



Prison Connections: The Power of Second Chances, Hope, and Human Contact

What is it like to volunteer inside a maximum-security prison, even inside solitary confinement? These resources are curated by two community members who spent three days in July volunteering in Pelican Bay State Prison in California.

Conversation Questions

1. What does it mean to give or be given a second chance?
2. What might it take to succeed in staying out of prison once someone is released? What are some barriers people might face upon leaving prison?
3. How might volunteering in a prison positively impact the prisoners? The volunteers?

Key Definitions

- *Rehabilitation* – the process of restoring someone (such as a criminal) to a useful and constructive place in society (*Merriam-Webster.com*)
- *Solitary confinement* – the housing of an adult or juvenile with minimal to rare meaningful contact with other individuals (*National Commission on Correctional Health Care*)

Listen

“Corey McCarthy” from *The Peter Attia Drive*

<https://bit.ly/2yVhYM9>

Corey McCarthy talks about volunteering in prison, shame, trauma, and redemption.

“Cat Hoke on Prison Reform and Second Chances” from *Elevate with Robert Glazer*

<https://bit.ly/31w2c6C>

Cat Hoke talks about Hustle 2.0, an organization that equips incarcerated people with training and tools to transform their lives, impact, and hustle.





Read

A Second Chance for You, for Me, and for the Rest of Us by Catherine Hoke

This book explores new starts, forgiveness, shame, and the power of possibility.

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander

Alexander, a legal scholar, argues that “we have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.”

“Buried Alive: Stories from Inside Solitary Confinement” by Nathaniel Penn

<https://bit.ly/2zACxjn>

This GQ article investigates the effects of solitary confinement.

“My Four Months as a Private Prison Guard” by Shane Bauer

<https://bit.ly/2lHyene>

Bauer recounts going undercover in a private Louisiana prison for *Mother Jones*.

Watch

“Step to the Line” from Defy Ventures

<https://bit.ly/2yZQnct>

This video shows a story of consequences, second chances, and hope that uses virtual reality filming to explore the ways lives are changed when someone serves time in prison.

“Defy at Pelican Bay” from Defy Ventures

<https://bit.ly/31AqrAw>

This video provides a brief introduction to the rehabilitation program that started transforming the whole culture in the Pelican Bay State Prison and that is the predecessor to the new Hustle 2.0 curriculum.





Explore

Hustle 2.0

<https://www.hustle20.com>

Hustle 2.0 offers education programs that equip incarcerated people with the training and tools to transform their lives, impact, and hustle.

Defy Ventures Washington

<https://defywa.org>

Leo Novsky is executive director of this nonprofit that works in prisons in Washington state.

