

Prison Experience Workshop Program  
Mentor Guidebook  
2009 Edition



**MENTOR**

**PRISON EXPERIENCE  
P. E. W.  
WORKSHOP PROGRAM**

**GUIDEBOOK**

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### **COURAGE**

**Definition:** Courage is what allows you to remain calm while recognizing fear. Moral courage means having the inner strength to stand up for what is right and to accept blame when something is your fault. Physical courage means that you can continue to function effectively when there is danger present.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** You can begin to control fear by practicing self-discipline and calmness. If you fear doing certain things required in your daily life, force yourself to do them until you can control your reaction.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

**Definition:** Knowledge is the understanding of a science or art. Knowledge means that you have acquired information and that you understand people. Your knowledge should be broad!

**Suggestions for Improvement:** Increase your knowledge by remaining alert. Listen, observe, and find out about things you don't understand. Read, study, and strive to learn something new every day.

### **LOYALTY**

**Definition:** Loyalty means that you are devoted to things such as your country, family, children, friends, etc.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** To improve your loyalty you should show your loyalty by never discussing personal problems with outsiders. Never talk unfavorably about those you are supposed to be loyal to in front of other people. Your loyalty is your honor!

### **ENDURANCE**

**Definition:** Endurance is the mental and physical stamina that is measured by your ability to withstand pain, fatigue, stress, and hardship. For example, enduring pain during workout in order to improve stamina is crucial in the development of leadership.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** Develop your endurance by engaging in physical training that will strengthen your mind and body. Finish every task to the best of your ability by forcing yourself to continue when you are physically tired and your mind is sluggish.

**TACT**

**Definition:** Tact means that you can deal with people in a manner that will maintain good relations and avoid problems. It means that you are polite, calm, and firm.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** Begin to develop your tact by trying to be courteous and cheerful at all times. Treat others as you would like to be treated.

**INTEGRITY**

**Definition:** Integrity means that you are honest and truthful in what you say or do. You put honesty, sense of duty, and *sound* moral principles above all else.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** Be absolutely honest and truthful at all times. Stand up for what you believe to be right.

**ENTHUSIASM**

**Definition:** Enthusiasm is defined as a sincere interest and exuberance in the performance of your daily tasks, chores, job, etc. If you are enthusiastic, you are optimistic, cheerful, and willing to accept the challenges.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** Understanding and belief in what you are doing will add to your enthusiasm for any job. Try to understand why even uninteresting jobs must be done.

**BEARING**

**Definition:** Bearing is the way you conduct and carry yourself. Your manner should reflect alertness, competence, confidence, and control.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** To develop bearing, you should hold yourself to the highest standards of personal conduct. Never be content with meeting only the minimum requirements.

**UNSELFISHNESS**

**Definition:** Unselfishness means that you avoid making yourself comfortable at the expense of others. Be considerate of others. Give credit to those who deserve it.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** Avoid using your position, job, status, etc. for personal gain, safety, or pleasure at the expense of others. Be considerate of others.

**Introduction**

Your commitment to become a mentor is in fact, a statement about the person you are. This includes your values, attitude, self-esteem, integrity, etc... Positive mentors are leaders of themselves. They emphasize the importance of self-sufficiency, and their ability to handle life despite difficulties.

People who display self-leadership are self-directed and to a large degree self-motivated. They are inclined to set their own goals and monitor their own progress towards achieving those goals. Becoming a mentor is very rewarding and it is an opportunity to become an asset in the community.

The P.E.W. Program has developed this guidebook as a helpmate to be used to accomplish your task of mentoring which will at times be a difficult responsibility. We have in short addressed some of these difficulties and listed some do's and don'ts. We hope that this guidebook is helpful. You are commended for stepping up to this much needed and helpful responsibility.

Mentors are people who are where others want to go. That may be positive status, accomplishments, business owner, etc... Mentors are guides and friends. They take others under their wings and teach them how to take positive steps in their life. Mentors are teachers, coaches, and sometimes devil's advocates.

As teachers, mentors teach life skills, such as, conflict resolution, communication skills, positive image, etc. They also create opportunities for those they are mentoring to practice these skills, and challenge them in hypothetical situations.

As the devil's advocate, mentors confront those they are mentoring to give them practice in asserting their ideas, and influencing others to acquire life skills.

As coaches, mentors support the dreams of those they are mentoring and help them find out what is important to them and what skills they possess to accomplish their dreams. They also help them acquire and become efficient in the skills needed to achieve their dreams.

The people you are mentoring will have days that they feel nothing they do is right. It is a mentor's responsibility to help repair damaged self-esteem and encourage those they are mentoring to continue on. The power of a mentor's positive expectations, reinforcing the abilities of those being mentored, will make it hard for them to fail.

