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A New Dawn in the Race of Life

by Grayson Pope

At just 15, Dawn Rasett felt she didn't matter. A childhood marred by sexual abuse left her with crippling self-doubt and a distorted body image. She made herself throw up regularly, trying to regain a sense of control over her body.

After decades of trying to escape the pain she felt inside, and exhausted from having her first child, Dawn picked up a meth addiction in 1996. She was 27 years old.

She spent the next decade

stuck in a destructive cycle of addiction, criminal activity, incarceration, and relapse. Her meth use destroyed her marriage and drove away her daughter. Dawn's mother stopped speaking to her.

After experiencing a brief victory over her addiction, she relapsed in 2014. Within six months, she received an eight-year stint for identity theft. "It was horrible," Dawn remembers about walking into the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Shakopee for women in March 2015.

Being locked up was overwhelming for Dawn. She knew something had to change. Though she didn't spend much time in church growing up—she described her family as "CEOs: those who attend church on Christmas and Easter Only"—she began to read the Bible and find a spiritual foundation for her life.

That's when a friend of hers inside joined the Prison Fellowship Academy®, an intensive, holistic life-transformation program.

After learning more about the Academy, Dawn knew it was the right path for her, too. Determined to make the most of her incarceration, Dawn signed up. The 12-month program was life-changing.



Photo by Kara Elizabeth Photography

Addiction, an eating disorder, theft, strained relationships—Dawn was running herself ragged. Then she went to prison and finally found rest and self-worth.

Her meth use destroyed her marriage and drove away her daughter.

'Finish the race, win the prize'

As part of the Academy, Dawn and the other participants were paired with women on the outside who agreed to be prayer partners. Dawn's prayer partner told her the Lord kept bringing Philippians 3:14 to mind when she thought of Dawn: "I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us" (NLT). She kept reminding

Dawn to "finish the race; win the prize."

So, Dawn kept "racing," pouring herself into the Academy. She loved so much about it—the knowledgeable facilitators, the in-depth curriculum, the classmates who became like sisters, and the caring volunteers.

"I was in awe of the volunteers," she says. One volunteer was a victim of identity theft. Dawn says listening to the volunteer's story was a "healing

experience" that helped her understand the full impact of her negative choices and strengthened her resolve never to make the same mistakes.

What Dawn most treasures about the Academy is that it helped her realize that she matters, and that she is worthy of respect and care. She recalls, "I learned who I am in Christ, that I'm

Continued on page 2

A Prisoner's Cookbook: Tasty Treats Behind Bars

by Stacia Ray

What flavors from the outside do you miss the most?

The juicy cheeseburger from your favorite diner? Your grandma's homemade apple pie? Whatever you're craving, there are ways to reproduce some of the tastes of home with limited ingredients and a little creativity.

Angelina, a prisoner in Minnesota Correctional Facility-Shakopee, has put together a recipe book of tasty treats and eats made from



pamela_d_meadams/GettyImages

commissary items.

From buffalo chicken to gooey brownies, Angelina explains that her cookbook is made of recipes from many different people and that the items have been successfully tested.

"They [are] tried-and-true recipes," she says. "I hope you can enjoy them as much as we all have."

If you have the right ingredients, these can be easy to make.

"I never thought in a million years that you could make so many things in the microwave," she adds.

We're featuring a few of

our favorites from Angelina's many recipes. If you try any of these and want to tell us how they turned out, or if you have other recipe ideas of your own, feel free to write to us at: Inside Journal, ATTN: Recipes, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.

Happy cooking!

NOTE: Some of these ingredients may not be available or allowed in all facilities, and restrictions on cooking vary. Be sure to comply with your facility's rules and regulations.

Continued on page 2

Stop Chasing the Wrong Goals!

By Annie Goebel

Have you ever wondered why you are alive? Do you want to know if God has a bigger purpose for your life? I've got good news for you: Yes, He does!

God has a plan for each of us: "... plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope," according to Jeremiah 29:11. But how can you know what God's plans are?

The big goals we set for ourselves may not line up with God's big goals for us. He defines success differently than we usually do, but He does want us to succeed. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take." But how do we seek Him and know which path He wants us to follow?

The first step is to really get to know the Bible. Read it, meditate on it, study it, and even memorize it. When you feel stressed, try repeating a verse over and over—it's very calming!

Once you've gotten to know the Word better, ask the Lord to help you make decisions. Pray about a decision and ask God's Spirit to give you wisdom.

