

Healing All Wounds

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A Guide for Those Affected
by the US Criminal Justice
System

by

A Reformed Man

Table of Contents

Healing is Possible.....	4
The Harsh Reality	6
Why Read This Book?.....	8
You Are Among Friends	10
God is With You.....	11
In Due Time	13
It is an Industry.....	15
Three Famous Felons.....	18
Paul	19
Moses.....	20
David	22
In Modern Times, Others Have Gone Before You.....	23
Faith	25
Own Your Past.....	30
Early Release	32
Drugs and Alcohol	34
Initial Housing	36
Email is Necessary.....	37
Transportation	38
Getting Your Own Place.....	40
Schooling.....	43
Career Building.....	46

Interviewing	51
Resumes	54
Mental Health Resources	55
Personal Finance	56
Making Amends	57
Friends.....	62
Dating.....	64
Travel Restrictions.....	65
The Law of Attraction.....	67
Mentors.....	68
Self Employment	69
Getting a Business License	70
Expungement	71
Living life	72
If you're a family member reading this.....	75
Good Books to Read.....	76
Great Audiobooks	77

Healing is Possible

The intended audience for this book is anyone looking to turn their life around after going through part of the criminal justice system.

The fact that you are reading this puts you in the elite few who are trying to better themselves the right way.

The challenges before you may seem insurmountable. I assure you; they are not. Many others have gone before you, including kings, presidents, Biblical figures, ministers, and many authors of the Bible. Women and men alike have thrown away the chains of bondage and began a new life of peace, righteousness, and upright living. Remember that your past is a tool equipped to aid you in this journey we call life.

You are a child of God, and your past is something you have been through for the express purpose of fulfilling God's calling for your life. You are about to begin on an exciting journey, one designed specifically for you.

There will be tough times, including blood, sweat, and tears. And yet, if you keep the faith, you will overcome these things and arise triumphant. I welcome you to this challenge and hope to act as a guide for you on this new stage in your life. You are always welcome to email the author at webmaster@healallwounds.com.

The Harsh Reality

Unfortunately, if you are reading this, you probably have either been convicted or are out on bond. The sad reality is that many of these charges could have been prevented with proper legal representation. If you ever find yourself in trouble again, explain yourself politely to the police and then if things start to take a turn for the worse say nothing more and ask to speak with an attorney. When you meet with your attorney, which can take some time, explain your situation in full and do as they suggest. If you don't feel like your attorney has your back, and they very well may not, fire them and find new council if possible. Not every attorney will fight for you. Do not make the mistake of thinking your attorney will help you conceal a crime or do ANYTHING illegal. Your attorney is there to make sure the DA doesn't give you six months in jail for jaywalking, not help you conceal a

crime. Do not discuss the details of your case with anyone else. This is very important.

If you are in jail, or things are looking that way and you've been charged, if you need things to change, write your attorney a letter and mail it. Expect a week or two to get a response. Nothing in the criminal justice system moves fast. Understand this and be patient. You can email your attorney, if possible. Be aware that police may be able to read your emails. Not that you have anything to hide.

Why Read This Book?

This book is chocked full of ideas for employment, education, housing, and other topics. When combined with a support system, you should see results when using this book. Feel free to email me, the author, at webmaster@healallwounds.com with your tips and tricks as you see fit.

This book is a free service to help you heal your wounds. You are welcome to make copies and distribute it, but I ask that you give credit to me, the author, a reformed man, for writing said book. I also ask that you do not charge for any of the information in this book. If you are a counselor, you are welcome to use this as a free teaching guide.

All of the material is copyrighted, but you are free to share the link to this site, www.healallwounds.com. You can purchase a bound copy of this book on

Amazon for a nominal fee. The bound copy is updated once a year.

You can have a copy of this book sent directly to inmates from Amazon. You can always email the owner of this site at webmaster@healallwounds.com. At this time, I wish to remain anonymous but hope to open my own business in a few years. When that happens, I will come out into the open. As you will find out, I do not promote coming out publicly with your story unless it's necessary. There is still stigma associated with being a reformed man or woman.