A mentor must be trustworthy. Without trust any relationship will inevitably degenerate into conflict. On the other hand with trust anything is possible. In a personal relationship trust exists when you fully believe in the integrity and character of the other person(s). When the trust level is high those you are mentoring will express faith and confidence in you. A lack of trust is a serious barrier to opportunities for personal growth.

A mentor at times must be an empathic listener. Some of the people you will be mentoring will face serious personal problems and feel a need to talk about them with someone. They want to put their thoughts and feelings on the table for emotional release. They need an understanding ear to do this. They do not expect advice or guidance. They just want to spend some time with an empathic listener.

### Tips that will help you become an empathic listener

1. **Avoid being judgmental.** Objectivity is the heart and soul of empathic listening. The person is communicating for emotional release and does not seek a specific response.
2. **Accept what is said.** You don't have to agree with what is being said, but you should let the person know you are able to understand his/her view points.
3. **Be patient.** If you are unable or unwilling to take time to hear what the person has to say let them know. Signs of impatience send a negative message to the person needing to talk.

### How to use Positive reinforcement to reward positive behavior

When a behavior is followed by a positive outcome people are more likely to want to engage in that behavior again. Listed below are some forms of positive reinforcements that you will have to use as a mentor.

1. Tell people up front that you are going to let them know how they are doing.
2. Praise people immediately. Giving praise is one of the easiest and most powerful ways to make a person feel important and needed. When handled correctly praise can be an effective reinforcement strategy that ensures repetition of desired behavior.
3. Make positive comments regarding what they did right - be specific.
4. Avoid tactless comments which reduce self-esteem.
5. Tell them how proud you are of them and encourage them to do more of the same.
6. Always, be a good listener, when others display frustration.
7. Avoid a judgmental attitude. You are there to help them not judge them.
8. Constructive criticism should be presented with care. Constructive criticism is a form of self-disclosure that helps another person look at his/her own behavior without putting that individual on the defensive. Most people are very sensitive and are easily upset when they receive criticism. However, giving criticism effectively is a skill that a good mentor can master through practice. Here are two effective methods for giving constructive criticism.

## FOURTEEN LEADERSHIP TRAITS (Acronym: J.J.D.I.D.T.I.E.B.U.C.K.L.E.)

### JUSTICE

**Definition:** Justice is defined as the practice of being fair and consistent. A just person gives consideration to each side of a situation and bases rewards or punishments on merit.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** Be honest with yourself about why you make a particular decision. Avoid favoritism. Try to be fair at all times and treat all things and people in an equal manner.

### JUDGMENT

**Definition:** Judgment is your ability to think about things clearly, calmly, and in an orderly fashion so that you can make good decisions.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** You can improve your judgment if you avoid making rash decisions. Approach problems with a common sense attitude.

### DEPENDABILITY

**Definition:** Dependability means that you can be relied upon to perform your duties properly. It means that you can be trusted to complete a job. Dependability also means consistently putting forth your best effort in an attempt to achieve the highest standards of performance.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** You can increase your dependability by forming the habit of being where you're supposed to be on time, by not making excuses and by carrying out every task to the best of your ability regardless of whether you like it or agree with it.

### INITIATIVE

**Definition:** Initiative is taking action even though you haven't been told to do so. It means meeting new and unexpected situations with prompt action. It includes using resourcefulness to get something done without the normal material or methods being available to you.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** To improve your initiative, work on staying mentally and physically alert. Be aware of things that need to be done and then to do them without having to be told.

### DECISIVENESS

**Definition:** Decisiveness means that you are able to make good decisions without delay. Get all the facts and weight them against each other. By acting calmly and quickly, you should arrive at a sound decision. You announce your decisions in a clear, firm, professional manner.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** Practice being positive in your actions instead of acting half-heartedly or changing your mind on an issue.

**Open the Relationship:**

Recognize that in the early stages of the mentor/mentee relationship, the mentor needs to take a leading role, but later as the mentee’s confidence and understanding grows, the balance must shift.

**Develop the Relationship:**

At the start of each mentoring session, and each time the mentee reaches a milestone, review not just their current performance or success, but what lessons they have learned about themselves and the process.

Ask these three questions:

- What happened?
- Why it happened?
- What was learned from the experience?

Remember that a mentor and mentee should jointly identify what needs to be explored in order to achieve each objective. Also recognize the potential of the untapped resources within each mentee and teach the mentee how to tap into them.

First, avoid starting your message with “you”, such as “you didn’t talk with Officer Smith about the problem we talked about.” For better results, replace “you statements” with “I statements”. Like, I am concerned that you have not talked with Officer Smith about your problem.

