

March 18, 2020

Dear Reader,

We are writing to you as the graduating class of the fall 2019 Arizona State University Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. Inside-Out is so much more than any one thing. We are 20 intellectuals who came together to embark on a journey of knowledge and self-discovery. We are mothers, daughters, and sons. We are people, people searching to be understood, and to be heard. We are unique in our stories; we come from all walks of life, and yet within the walls of the Arizona State Prison at Perryville, we are all students of Inside-Out.

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program is an international program that provides transformational learning within prison walls. It moves beyond the traditional boundaries of a classroom or cell. It provides the opportunity for those inside to be more than just people in prison, and for those outside to be more than just people in college. This fall, we worked together to enhance the lives of people who live and work within our correctional system.

We are not calling politicians and legislators to action in order to reform a broken system. In fact, we would not have had the opportunity of Inside-Out if not for the support for programming by the Arizona Department of Corrections. We are also not expecting to provoke a watershed moment in history as the result of our twenty voices and a single written letter. We are more realistic than that. But we believe that highlighting problems facing the correctional system as it stands today is a narrative that has been heard too often. A narrative focusing on solutions brings promise, and we choose to focus on a path forward that is achievable through small actions.

So, we are simply asking for your consideration of our thoughts and for you to assist us in the sharing of these ideas to a greater community. See these concepts within yourself, teach them to others, and humanize the experience of those so often disenfranchised in society. No matter your walk of life, we all have the potential to be a part of the creation of a better correctional system; a solution far greater than any single individual.

We call our transformational learning approach **Motivational Justice**. Motivational Justice thrives on the power of the desire within us all to find purpose and meaning within our lives. We read four books in class that contributed to our ideas on Motivational Justice and we encourage you to read them yourself: *Drive* by Daniel Pink, *The Power of Meaning* by Emily Smith, *Give and Take* by Adam Grant, and *The Culture Code* by Daniel Coyle. Most importantly, Motivational Justice is inspired by our own experiences in life and what we shared with one another within the prison at Perryville. To us, Motivational Justice means working alongside the Arizona Department of Corrections to help people who live and work in prison to find meaning and purpose in how they live their lives. People who live and work in prison yearn to make a positive impact on the lives of others. They just need the opportunities to do so.

Below we have compiled a short list of 10 key takeaways and lessons we have learned from our books, our class activities, and our talks with each other that we would like to share with you:

1. Anyone can be a mentor. The bond between a mentor and mentee has the potential to build a whole greater than the sum of its parts.
2. Change does not have to wait for tomorrow. You can create the conditions necessary for change to happen today.
3. You do not have to do something extraordinary to live a meaningful life. Meaning can be found in the smallest of things.
4. "Treat a man as he is, and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he could be, and he will become what he should be." (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
5. Autonomy creates the sense of free will that drives us to attain the success that comes from our own internal desires.
6. Embrace discomfort, if you are not uncomfortable, then you are not learning.
7. There is immense strength to be found in vulnerability.
8. There will be times when you succeed and there will be times when you fail. Oftentimes, we view resilience as a *reactionary* tool to be used when things go wrong. Rather, you can build your resilience *proactively* to prepare for the inevitable downturns in life.
9. One of the most important aspects of belonging is being heard. Taking the time to listen to someone and understand their perspective is essential for productive communication.
10. There is power in how we choose to define ourselves; the way in which we tell our story is important, and others can learn from our experiences.

Within the boundaries of our classroom realities were shattered, emotions were untangled, stories were heard, and **we were forever changed**. This was not just a class of "inmates" and "college kids," it was a class of people. People who yearned to understand each other and to grow with each other. **Now we want to hear from you**. How do you see these principles in your life or organization? What did we miss? We do not want our efforts to go to waste, please share with us your experiences so that we may continue to learn and add to our knowledge. You may reach us at the address below, and we eagerly await learning what motivational justice means to you.

In the envelope you will also find a sticker that we have created for you to help spread our message. We encourage you to stick it on your reusable bottle, the back of your phone, or anywhere people will see it. Time only stands still if you do. So help us to inspire people, in prison and out, to make moves and do whatever it is that will bring them meaning and purpose in life.

Thank you for reading our letter and for joining us to be a part of the solution.



A collection of handwritten signatures in brown ink, arranged in two rows. The first row includes names like Kelly, Alicia, RALEIGH, Christy, Roger, Jamie, Alexis, Juhie, and Cora. The second row includes names like Michele, Rachel, Josh, Yasmine, Juan, Veronica, Jack, Gene, and Bri.

The ASU Inside Out Prison Exchange Program Fall Class of 2019

You may also help us put these ideas to practice at <http://www.asufoundation.org/asuinside-out>