You Are Among Friends

Many people have turned their lives around after being processed by the criminal justice system. Unfortunately, most do not share their story.

Even I, the author of this book, have chosen to remain anonymous until I start my own business so that my employer doesn't catch any heat from their customers. The reality is the shame associated with a conviction keeps most of the reformed from sharing their story. If you follow the guidelines in this book, you will have a story of redemption yourself. When you don't need your specific job anymore, I highly encourage you to share your story with others, perhaps even publicly.

God is With You

Even when it looks like all hope is lost, God is still with you. It's important to remember that if you take one step toward God, he will take two steps toward you. Millions of people from every social class understand and appreciate this simple statement.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.- Jeremiah 29:11

Another verse worth remembering is: *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.- Romans 8:28*

Many other books on this subject try to teach you to have the right attitude, but don't address the HOW to rebuild your life after the trauma you have been

through. This source is about HOW to rebuild your life and heal all your wounds.

In Due Time

You are probably wondering, how long will take for this to work? The honest reality is, it depends. If you are ending supervision from a misdemeanor, it will take two years for things to settle back to normal. For felonies, it takes about 4 years from the end of supervision. For sex offenders, it can take even longer. If you are a sex offender, and find this information useful, email me.

The good news is, if you read this book and take it to heart, you should be able to see immediate improvements in about 2-3 months. There will be a slow but steady progression back to normalcy and eventually successful living.

It's sort of like cooking food in a microwave vs a crock pot. The microwave is faster, but the food from the crockpot tastes infinitely better. Embrace the crockpot. Ditch the TV dinner. Taking

shortcuts to success only hurts you, and no one else.

Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty. - Proverbs 21:5

Furthermore, it isn't good to be ignorant, and whoever rushes into things misses the mark. - Proverbs 19:2

The sad reality is that for every source like this one, there are ten criminal justice textbooks for law enforcement.

It is an Industry

I'd like to get something out of the way. The criminal justice system is a business. The players in the game are mostly good people. Like any business, it has bad actors. The political left says that the system is racist and evil. That is not exactly correct. I've seen this from every angle. It is biased against poor people. Like any business, it needs customers. In order to be a customer for the criminal justice system, you have to either have been charged with a crime or convicted of a crime.

People with lots of money can post bail, which lessens the damages that come their way. They can also afford better legal representation, unfair as it may be. Rich people also are less likely to lose their home, their car, and even their family if they are touched by the system. This is because they post bail and have better attorneys.

The system ropes people into the system and then after letting them go ropes them back in on "minor" glitches. It's too easy to get in, and too easy to get out. Little to no thought is given to rehabilitation. It's sad. Remember that law enforcement is an industry, but that the individual players in the system are not out to get you.

The stats for the US criminal justice system are abysmal. Inmates are subject to all kinds of horrible violence, intimidation, and sexual assaults on almost a daily basis. Gangs and hate groups are common. To make matters worse, most inmates will steal everything you have if given the chance.

Based on the recidivism rate, 76.6% within 5 years, there is a very legitimate question of whether the prison industrial complex is working at all. Scandinavian counties like Norway have a

recidivism rate of around 20%. That is worth thinking about.

Things look bleak for the US system. Nevertheless, we are where we are. We the people created this mess by passing laws and voting for elected officials. We aren't going to get through this mess overnight, but this book hopes to make a dent in the issue sooner rather than later.

Three Famous Felons

Now for the examples. If you are a Christian, you are probably already familiar with three very successful reformed felons.

Paul

Before becoming a Christian, the Apostle Paul persecuted Christians, killing many and spreading fear amongst the early Church. He became an apostle and traveled much of the known world at that time spreading the good news. He wrote one third of the New Testament. He was wrongfully imprisoned and executed by the Romans but did incredible work in the interim.

