This is How I Leave Prison Every Night

Javonte Dillon

I’m in prison, but my mind is not. Sometimes when I lay down, I think about my future. What do I want when my freedom comes? The thing I think about the most is how I’m going to earn money in the right way, so I won’t spend one more day of my life in prison. I think about the type of job I would like to have. Even though I am not married and don’t have kids, I picture myself coming home from work to my wife and kids, showering, eating a home-cooked meal, and helping my kids with their homework.

This thinking is just a way to keep myself from getting stuck, not physically, but mentally. In prison, you are taken away from the real world. Some people let themselves go. They let go of their freedom in their mind; all they can see is the prison gates. They start to think and act like they’re in prison.

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They start to lose their minds. I have seen so much. One time this dude used the restroom on himself and wiped it all over his face and body. Another time I saw this man try to hang himself because he didn’t want to be on lockdown. That’s just a little bit of what I’ve seen.

In my mind, I am not stuck. I travel as if I am free; I think as if I am free. When I lie down, I think of the places I saw on TV, and I can picture myself there. One of the places I often picture myself is on Miami Beach. It has beautiful women (remember, I am not married yet), nice looking water, jet skis, and all kinds of other things. I really feel like I am there when I mentally zone out and leave prison.

The brain is amazing; I thank God for it. Using my brain is how I leave prison every night.

Javonte Dillon, 22 years old, takes HiSET classes with the Special School Program at the Allen Correctional Center in Kinder, LA. He is 22, and he has been in jail for eight years. He was tried as an adult at the age of 15. He likes writing, rapping, reading, and learning as much as he can. He dislikes people who judge others by how they look and people who harm kids.

Another Form of Travel

When Javonte says he leaves prison every night, what does he mean? How does he do it? How do you use your mind to transport yourself? Where do you go and what do you do? Read Javonte’s biography at the end of the essay. Do you know of children who have been tried as adults? Look up some articles on this topic, develop your opinion, and write about it. (For further reading on prisons, see Issue #40 of The Change Agent <changeagent.nelrc.org>.)