Second, request a specific, in the future, instead of pointing out something negative.

9. Always avoid preoccupation with self. One of the major obstacles to becoming a positive mentor and providing positive reinforcement to others is preoccupation with self. The term narcissism is often used to describe this condition. Narcissism is a Freudian term based upon the mythical youth who wore himself out trying to kiss his own reflection in a pool of water.

There is nothing wrong with taking charge of your life and making your own decisions, and you surely should never apologize for pursuing your goals as long as you don’t walk over other people in the process. Nevertheless, you should avoid the kind of self-centeredness that prevents you from recognizing the accomplishments of those you are mentoring, as well as others.

As a mentor you will have to deal with some of the following difficult people, as you attempt to resolve issues and teach the people you are mentoring conflict resolution.

**Issues**

1. *The know-it-alls:* They will tell you what they know, but won’t take a second to listen to your clearly inferior ideas.
2. *The think they know-it-alls:* They don’t know much but they don’t let that get in the way. They exaggerate, brag, mislead, and distract.
3. *The “Yes” person:* They are quick to agree, but slow to deliver, leaving a trail of unkept commitments and broken promises.
4. *The “Maybe” person:* When they are faced with a crucial decision they put it off until it’s too late and the decision makes itself.
5. *The “Nothing” person:* They exhibit no nonverbal feedback. They also tell you nothing and stare past you as if you are not there.
6. *The “No” person:* Doleful and discouraging they believe that what goes up must come down, and what comes down must never be able to get back up again.

### Strategies

1. Acknowledge their expertise and be prepared with facts. Use plural pronouns like we or us. Present your information as probing questions rather than statements.
2. Acknowledge their input, but question their facts with “I” statements such as “from what I’ve read and experienced...”
3. When they say yes, ask them to summarize their commitment or promise. Let them know how you will feel if they do not follow through.
4. Help them feel comfortable. List the advantages and disadvantages of the decision or option.
5. Use open-ended questions that begin with who, what, where, when, or how; also use humor.
6. Ask them to critique your ideas. Listen to their feedback, fix the problem, and then present the plan.

### Keys to self responsibility

To reach your full potential and becoming a great mentor, take responsibility for your actions in meaningful ways.

- **Consciousness;** You have a choice – pay attention and be fully present when you are making critical decisions. You are responsible for the level of consciousness you bring to any occasion.
- **Decisions;** Other people don’t make you talk or act in certain ways. You are responsible for how you speak and listen, whether you treat others fairly or unfairly, whether you keep your promises or break them. You are the source of your own decisions and actions. Don’t cause yourself embarrassment or regret later.
- **Actions in respect to feelings and emotions;** When you’re angry, you have the urge to lash out. When you’re impatient you may want to act too fast. Always remember you’re a mentor, and responsible for your actions, act thoughtfully, less impulsively, and enjoy better results.
- **Refuse to indulge in confusion;** Everybody gets confused sometimes, but staying confused is another way of avoiding responsibility.
- **Never wait on someone else to just happen along to solve a problem;** You must ask yourself what needs to be done to get the results I want, and then do it your self.

### A positive mentor exhibits the following life skills at all times

1. **Live consciously;** Pay attention to all information and feedback about needs and goals.
2. **Self-acceptance;** Be willing to experience whatever you truly think, feel, or do; even if you don’t always like it. Face your mistakes and learn from them.
3. **Self-assertiveness;** The willingness to express appropriately your thoughts, values, and feelings to stand up for those who can’t. You should speak and act on your deepest convictions without being overly aggressive.
4. **Live purposefully;** Set goals and work to achieve them, rather than living at the mercy of chance or outside forces.
5. **Integrity;** The integration of your behavior with your ideas, convictions, standards, and beliefs, in order to act in congruence with what you believe is right.

**NOTE:** A mentor’s ultimate goal is to empower people with the ability to accomplish goals and live a successful life.

### Techniques for ensuring success

#### The Excellent Mentor:

- Helps mentees to focus efforts and clarify goals.
- Prompts the mentee to develop effective strategies, and acts as a devil’s advocate to challenge them.
- Helps the mentee identify appropriate attitudes and behaviors.
- Shares knowledge and wisdom based on his/her own self experiences.
- Acts as a source of inspiration and motivation while maintaining confidentiality.

Mentors accomplish the above mentioned by asking penetrating questions that help mentees distinguish real issues from apparent ones, acceptable behavior from unacceptable behavior, etc. Mentors must accept the mentee unconditionally, ask how or what rather than why questions; listen actively to their mentee’s feelings as well as their words, and volunteer observations.

**Note:** Mentors are unlikely to be effective in the long run if they try to become personal fixers of their mentee’s problems.