Moses

Another famous felon was Moses. Moses killed an Egyptian in a burst of anger. He then ran from the law and wandered the desert for 40 years, a typical prison sentence. At the ripe age of 80, with his brother's help, he returned to Egypt. He performed dozens of miracles showing God's glory to His people, and to the Egyptians as well. Pharaoh released the Israelites after the angel of death killed all the first-born Egyptians. Moses led the Jewish people out of slavery.

Moses parted the Red Sea which allowed the Jewish people to cross over to the other side. When pharaoh's army started to cross the dry land, God used Moses to collapse the sea and drown the entire Egyptian army in minutes.

That would be more than enough for most people, but God wasn't finished with Moses yet. Moses

then created Mosaic law, the foundation of Jewish laws. He led the Jewish people to the border of the promised land and died at the age of 120!

David

David, the second and most righteous king of the Jewish people, killed his mistress's husband when he got her pregnant. He then began construction of God's temple, which his son finished. He then authored the book of Psalms in the Bible. To add to that, he united the 12 tribes of Israel under one flag. He is widely considered to be the greatest king of the Jewish people.

In Modern Times, Others Have Gone Before You

The odds may seem against you, they are not. Bush 43 was convicted of a DUI and became President. Dick Cheney was arrested twice for DUIs and became Vice President. VP Aaron Burr killed a man in a duel. What happens is that people see you as an unknown risk. At first, some people will approach you with interest. Most people will shy away from you, especially if you have negative tattoos.

I, the author, am heavily tattooed. None of my ink is offensive, and I've never gotten poor treatment due to it. That being said, I cannot over emphasize this: remove or cover up gang tattoos or anything associated with hate. There is no place for that in a free society.

Believe it or not, people want to help those who are seeking God's worthy causes. If you are part of a small group, please let them know what you are going through. Get them to go to bat for you. Ask them to pray for you.

God's love is healing. How do you know if something is from God? The answer is in scripture.

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it – Proverbs 10:22.

Once again, if you take one step toward God, he will take two steps toward you.

Faith

For things to change, you must change. It is important to keep an attitude of gratitude. Always know this.

Faith is the foundation for everything else. If you are not a Christian, I invite you to tithe, contributing 10% of your paycheck for God's worthy causes, for 6 months. You will be amazed at the blessings that pour into your life. Please accept this challenge and see God's plan begin to unfold in your life.

God is the God of second, or third, chances.

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. – Matthew 18:21-22

And never forget:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16

Go to church once a week. Sunday is best, but Wednesday night will do if that is your thing. In some areas, church is offered on Friday and Saturday night. That's a great way to congregate as well. It is best you come in person. Many churches have streaming services, but the best way is to go in person in order to benefit from the fellowship of other believers.

Business casual attire is best for church these days. I go to a conservative church, and no one wears a suit, even the pastor. If you don't have any business casual clothing, fear not. Just go in whatever clothes you have that are clean. We

come to Jesus as we are. Fear not. We are always a work in progress.

Each congregation is different. Do not become too attached to a particular denomination (brand). Each church is unique in its own way. You want to make sure you feel welcomed wherever you choose to go.

Ask yourself this: is your church filled with people who inspire you to achieve greater things and are glowing with the holy spirit? If not, it's time to look for a new church. The congregation should be lively and supportive. You should be able to call it home. Finding the right church is the single most important thing you can do to recover your life. Salvation is just a bonus.

Church may interfere with your work schedule. If it does, without being preachy, ask your boss if you

can get time off to worship. They will most likely want to help.

Read your Bible. It's a free app on your phone!
Make it a point to read the Bible cover to cover at least once. You will be blessed for doing so. Although some people will tell you to read 10 chapters a day, once you have read the good book cover to cover, you only really need to read a daily devotional, which is a great way to stay connected. A good devotional for men is (<https://beresolute.org/mdd/>).

Tithing, putting 10% of your income to God's worthy causes, is key. Put 10% of your paycheck toward God's worthy causes. God promises to bless us for tithing. **This is the only way we are allowed to test God.**

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says

the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty. – Malachi 3:10-11

Most of your tithe should go to support your church’s work. Some of the rest can go to charity.

