



A Better Human or a Better Criminal?

Sara Davis

BEFORE YOU READ: What does it mean when a train gets derailed?

Getting Derailed

In 2009, I was 16 years old in the 9th grade. I was two grades behind because I had failed twice. I decided to drop out of school and enroll in a GED class. I attended class every day and completed all my assignments. After two months of classes, I was ready to take the practice test. I passed the practice test, so I could take the GED test.

When I woke up on the morning of the test, I was running late. I rushed out of the house, and then I drove as fast as I could to the testing site. When I arrived, I jumped out of my car and ran for the door, but the teacher would not let me in because I was five minutes late. I was so upset and mad at myself. It made me want to give up. Even though I paid the \$100 fee for the test, they still wouldn't let me in the building.

About a year later, I enrolled in another GED class. But, again, I let myself get derailed. This time, I was hanging out with a guy who



wasn't good for me. He steered me in the wrong direction. I would skip class sometimes just to

I want to be a better human.

get high with him. I knew I was doing the wrong thing, but all I wanted to do was be with him. I put him before my education. On the days I did go, I did well, and again I passed the practice test. But on the day of the GED test, I didn't show up. I preferred to go get high with my boyfriend. I was young and naive.

Stupid Choices

I regret not taking it seriously back then because if I had, I would probably be in a better place today. As the years went by, I found myself in and out of jail because of stupid choices I made. I started doing drugs and selling them to support my habit. I wasn't happy about what I did for a living but I couldn't stop. I knew there were consequences, but I didn't care. Eventually the police came after me. I was arrested and spent nine months behind bars. The whole time I was in there I kept thinking I need to go back to school when I get out into the free world.

A New Outlook on Life

I'm a free woman now! As much as I hate to admit it, prison has been a blessing in disguise for me. When you go to prison, two things can happen: you can either become a better human or a better criminal. I want to be a better human.

I know I can and I will get my education this time around. I never want to go back to prison. Although I hated prison, it taught me a lot. I have a new outlook on life. You are not free the day you walk out of prison; you are free the day you walk out of ignorance. This time I could not be more serious about getting my GED. I am focused and I am excited to achieve my goals.

AFTER YOU READ: What are the different ways Sara gets derailed from reaching her goals? What has she learned in the process?

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