For example, if, after your release, someone wants to hire you to do something you're unsure about, ask yourself some questions: Is it an honest job, or is it dishonest? When I pray about it, do I feel peace or



Photo by Taralyn Quigley

uneasiness? And finally, what do other Christian friends or mentors think of it? The Bible tells us in Proverbs 19 to seek advice and accept discipline, and this is especially true in decision-making.

Yes, God has a plan for you. Seek Him in all areas of your life, and He will direct your path. In this edition of Inside Journal, we discuss God's plans for our success here on earth. On page 1, check out our favorite meal ideas you can make with some simple ingredients and a little creativity. On page 3, you'll learn about the recipe for a successful life. On page 4, the owner of EDWINS restaurant shares his advice for success behind bars and beyond. And also on page 4, read about some exciting news stories that may just affect you personally.

I pray you find just the right ingredients you need for some inspiration in this edition. ■

Annie Goebel is the director of programs and special events for women at Prison Fellowship.

Subscription Info

At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from prisoners asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. We are grateful for the interest and support of our readers—however, because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at

P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

Cookbook

Continued from page 1

Popcorn Supreme

- 1 (8-oz.) bag microwave popcorn
- 2 (8-oz.) bags caramels
- 3 oz. honey (one-fourth of a 12-oz. bottle)
- 2 scoops peanut butter

Pop popcorn; set aside. In medium bowl, place caramels and a little water and heat for 30 seconds at a time until melted. Add honey and peanut butter; heat for 1 minute and stir. Put popcorn on plates or plastic bags and drizzle mixture on popcorn.

Chili Cheese Pie

- 1 pkg. (or 15-oz. can) chili with beans
- Seasoning packet from chili-flavored ramen
- 3 pkgs. sugar
- Half a bag of corn chips
- 1 summer sausage
- Squeeze cheese
- Lawry's seasoning
- Onion flakes
- 1 (8-oz.) block mozzarella cheese, cut up

Cook chili as directed. Cut up sausage and add to chili mixture. Stir in ramen seasoning, sugar, Lawry's, and onion flakes. Microwave for 2 minutes. In a medium bowl, crunch up corn chips and spread out to create a base layer. Top with chili mixture. Melt mozzarella in microwave, then pour onto chili mixture. Top with Squeeze Cheese to your liking.

Orange Chicken

- 24 oz. (two 12-oz. pkgs.) chicken
- 1 pkg. rice
- Tang
- Soy sauce

Cook rice as directed; set aside. Heat chicken. Add 2 scoops of Tang and soy sauce (to taste) to the chicken. Add a spoonful of hot water and stir together. Microwave for 2 minutes. Pour orange chicken mixture on top of rice.

Buffalo Chicken Wrap

- 6 tortilla shells
- 1 (8-oz.) pkg. mozzarella cheese, cubed
- 24 oz. (two 12-oz. pkgs.) chicken, cooked
- 4 individual serving pouches (approx. 2 oz. each) ranch dressing
- Tapatio hot sauce

In medium bowl, combine hot sauce and chicken. Warm tortilla shells for 20 seconds. In each tortilla

shell, add chicken mixture, cheese, and ranch dressing. Wrap up by rolling into burrito. Makes 6 wraps.

Strawberry Cake

- 1 pkg. vanilla wafers
- 2 pkgs. red Kool-Aid
- 1 pkg. strawberry-filled cookies
- 6 oz. (half a 12-oz. bag) French vanilla creamer
- 6 pkgs. sugar

In large bowl, crush up wafers. Add some water, a little at a time, and stir until it's like cake batter. Add in the Kool-Aid packets and stir together. Separate the outsides of the cookies and stir into the batter mix. Microwave for 3 minutes. Take out and set aside to cool. In filling bowl, mix in some creamer. When the cake has cooled, top with the filling mix as frosting.

Chocolate Brownies

- 1 bag vanilla wafers
- Chocolate milk
- Water
- Hot cocoa packet

In medium bowl, crush up the vanilla wafers. Add water, a little at a time, and keep stirring until it is like a batter. Stir in a little chocolate milk. Add half the packet of cocoa to the batter and stir. For the "frosting," pour the other half of the cocoa packet into separate bowl, add a little water, and stir; then microwave for 30 seconds. Add frosting to brownies and let cool.

