

JUST WORDS

The Stories of Working People In Our Community

Episode 55: Terry

Welcome to Just Words—the stories of working people in our community.

It makes you feel less than man, you know what I am saying. It makes you feel really really low with yourself, it really do. It tears you down.

That's Terry, a 45 year old ex felon, talking about how being unable to find a job and take care of his family makes him feel about himself. In August of 2006, he was released from prison after six years and since then has struggled to find steady employment. He keeps getting turned down for jobs because of his record, and it has begun to rob everything in his life of joy, even his relationship with his ten year old girl. Things like going for walks or shooting hoops, even those things aren't enjoyable anymore.

You know when I first come home, those are the things we used to do. When I was on home detention, I couldn't wait to get a pass to take her out. We used to do these types of things, just go for a walk, go down to the harbor. I can remember her crying because I didn't have money to buy her ice cream. And I know my daughter, she will say, we don't need money daddy, but when she asks me for something, it hurts when you can't give it to her. Something as simple as an ice cream.

When he was first featured on this program several months ago, terry spoke of a young lady he had fallen in love with, and expressed his desire to marry her and build a new life with her and her daughter and his child. But even that relationship is strained as Terry struggles with his feelings of worthlessness.

I am not where I want to be right now. I am not happy with myself. I am really going through some serious stuff right now. I am very depressed. So there is nothing I can do for her. I want to be able to support her and her daughter and my kid, take her out. And right now I just got this wall built up where I just don't want to be bothered with nobody because I am not where I want to be in life.

Where does Terry want to be at in life? His dream is a job as a forklift operator, making enough money to make a home for his daughter, his lady friend and her child. He wants to do the right thing. But when he can't take care of his family

It is so easy to do the wrong thing. Let me tell you. I can walk outside this door and walk I guess about four blocks over that way and do the wrong thing, just like that. That is how easy it is. And I guarantee you, I will run into at least three people who will offer me a job on the street. But I think about the time that I done, and I think about where I at today, even though I don't have the job I want...but if I break the law, and get caught, it will set me back so much further than I am now. That much I do know. If I am struggling right now because of my background, adding something else to it is not going to help me out. But trust and believe, it ain't easy.

As a new year approaches, terry hopes that things will become better for him. We wish him, and all of the brave and tenacious people we have featured on this program during the past year, the very best. You are the shining lights of our communities, and your refusal to succumb to stereotype or to capitulate in the face of tremendous adversity is the beacon of hope that this city needs. Happy new year, to all of you.

Music: Auld Lang Syne

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