This will exercise your faith muscle. Give God a six-month challenge and see what happens in your life. You are going to be amazed.

Own Your Past

It is necessary to create a new life for you and your family. When asked by people, admit that you messed up. If you aren't guilty, just say you were convicted of something and that you are reformed now. This approach is dangerous and can backfire.

Admit that most of your friends, and even some of your family, are not looking out for your best interest.

Do not hang out with people you do not want to be like. If you are on parole/probation, you are not allowed to associate with felons. This means you may have to give up a lot of people.

If you aren't sure about someone being a felon, email them asking if you can spend time with them. Make sure they respond via email, so you'll have a written record.

You do not need to come out and make your
past public. *You need a canned response if
things do come up.*

Early Release

If you are fortunate enough to be offered parole or probation, you should take it. The terms of your release are different in every circumstance, but look something like:

1. Maintain a stable job
2. Have no contact with law enforcement
3. Do not hang out with felons
4. Don't leave the county or state without permission
5. Submit to drug testing
6. No warrant needed to search you

You must follow all rules of your probation. If you have any questions, just email your PO using your smart phone. Early release may sound painful, but it is really giving you a head start on the rest of your life. Be thankful you aren't behind bars, and make sure to be polite and extra well-mannered to your PO. You want them on your side!

If you have gang tattoos, get them removed immediately. Many tattoo shops have apprentices. If they do, they may be able to do black out tattoos over your offensive ones at little to no cost.

You may want to ask to go to a halfway house in a different part of the state to avoid the gang you were a part of. This cannot be overstated. If you go back to the same crowd after your release, you will end up back behind bars. Do not make the mistake of thinking you can outsmart the system. You cannot. Do not try to.

Drugs and Alcohol

Abstain from all forms of drugs and alcohol. Only smoke cigarettes if you feel the need. People generally don't get assaulted over a pack of cigarettes. Your past actions have proven that you can have impaired judgement, and you don't need drugs or alcohol making things worse for you.

You want to stay away from anyone who drinks or uses drugs in your presence. This is especially true for individuals with a history of substance abuse, and people with mental illnesses. A reformed addict relapsing can lose everything overnight, especially if they are drug tested at work.

Furthermore, people with mental health concerns can have acute episodes triggered by intoxicants.

If you have a history of substance abuse, I recommend visiting:

1. Narcotics anonymous.
2. Alcoholics anonymous.

These 12 step programs have been proven to work.

Initial Housing

Homeless shelters and half way homes work at first. If you want to further your education, which will be covered in a later section, see if you can stay with a family member and take classes while living with them. I highly recommend doing so. Be prepared to pay some sort of reduced rent.

Email is Necessary

Gmail is your friend, and its free. At first, you will have trust issues. Getting over this is simple. Create a Gmail account and use your smart phone to email people. You will create a paper trail this way. Get with your lawyer on Gmail for questions you may have.

If you are on parole/probation, your PO may have email too. Ask if you can email them questions. It is important to stay on their good side. Your professional demeanor will help you succeed.

Transportation

Cars can be difficult. If you had a car when you got arrested, do everything in your power to keep it. It may get impounded. If it does, try to get someone to pick it up for you and hold it for you. Unless you are in Manhattan, it is much easier to find a job if you have a reliable car.

If you do need to buy a car, don't finance it. Save up and buy a cheap \$2000-\$3000 Honda or Toyota and have it checked out by a mechanic before you buy it. It should last until you are on your feet.

If you don't have access to a car, try and get to a residence where you can use a bus pass. These are inexpensive and buses are reliable. If that doesn't work, consider walking to work. As a last resort, ride a bike. The reason a bike is a last resort is you'll be sweaty when you get to work.

Bosses don't like this. If there is a shower or gym near your work, that changes things.

