

## "Lost and Found Judgment"

When people learn that I've been incarcerated for 37 years, they often ask how I did it while appearing unscathed. If I had to sum it up in one word I'd say "judgment", the consequential prison GPS.

Coming to prison at such a young age having a life sentence, I disregarded judgment and embodied my environment. After reaching the lows I deeply regret, I literally and figuratively fell into a deep hole. My lapse in judgment had cataclysmic repercussions before becoming the wake-up call I desperately needed.

Sitting in the pit created by me, I faced a stark introspection which led to a complete self-destruction. As I was stripped bare, my sense of judgment was heightened. Deep down I found the moral principles and core values my mother put there years ago, and they would prove to be vital in a life changing reconstruction.

To create a healthy foundation, I had to release the baggage that impacted me for decades, and forgiveness turned out to be the cathartic growth I needed. Judgment not only became paramount in the process of eliminating everything/ everyone that could impede my development, it's now the filter for how I live my life.

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# Thank You FOR READING!

Below are some questions to reflect on from this piece. Feel free to also use one as a conversation starter with a fellow reader, or even a loved one on the outside!

*Do you have a "prison GPS"?*

*How would you describe the kind of judgment, or critical thinking, that has allowed you to navigate the experience of being incarcerated?*

*How has this guiding judgment helped you to grow and change?*

We'd love to hear what you thought of the piece, or if you've had any meaningful conversations as a result. Or perhaps you'd like to share an expression of your own (visual art or creative writing). You are always welcome to write to us at Shining Light at P.O. Box 267, Annville, PA 17003.

*\*Note: We will not be able to provide a response to your letter or receipt of your submission, but know that we value your feedback and contributions and will take them seriously.*

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