

## JUST WORDS

### The Stories of Working People In Our Community

#### Episode 48: Donny

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Welcome to Just Words. The stories of working people, in our community.

Over the past two weeks we've gotten to know Donny, a 24 year old who grew up in Baltimore and who was dealing drugs by age 14, and was incarcerated as a juvenile just a few years later. He was released when he was almost 21. He had no high school degree, no training, and a young son.

**And if those things didn't present enough of an obstacle, there was another thing. He was angry.**

My attitude was more like, stubborn, used to doing everything on my own, doing things my way, setting my own standards for myself. It was like a short man complex. That's what was pointed out to me; I had a short man complex.

**So what happened to Donny? Did he go back to dealing drugs? That could have easily happened. It happens all the time. But instead, he heard about a program called STRIVE that helps men and women get employment and join the mainstream.**

My mother told me about strive like a year ago. And I kept putting it off putting it off, I didn't want to find out what it was about. So then, I started thinking of different things, I had a lot of business plans I wanted to put together. And I heard it was a good place to go network. Finally like a year and a half later, I went ahead and went to strive, enrolled, and went through the orientation process. I was a knucklehead my first day there. When I say a knuckle head, I mean close minded. You know how you go for help but you still close minded, you still don't trust anybody, you don't want to take their help unless it is friendly to you? And there was another guy, also a STRIVE member. He presented the world recalcitrant. At first I didn't understand what he was saying to me, so he made me look it up in the dictionary. It said, a willful disappointed person. I am still sitting there saying, this is not me, I am still in denial.

**But Donny's attitude began to change. He credits it to some of the teachers he had at Strive. And he tells a story about a mouse couple named him and her and a boy and girl named she and he.**

And the mouse everyday was prepared for struggle. They sniff the cheese, preserved the cheese, and made sure they took care of the cheese. They had already started planning ahead. One day the cheese stopped coming. So the mouse was used to this, prepared for this, they're already ready to move out and look for new cheese. The mouse moved on. He and she wasn't like that. They were so used to having their cheese that they were used to just sitting there and hoping hoping hoping. Days weeks and hours went by. He left to go find new cheese. She was still scared. He was scared but he still went out to find the cheese. He brought the cheese back to her. And tried to make her understand that there were new things out there to experience instead of being used to the same thing, hoping that the cheese came, cause it never came.. And out of that story, I am just going to tell you what I got out of it. The best way to move forward is to not be afraid to know where you come from. You have to remember the mistakes you made to move forward. Me as a person that went to jail a whole lot...when you locked up being bars you say oh I am going to change my life I am going to do this, So you back out there in that atmosphere...your new cheese is out there. But you are so used to the old cheese that is all you can adapt to. . You got to accept change

**So for Donny, is the cheese story more than just a story? And did he accept change? Find out, next week.**

**Music: *New Orleans* by REM**

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Through a grant by the Open Society Institute-Baltimore. Visit them on the web at [www.osi-baltimore.org](http://www.osi-baltimore.org).