Getting Your Own Place

If you want to live with family, that is a choice. If you are a felon, you aren't allowed to be around weapons. If you are a sex offender, you aren't allowed to be around kids. To be frank, especially while you are on supervised release, unless the other party is totally OK with you being a custom fit, it is best you do your own thing. If you do choose to live with someone, use your Gmail account to make sure they understand your restrictions in writing.

If you find yourself in a halfway home, stay as long as you feel welcome and save up cash. Once you have done that, your next step is to get a cheap one bedroom apartment on your own. Don't try and get a roommate unless you know them well, and they don't have a record. Many apartment complexes don't allow tenants with criminal records. The good news is you can filter for this

rapidly. Simply generate a pre-canned introduction, go on craigslist, and email every ad that interests you with your intro using your Gmail account. Within 72 hours, you'll know exactly where to look!

Although it may seem counterintuitive, if you continue renting a cheap one bedroom apartment, you should have no trouble building up some cash reserves.

With your savings, strongly consider buying a one or two bedroom condo in an area that is desirable to you. If it's a cheap condo, it should have roughly the same monthly payment as your apartment. The great part is, sex offender constraints aside, you won't be denied the ability to own a condo like you have been when renting an apartment.

You can browse realtors and condos online through your phone. Try out the Zillow app as an example.

Getting a mortgage can be tricky. As long as you have two years of steady work experience and rental history, with no new credit blemishes, you should be ok. Churchill Mortgage is a mortgage broker that specializes in these sorts of things. Look them up online and see what they can do for you.

If your credit is keeping you from moving forward, I recommend a Dave Ramsey course. It's recommended for everyone, but especially those with poor credit.

Schooling

Education makes a big difference in people's lives. If you have started or completed additional education, put this on your resume/cover letter.

Assuming you are locked up, if the jail or prison you are in offers jobs or higher education, it is strongly recommended you take advantage of these activities. Start small. GEDs are often offered in jail / prison. Doing so will look good when trying to gain an early release and will enable you to get a leg up on finding a job when you do get out.

Depending on your offense, you may not be able to get a student loan. Fear not, you can usually pay for community college or trade schools while working. Remember to put your new career and studies first. This means if you can afford to not work overtime you should consider it. Do not take summers off and be sure you earn your

degree. Full degrees are a steppingstone to greatness.

For trade schools, ask to speak with their career services and explain your situation. Emphasize that your past is very much in the past. Ask about career opportunities. Find two or three things that interest you.

Go online to make sure you can perform the job legally. Many states restrict the jobs you can perform.

For college / grad school, start at a community college. Make sure you get an associate's degree. The credits are much more likely to transfer if you have an associate's degree. After your first semester, start applying for scholarships. You may be surprised at how much money you get.

Stay at local low cost state colleges, especially for undergrad. Master's degrees can be tricky. Generally speaking, lawyers and doctors can't have records. PhDs can, but have their options severely cut back if they are on a research track. IT and business masters are good options.

If you aren't sure about this, email your attorney and the director of the program you are in. You can start by asking if they do a background check to enter the program. Be tactful.

If you pursue an advanced degree, you are sort of in no mans land. It's so rare to have people with a criminal record come this far, that the people hiring you won't have an established process. Just be patient and open with them. Keep the faith.

Career Building

A faithful (right-minded) man will abound with blessings, But he who hurries to be rich will not go unpunished. - Proverbs 28:20

If you are a felon just getting out of a jail or prison sentence of a year or more, do not be picky when looking for a job. Take the first HONEST FULLTIME job that you can find and stay for a year before looking for new work. You have been out of the mainstream workforce for a year or more and are not in a position to negotiate. The best thing you can do is find a stable job and work it with consistency and diligence.

Prove to others you are reliable and can hold down a full time gig. After a year, you will be in a much better situation to find gainful employment. This may be painful. Focus on things you can enjoy,

such as listening to music on Spotify for free on your smart phone or going for a walk.