Monster Cookie Bars

- 1 small jar peanut butter
- 2 (8-oz.) pkgs. caramels
- 1 (12-oz.) jar honey
- 2 pkgs. bananas & cream oatmeal
- 1/2 pkg. vanilla wafers
- 6 sugar packets
- 1/2 cup French vanilla creamer
- 1 bag M&Ms
- Cereal of your choice

In large bowl, crunch up vanilla wafers. Add dry oatmeal. Stir in creamer and peanut butter. Then stir in cereal, M&Ms, and honey. Mix it all together. In separate bowl, microwave the caramels (about 30 seconds at a time until melted); add melted caramels to the mixture. Pat the mixture into bars. ■

A New Dawn

Continued from page 1

beautifully and wonderfully made, like Psalm 139 says." Now, when she begins to have negative thoughts about her body, she fights against the destructive thinking with the truth that she is a precious daughter of God.

Equipped with a new way of seeing herself and the world, Dawn looked forward to her release, though it was mixed with anxiety over returning to life on the outside.

Eyes on the prize

Dawn was released on March 27, 2017. Just one week before her release, she discovered an open room at a clean-and-sober house. She then found work at a Christian-owned business through a job placement program she worked with while incarcerated.

After finding a place to live and starting her new job, Dawn reconnected with her daughter, and they are still in contact today. Dawn says she is also now "super close"

with her mother. She got involved with a local church and Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered program for people with "hurts, habits, and hang-ups."

Lately, she has discovered why these kinds of connections are so important for a healthy reentry; after several months of things going smoothly, a string of Dawn's family members lost their lives or experienced prolonged illnesses.

Traumatic events like these can be dangerous for people with addictions, who may be tempted to return to old habits. But Dawn has found comfort from family, friends, and Prison Fellowship® volunteers who have reached out, and she has kept her "eyes on the prize."

"I want to do what's right even when no one's looking. I came to see that no matter what, [life is] about choices ... and it's going to be OK as long as my eyes are fixed on Christ." ■



Photo by Kara Elizabeth Photography

Rewriting Your Recipe for Success

by Johnathan Kana

I still remember the first time I caught a glimpse of myself in the white uniform Texas prisoners wear. That was when it really sank in: I had become just another face in a sea of hundreds of people reduced to the worst thing they'd ever done.

Dressed in those drab garments, I looked no different from the next prisoner in line. No one who saw me in that moment would ever guess that I was an Eagle Scout, an all-state musician, and the valedictorian of my high school class. They'd have no idea that before coming to prison, I graduated college with honors and was working on a master's degree with a full-tuition fellowship.

In the free world, I had been an overachiever who, by all outward appearances, was going to do big things with his life. But behind bars, staring at myself in that uniform, I felt like the biggest failure in the world.

False sense of success

The kind of success most people pursue, measured by the money in your bank account or the power you wield, is a shifty, dangerous beast. The more you feed it, the hungrier it gets. And the longer you chase it, the more likely it is to turn on you. In an instant, everything you've

worked for can be gone.

I know, because prior to my arrest, I fed and chased that beast for the better part of my adult life, only to spend two long years of incarceration reflecting on the high cost of my ambition. Before prison, I had seriously invested myself in a career path that, after prison, was now closed to me, probably forever.

With a criminal record, my college degree wouldn't help me much when it was time to apply for a job after

leaves you unfulfilled? There behind bars, I finally realized it was time to stop chasing the beast. Time to re-evaluate my idea of success.

In the Bible, Jesus warns His followers not to strive for fame, riches, and other worldly markers of success. He says that it's possible for someone to "gain the whole world" (Matthew 16:26)—to have everything the world says we should ever want or need—yet feel utterly unfulfilled, like there's still something missing that

only God can supply.

Jesus also tells His followers a story about a rich man in Luke 12:16-21. At the end of that story, Jesus says, "A person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."

God doesn't measure His people by impressive job titles, fancy college degrees, and high salaries—things society often equates with success. In fact, seeking those things can often lead to pride and greed.

The Bible talks about success as a recipe of love, compassion, generosity, and humility. God's Word says that "God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth" (Matthew 5:5).



prison, and I didn't exactly have a Plan B for my life. I felt like my chances for "success," at least how I had always defined that term, were gone. That terrified me.

Sitting there in my prison whites, I had to face the fact that there was still a part of me that was desperately sick. If I looked deep inside, I could sense a void that would never be satisfied, even with a good job, a great education, and friends in high places. What good is success if it only

QUIT THE RAT RACE!

