- » Book reports that show reading comprehension, reflection, and communication.
- » Release plans that identify goals, resources, risks, responsibilities, and measurable steps.
- » Course responses and completed projects that demonstrate sustained self-directed learning.

A Profile becomes more credible when it contains specific, dated work. Instead of writing only, “I want to improve,” you can identify what you studied, the insight you gained, the choice you will make, and the date when you will review your progress. Over time, those entries can show consistency, growth, and follow-through.

That record can become an asset for self-advocacy. You may use it to help family members, mentors, employers, program staff, or decision-makers understand your preparation. It may support a lawful request for greater responsibility, a new opportunity, or a higher level of liberty. The authority to grant any request belongs to the appropriate decision-maker, and a Profile does not guarantee relief. It gives you a stronger way to present evidence of your work.

Prison Professors will promote participants who work consistently to develop their Profiles. Our goal is to help the broader community find and evaluate your discipline through your writing.

### **WHY I CHOSE WEB3**

Web3 is an evolving area of the digital economy. It includes blockchains, digital assets, smart contracts, decentralized applications, and new ways for people to coordinate online. Some projects are useful. Some are experimental. Some are poorly designed or dishonest. Prices can be volatile, transactions may be irreversible, and legal or regulatory requirements can change.

I did not create this course to promote speculation or encourage you to buy a token. You can complete every lesson without internet access, an account, a wallet, a digital asset, a purchase, or a transaction. I created it to help you understand a technology that may influence future work, commerce, recordkeeping, and communities.

The course also includes a real example connected with Prison Professors. CZ is the founder of Binance. We became friends as he went through his own experience with

the justice system. I helped him work on his biography, *Freedom of Money*, and I narrated the audiobook. In the book, CZ wrote about his support for Prison Professors.

After the book was published, people whom neither CZ nor I knew organized an independent Web3 community with a token created in support of our nonprofit mission. Neither CZ nor I created the token. Prison Professors did not organize, manage, or control the token project. The community website identifies the effort as independent, not as an official Prison Professors product or endorsement.

The independent community used BNB Smart Chain, a public blockchain, and programmed transaction fees that send resources to a public treasury address supporting our nonprofit mission. A blockchain explorer allows anyone to view activity associated with a public address. In Lesson 9, we explain how the BscScan explorer displays that public record.

A screenshot supplied for this course on July 21, 2026, showed the public treasury address holding more than 943 wrapped BNB, or WBNB, along with a smaller native BNB balance. The approximate market value shown at that time exceeded \$500,000. The balance can change as transactions occur, and the dollar estimate can rise or fall with the market price of BNB.

I share this case as an educational example, not as a recommendation to acquire or promote any asset. The case shows how people who did not know me personally learned about documented work, formed a community, used Web3 tools, and chose to support a mission. That experience reinforces a lesson I learned in prison: when you prepare consistently and make your work visible, people may discover your record and decide to help.

Future lessons return to this case to explain how tokens, public addresses, custody, transactions, smart contracts, decentralized finance, and governance interact. I encourage you to evaluate the case with the same questions you would apply to any project. What can you verify? Who controls each part? Which risks remain? Which claims are observations, and which are predictions?

## **HOW I ENCOURAGE YOU TO USE THIS COURSE**

I encourage participants to work through the sequence in order. Each lesson builds upon the previous lesson. You do not need to finish quickly. A steady routine will help you retain more than a rushed reading.

**READ BEFORE ANSWERING.**

Read the entire lesson before writing your final response. Mark unfamiliar terms and return to the definitions. If your circumstances allow, explain the central idea aloud or in writing as if you were teaching another person.

**WRITE YOUR OWN RESPONSE FIRST.**

At the end of each lesson, answer the questions in your own words. Use complete sentences. Include examples from the lesson and, when appropriate, connect the concept with your life, goals, or observations. Record the date. Those entries can show that you are self-directed and striving to reach a higher potential.

The printed workbook does not include writing space. Use separate paper and keep your responses together when possible. A simple heading can identify the course, lesson number, lesson title, and date.

**COMPARE ONLY AFTER YOU FINISH.**

An appendix will include sample responses written as I would answer them. Do not begin with those responses. Complete your own work first. Then compare your reasoning with the sample.

The sample is not the only acceptable answer. Use it to identify an idea you missed, a risk you should consider, or a clearer way to explain your conclusion. If the comparison changes your thinking, write a short revision. That revision becomes evidence that you can receive information, reflect, and improve.

**ADD THE WORK TO YOUR PROFILE.**

If you want to extend the exercise, record your strongest responses as dated journal entries on your Prison Professors Profile. If email is available, send the response to [Playbook@PrisonProfessors.org](mailto:Playbook@PrisonProfessors.org). Put the date you completed the journal entry in the subject line and identify the Web3 lesson.

If you do not have email access, you may send the response through a family member who can upload it, or mail it to:

Prison Professors 1205 BMC Drive, Suite 706 Cedar Park, TX 78613

Follow all facility rules for correspondence. Do not include passwords, private keys, seed phrases, authentication codes, account credentials, or other sensitive information in a response.

## **BUILD A PATTERN.**

One response may show effort on one day. A series of dated responses can show a pattern of self-directed learning. Add book reports, journal entries, release-plan updates, and other projects when you can. Review older work and notice where your writing, judgment, and goals have improved.

## **MY INVITATION TO YOU**

I know that confinement can limit your choices. It can also create long periods when the future feels distant. I cannot choose your circumstances or promise how another person will respond to your work. I can encourage you to control the choices that remain available.

You can choose to learn. You can choose to write. You can choose to document a plan. You can choose to revise after receiving new information. You can choose to build a record that shows who you are becoming.

That process worked for me. It helped me turn years in prison into years of preparation. It helped me earn trust, build relationships, create lawful income streams, and devote my life to helping others prepare.

I invite you to begin this course with the same spirit. Do not wait until every resource is available. Start with the lesson in front of you. Complete the work in your own voice. Date it. Preserve it. Then take the next step.

Your past will always be part of your story. Every day gives you an opportunity to write a new chapter. A documented record cannot erase a conviction or guarantee an outcome. It can show your preparation as you respond to collateral consequences: the legal, social, and practical barriers that can follow a conviction.

Develop your curriculum. Become your own Prison Professor.

Michael Santos,

Founder, Prison Professors