Your main obstacle to employment is that employers don't trust you. The second obstacle to employment is that employers can't insure you. You can't do anything about the second. If you used to work in an industry that is off limits, be aware of this. Success is possible. It is time to change industries.

The best recipe for building trust is to use your network. If a trusted friend who knows you well either from your life before your record, or from Church, and is willing to vouch for you, use this person to find employment.

One of the best options is to send your resume throughout your network or mail a few note cards with your info on them to people. It just depends on

which camp you are in. Networking is key during your job search.

Let everyone you know that you are looking for a job. Let people know you are a 'custom fit', but don't go into the details unless you really know the person well.

The best course is to tell HR about your situation up front, if there is an HR person in the company.

Don't start off with your bombshell, but do mention it during the first conversation. Try to get your story in writing with the full scoop of how you have turned your life around. Be sure to include any support groups, education, getting off probation or parole, and that you have excellent references.

Honest Jobs is a great website to look for jobs where having a criminal record is considered acceptable. It is recommended you create an

account and see if you can find something that suits you. Also look on indeed.com and monster.com.

It never hurts to have a LinkedIn, professional Facebook, account. Be sure to use a conservative photo and post only what you want the whole world to see. Network like a mad man.

Do not try get rich stock schemes or novel business ideas. Keeping it simple means you will be able to successfully integrate back into society as a respectable citizen.

Most blue collar jobs allow people with criminal records. Good places to start are landscaping and tire on shops. Ask around and see what type of work you can come up with. You may be surprised at your results.

Remember that any job during supervised release is a steppingstone to something

better. As soon as you get off supervision, you should be able to find a much better job.

Interviewing

To get any job, you must go through an interview. Regardless of what kind of job you are interviewing for, wear a conservative suit. The best place to find a suit is your local thrift shop, such as Goodwill. You should be able to find a suit for under \$100. If you don't know how to tie a tie, search YouTube.

If you don't have a GED or high school diploma, get one now. Make that a priority. Work odd jobs in the interim.

You have two options when addressing your record. Be upfront with HR or tell the hiring manager directly. It is suggested that you be upfront with your issue with HR at the beginning of the process. It is reasonable to assume that recruiters will ask your references about your record. Prep your references for this and make

sure they will go to bat for you. You may want to include your pastor as an extra reference.

Alternatively, you can tell your potential boss during an in-person interview. They may flat out reject you. It's totally hit or miss. My suggestion is to speak with HR and use your instincts.

The higher up the food chain you are, the less likely you are to offend by being upfront.

Keep things private unless you are ready to retire. I am a felon, but I don't share my story publicly because I am afraid it might cause my employer to lose customers. For that reason, I'm anonymously creating this book. Don't try and buck the system. You are not special. There is much stigma attached to your past. Understand this.

If you don't have a printer, you can use the printers at the UPS store and FedEx store for a fee. Some FedEx stores are open 24/7.

Resumes

Your free Gmail account comes with a free subscription to Google docs. You can access this free service at <http://docs.google.com> . You can use this terrific service to write your resume. It won't be the prettiest thing, but it will more than suffice. You will need a desktop or laptop computer to use Google docs. If you don't have a computer, I suggest using one for free at your local library. If you don't know how to use a computer, as may be the case if you are getting out of an extended prison sentence, you can take computer literacy courses at your local library too. Resume template apps are available for free on your smart phone too. They are worth trying too.

Mental Health Resources

If your record is the result of a mental illness, be upfront about it. Some people will think you will relapse, but many more people will think you should be given a second chance. There are still consequences, but knowing you were not of sound mind makes things easier. If you are suffering from a mental illness, it's important that you get help from a physician. You may not like the meds, but they are far better than the illness itself.

Personal Finance

I strongly recommend taking Dave Ramsey's personal finance course called Financial Peace University. It is \$11/month and may even be offered through your local church. If you are under 30, you have a reasonable shot at retiring a millionaire. His program will show you how.

Making Amends

Now that your life is back on track, you may want to make some amends. Wait until you've been out of jail or prison for a year. If there is a restraining order of any kind in play, do not reach out. If the person you want to contact is restricted due to being a felon and you are on early release, wait until after you are off supervision.

