

College Guild Reader: Cathy

Student: Brandon G.

Captivities Unit: Captives, Inside the Walls, The Crime, Release

Hello Brandon,

I was honored to have the chance to review your latest work. Congratulations on completing the Captivities unit! I found your responses thoughtful and inspiring. I will share some comments about some of your specific responses below. You will see that I also like to ask more questions to keep you thinking about these topics.

3 - Martin Luther King, Jr has been such an inspiration for so many people. It was very powerful to read your comments and how important MLK's message has been for you. I hope that you hold on to your dreams and achieve them. If you keep MLK as a role model you are well on your way.

4 - 6 – You clearly have used your time to reflect on how you got to your current situation. I think that we can gain strength by owning our decisions (both good and bad) and it sounds like you have worked hard on that. Do you think you always had this much strength, or has it grown through your prison experience? When you look back on your younger self when you entered prison, can you find other ways where you have grown because of the prison experience? Do you think you could have grown in those ways if you did not go to prison?

10 - 15 - It must have been difficult to write a letter to your victim, but I would think it must also be a helpful part of your growth. You said you don't have personal experience with victim empathy programs, but would you choose to meet face to face with your victim if you had the chance? What if your victim did not want to meet you? Could you understand that? You, too, were once the victim of a crime so you must understand how complicated it can be to forgive someone who wronged you. You mentioned it took years to get over wanting revenge. How did you eventually succeed and move beyond wanting revenge? Did you feel a sense of relief once you did? Can you blame a victim who cannot forgive?

16 - Your advice to Tom sounds very wise and positive. I think you should save your own words to review when you are preparing for your release from prison down the road.

17 - It is good that you now see the value of education and that you are pursuing opportunities such as College Guild. It is also so important that you are maintaining your relationships with people outside of prison, especially your mom.

Thanks for sharing your work. Keep it up and stay focused!

Cathy