



Amazing Friendships beyond the walls

By H., 27 years old, 4 years on death row in Texas

I've been on death row for a while now and I have learnt that friendships are very important in my life, especially while incarcerated. At first I didn't think anything good could come out of having a pen pal until I received my first pen pal. Now I wouldn't even call them pen pals, more like friends that are a part of my family. That's how close and important they become in my life over the years. They are the people that keep you company while being in your cell all day with just your thoughts.

Receiving letters are always something to look forward to. It's your way to get into their world, it's your connection to the outside. Always so much positivity that comes to you through these letters which are so uplifting. Those special people in my life out there is what keeps me going every day. Getting up in the morning knowing that you have people on your side that care about you... makes you grateful for another day.

I've met some incredible people while being here over the years, wishing I met them while being in a better situation. I won't try to think too much on the whys and ifs but what's important is that they are here on my side with me through this journey. What I love the most is that you can trust them to be dependable, loyal, and consistent with you all's friendship. And that makes a friendship last a very long time. You can trust them to be by your side when you need them the most. That means a lot being in my situation because if it wasn't for them I don't know how I would have survived most days. Some days you may feel like you want to give up but, they wouldn't let that happen, it's just too much unconditional love both ways. Giving up isn't an option especially when you have people on the outside that love and care about you.

I'm glad that when I got my first friend from the outside and we got closer it opened my eyes to a better world on my side. It made things better for me mentally. I learned that no matter where you are there will always be amazing and positive people around you. They'll support you knowing that you are a human being like them... and we all make mistakes. We just have to get the whole world to understand that we have hearts that beat just like everyone else's. We have feelings, love and care just like everyone else out there do.

Now something even more amazing happens when you first get to see your friend you've been corresponding with face to face. It's like it's all a reality now and the bond just gets ever stronger. It's different because now you can laugh and talk to one another in person. For me it's like I get to know this person I have been writing over the years even more. Now you can express your feelings for this person now, in reality than on paper. It all seems unreal and it's a beautiful thing.

I would advise people on the outside to reach out to someone that is incarcerated and become a friend. You will never know the beauty of getting to know someone that can even bring you better days and make you a better person. Nothing but positivity would come out of it both ways, giving someone friendship support on their journey inside these walls. So be that person to bring better days to someone in here. Let them know they have someone that love and care about them out there.

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