Reach out via email. Have a brief introduction and own your past.

Admit that you messed up. Take full responsibility for your actions. Say you are sorry. Talk about how you have taken steps towards living a righteous life. Talk about how you've strengthened your faith and stayed free of any new charges.

If on early release, mention that you follow the requirements. Mention that you are clean and

sober. Mention that you have a full time job. If you now own a car, mention that too. See if they'd like to do coffee and catch up. Ask them to write back. Good luck.

Godly Relationships

If you learn nothing else from this chapter, remember that if you keep doing the same thing, you will keep getting the same results. We teach people how to treat us. If we allow misbehavior, it will only grow. This is probably the second biggest take away from this chapter.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. - 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

The reality is, if you've experienced jail or prison, you've spent some time with some really messed up people. Most of the people in the system have no desire to better themselves. They're looking for their next con or fix when they get out.

They have sided with the devil. And the devil wishes to steal, kill, and destroy your life in every way he possibly can. He is relentless. Fear not, by being a tithing Christian, the devil can't touch you. Isn't that great?

You may be in a situation where you don't rightly know what healthy relationships look like. Figuring that out is beyond the scope of this book. Fear not, many resources are available. Seek out a counselor at your church and see where that leads.

The book Boundaries helps you understand what upright relationships look like. Another good read is

Codependent No More. If you are in a relationship with someone who has substance abuse issues, Codependent No More is a must read.

Friends

With few exceptions, you probably want to steer clear of most of the people you associated with prior to your conviction. Also, the characteristics of your inner circle will mold you into the future you want to become. Be mindful of this.

"He who blesses his neighbor with a loud voice early in the morning, It will be counted as a curse to him [for it will either be annoying or his purpose will be suspect]. A constant dripping on a day of steady rain And a contentious (quarrelsome) woman are alike; Whoever attempts to restrain her [criticism] might as well try to stop the wind, And grasps oil with his right hand. As iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens [and influences] another [through discussion]. He who tends the fig tree will eat its fruit, And he who faithfully protects and cares for his master will be honored." - Proverbs 27:14-18

If someone in your inner circle tries to get you to do something either unethical or illegal, completely cut this person off. You need to have a ZERO tolerance policy for riff raff. You are not in jail anymore and can choose who you associate with. These sorts of people will only drag you down and get you in trouble again.

Dating

Unless you were married or engaged before your conviction, it's probably best that you remain single for a year when getting out. A lot has changed in your life. Most likely, the type of spouse you would like to have is not interested in you in your current state. Fear not, things will change for the better.

When you do start dating again, do not visit bars or nightclubs. These places will not have the types of people you are looking to meet.

Unless you made the paper, do not bring up the conviction until your relationship is exclusive. This gives you time to prove that you are an upstanding citizen. If you did make the paper, let your potential spouse bring it up, unless it's exclusive and then you should bring it up on your own.

Travel Restrictions

Unless convicted of drug trafficking, you CAN get a passport. You will need to be off parole and probation to leave the country, in most cases the state. If you are a sex offender, speak with law enforcement. These steps should be second nature.

If you are traveling abroad, contact the embassy of the country you wish to visit. Be for warned, many countries do not know their own laws. If that is the response you get, do not travel to these countries unless you are willing to be rejected at customs and turn around to board the next flight back.

Once in the new country, you will want to be sure that you do not rock the boat. Follow all laws. If you get in trouble abroad, it's nearly impossible to get a bond. You will be a prisoner in a place you do not understand. You will be sent back to the US

after your sentence is over, and you may be unable to ever return. Don't take the risk. Be a law-abiding citizen, just like you are in the states.

The Law of Attraction

It may not be purely Christian, but there is no disputing this powerful principle. You become what you think about. If you think of yourself as a magnet, the law of attraction states you will attract like things to you. The law of attraction pulled you into jail with likeminded people. It's worth noting that it's not 100%. The Jews didn't attract the Holocaust for example. If you act the part of an upstanding man or woman, and think that way, you are going to be surprised who you run into and what kind of opportunities come your way.