Are you chasing after unfulfilling goals? If you don't surrender yourself to God, all the money and power on the planet will mean nothing in the end. Romans 12:2 says, "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

If you don't know how to find success God's way, start with this simple prayer:

"Lord, help me to see that You are the only path to true success. Show me how to stop seeking the things that don't matter to You. Humble me to seek You above all else. Amen."

To discover how God can show you a more fulfilling life than you ever dreamed, sign up for a free correspondence Bible study through one of our trusted partner organizations by writing to "Recipe for Success," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. To request a large-print Inside Journal Life Recovery Bible in English or Spanish, see the ad on this page.

True success

Scripture says all of us have rejected God. We are determined to pursue our own vision of the "good life." Yet no matter how hard we try, we always come up short.

God sent His Son Jesus to earth to show us how to truly live the "good life." Because we could never fix our sick hearts on our own, Jesus took all our sins and selfishness to the cross, where He died a criminal's death on our behalf. Anyone willing to turn to Jesus can become a child of God—and know real success.

I still have a picture of me in that white prison uniform. It's a snapshot with my wife in the unit visitation room. Each time I stumble across it,

I'm struck by how strangely happy I seem. The uniform is as drab as ever, but neither of us seems to mind. Perhaps that's because by the time that photo was taken, I had decided to trust God for my future instead of trying to blaze my own path.

I no longer chase after the "success beast" of big salaries and impressive job titles. The only title that matters to me now is "child of God." That's the most prestigious title I could ever have. ■

Johnathan Kana is a former prisoner who now serves as a freelance writer and musician. He lives with his family in Texas.

Photo by naruedom/GettyImages

Sudoku: Find the Key to Success!

Complete the Sudoku puzzle below. Then use the numbers in the top row to fill in corresponding letters on the secret message!

S	C	G	F	I	R	P	U	O
	4			7		5		6
3						8		
			2					9
			7	3		4		5
1		6		2	4			
8				2		7		
	1	2						4
7		9		8			5	

Use the letters directly above each number to unlock the message below!

[] [] D
 1 6
 [] [] Y [] [] []
 7 2 [] 6 3 8
 [] E [] [] E
 8 4 7 5
 [] [] []
 9 6 8
 [] [] [] E [] [] !
 2 3 4 4 2 2

See Page 4 for answer key.

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- ✓ Your facility name
- ✓ Your facility address for prisoner parcel delivery
- ✓ Whether you want English or Spanish*

*Bibles are available in large-print English or large-print Spanish. Limit one Bible per person.

This Chef Is Serving Up Second Chances

by Grayson Pope

Brandon Chrostowski is the owner and founder of EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute in Cleveland, Ohio. EDWINS is a French fine-dining restaurant staffed entirely by formerly incarcerated men and women. Inside Journal sat down with Brandon to talk about second chances and how to prepare for future job success.



Photo courtesy of Brandon Chrostowski

At the end of the program, graduates can either apply for a job with EDWINS or we'll help them find one elsewhere. Since housing can be such an issue for former prisoners, we have a separate campus with three buildings and houses for current students and graduates. There's a library, fitness center, and test kitchen. That's a place where someone can live in a safe environment and study.

IJ: These programs have garnered a lot of attention, especially because of the Oscar-nominated documentary "Knife Skills" that tells the story of EDWINS. Tell us more about the film.

BC: I knew the message behind EDWINS had to be captured to be able to reach inside the walls and get to people who are losing hope. In 2013, I ended up having dinner with a filmmaker who's won an Oscar and was nominated several times. I started talking to him about a film project on EDWINS. The film goes behind the scenes to show audiences what our program's like. It's affected a lot of people. When we screen it in prisons, people are very moved by the film.

IJ: Some of our readers will be released soon. What advice

would you give them as far as how or when to talk about their criminal record during a job interview?

BC: Start from a place of honesty and then expand on what you've learned and gained. Imagine a formerly incarcerated person saying, "Hey, I've been to prison and served time behind bars, but it really taught me this about myself and pointed me in a direction where I want to accomplish something. It wasn't ideal, but it helped build my character." If you hear that, you're moved by something like that.

IJ: What other advice can you give our readers?

BC: What you're going through now can give you perspective in a way nothing else really can. Find out who you are and what you're supposed to be doing here. That can only come through reflection. Start learning a skill now or refine one you already have through any programming you can find. If you're passionate about what you do, and you're willing to listen, then the sky's the limit. If you keep on working hard, and you embrace your perspective, you will succeed in whatever it is that you want to succeed at. It's not over. It's just begun. ■

Inside Journal: Where did you get the idea for EDWINS?