Mentors

Mentors can be hard to find. When you find one, be thankful.

Put spiritual mentors first. They should be strong in the faith, someone you look up to, and see you for more than your record.

Your professional mentors should be a few years ahead of you professionally. Their education should be equal to or better than you. You should be able to look up to them. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Especially early on in your newfound career, you'll need it. Just like your personal connections, your spiritual and professional connections are important too.

Self Employment

If you have a trade or skills you can use on your own, I highly recommend starting your own business. Being self employed, no one will check your record unless you must apply for a business license. Even then your chances are pretty good. Excellent examples are plumbers, electricians, landscaping services, and more. If you can get your own business up and running, you should be good to go.

Getting a Business License

You may need a business license to be self employed. Depending on the state you are in, you may not have any trouble getting a business license. For example, in Colorado a felony alone cannot be used to prevent you from getting a business license. In other states, you may have slim pickings. If you are unsupervised, you may want to consider moving to a new state to take advantage of the prospects for you there. If you decide to do so, it is highly recommended that you find some sort of new job in your new state before moving. Moving without a job can be a recipe for disaster.

Expungement

You may be one of the fortunate few who can have your case erased from public record. If this is the case, you should do this. Generally speaking, you will need to have 5-10 years of clean living before you qualify for expungement. All of this can be looked up online quite easily. If you made the paper, you should tell people you were arrested but not convicted. State that you don't like to talk about that experience. Most people should understand this.

Understand that some countries do not honor the expungement. For this reason, always report everything when traveling abroad.

Living life

In some ways, having a record makes you a second class citizen. It is suggested you focus on the things you can do:

1. Worship as you see fit in your own way
2. Travel America
3. Go to sporting events
4. Spend time with your family
5. Cook meals
6. Spend time in the great outdoors
7. Go camping
8. Go fishing
9. Go hiking
10. Go to the gym
11. Watch any TV station you want
12. Eat any food you want

13. Read any book you want
14. Go see a movie
15. Sleep in on weekends
16. Write a book
17. Play an instrument
18. Ride a bike
19. Go for a drive
20. Play a board/video game
21. Enjoy romance with your spouse
22. Visit a national park
23. Paint a portrait
24. Drive a classic car
25. Go to a salon
26. Get a massage
27. Go to a buffet
28. Adopt a rescue pet

Living a richly rewarding life is possible. Focus on what you can control. Surround yourself with good friends, family, and faith. Be sure to live below your means and invest for your future. Live a conservative lifestyle. God has much in store for you.

If you follow this book as a guide, you are going to be amazed at what happens. More than one person has walked this road before you. Most people are happy to help someone who is working on one of God's worthy causes.

If you're a family member reading this

If your family member is up against charges, try to get them to take a plea. Going to trial is usually a mess. Pleas do not take long. If they maintain their innocence, fight like tooth and nail and move for a speedy trial. The systems designed to move slowly, but you can force its hand. Read the rest of this book and be as encouraging as you can be. Do not tolerate mediocre behavior. Do not be an enabler. Do not make excuses for them. Do not try and be super chummy with their lawyer. Do consider offering them a room to rent if it makes sense.

Good Books to Read

The Bible

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

The Eighth Habit

The Richest Man in Babylon

Codependent No More

Financial Peace (although most Dave Ramsey books teach the same things)

The Legacy Journey

Beyond Bars

Jails to Jobs

Jobs for Felons (free book on <http://felon-jobs.com/>)

Great Audiobooks

The Ultimate Jim Rohn Library

Change Your Thoughts, Change Your Life

Wayne Dyer's Ultimate Library

You can get most of these books at your local library. I suggest you buy them used on Amazon.com. Doing so will allow you to contribute to your personal library. You should be able to get most of them for under \$10 including shipping.

Notes