Brandon Chrostowski: As a teenager, I faced a 10-year sentence on a drug-related felony charge, but the judge let me off with probation. When I was on probation, I ended up meeting a chef in downtown Detroit who mentored me in the fundamentals of the culinary arts and hospitality. From there I just ran with it. I went to school in New York, then worked in some great restaurants in France. I went back to New York in 2002, and I kept getting these phone calls from back home in Detroit where people would say, "Quentin got murdered," or a chef I worked with had just been killed. When I heard

about the losses, I realized [that] my stars had changed because of others investing in my life and development. That's really what encouraged me, and I said, "Hey, I've got to build something."

IJ: That "something" became the EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute. What's the vision behind EDWINS?

BC: The idea behind EDWINS is that every human being, regardless of their past, has a right to a fair and equal future. We wanted to carve out a mission that's committed to giving people a second chance and developing their careers and dreams. The overarching vision is to make sure we

change the societal perception of former prisoners reentering society. We shouldn't overlook someone's perspective regardless of if they've been to prison or Princeton or wherever.

IJ: How does the program work?

BC: It starts in prison. We teach men and women basic culinary skills and what it takes to work in hospitality. The goal is to empower them to take control of their future and show them what's possible. On the outside, we offer a six-month program through EDWINS where formerly incarcerated people learn dining room and kitchen skills.

News + Notes

FIRST STEP Act Becomes Law

The FIRST STEP Act, federal criminal justice reform legislation supported by both the Democrats and Republicans, was passed in December 2018 by overwhelming majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The bill, which will affect more than 180,000 people in the Bureau of Prisons, was signed into law by President Trump on December 21, 2018.

Among other measures, the FIRST STEP Act will: enact modest but important sentencing reforms; increase the good-time credit cap from 47 days per year to 54 days per year; recommend that federal prisoners be eligible for transfer to facilities no more than 500 miles from home; increase eligibility for visits and calls with loved ones; and allow prisoners to get earned-time credits for participating in programs proven to reduce recidivism.

The FIRST STEP Act was

supported by many groups, including the ACLU, Right on Crime, and Prison Fellowship.

Florida Restores Voting Rights

Approximately 70 million American adults—or 1 in 3—have a criminal record, limiting their access to education, jobs, and housing. In some settings, they are not permitted to vote. In November 2018, during the nationwide mid-term elections, Florida voters approved Amendment 4, a measure to restore voting rights for people with a felony conviction (except for homicide or a felony sexual offense) as soon as they fully complete their sentence, including prison, probation, and parole.

The decision, which changed the Florida state constitution, affects more than 1 million people. Previously, Floridians with a felony conviction could only have their voting rights restored by the state's Executive Clemency Board.

'We Believe in Second Chances'

Since 2017, Prison Fellowship has led the charge to declare April as Second Chance™ Month. This nationwide effort exists to unlock opportunities for men and women who have paid their debt to society and create awareness of the challenges they face.

For the past two years, the United States Senate passed a resolution to declare April Second Chance Month. In doing so, the Senate joined the White House, governors, state legislatures, and more than 232 organizations to

promote second chances from coast to coast. Community events, such as the Second Chance 5K in Minnesota, have expanded each year.

James J. Ackerman, president and CEO of Prison Fellowship, says, "We are fighting for those Americans ... who wish to regain their dignity and make important contributions to society."

In the middle of the movement for second chances are returning citizens and currently incarcerated men and women. In 2018, people with a criminal record shared their stories at a community prayer walk event in Washington, D.C.,

while prisoners at facilities in Ohio and Minnesota worked with prison officials to organize Second Chance 5Ks on their yards.

April 2019's Second Chance Month theme is "We Believe in Second Chances." There will be more 5Ks—both in prisons and out—prayer walks throughout the country, reentry fairs, and church events raising awareness of the importance of second chances. ■

S	C	G	F	I	R	P	U	O
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3	9	7	6	4	5	8	1	2
6	8	5	2	1	3	7	4	9
9	2	8	7	3	1	4	6	5
4	7	3	5	6	9	1	2	8
1	5	6	8	2	4	3	9	7
8	6	4	1	5	2	9	7	3
5	1	2	3	9	7	6	8	4
7	3	9	4	8	6	2	5	1

SUDOKU KEY

Use the letters directly above each number to unlock the message below!

G O D
1 6

I S Y O U R
7 2 6 3 8

R E C I P E
8 4 7 5

F O R
9 6 8

S U C C E S S !
2 3 4 4 2 2



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