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Interviewing & Counseling

Personal Reflection Writing Assignment

In thinking about where to begin for this writing assignment, I wasn't so sure where to start as I have grown a great deal as a person in the last five years and my whole perspective on life, and the issues that life present, has changed. Especially how I experience and express the different emotions that we often feel throughout life. Furthermore, how I express and experience emotions now are not the same as how I experienced and expressed them in the past. However, there are some occasions that cause the anger to immediately flash to the surface, and as a result of some familial experiences, and the neighborhood that I grew up in, I have experienced (and sometimes still do) a great deal of anger in my life. I have also experienced some of all of the emotions listed in the assignment, but unfortunately none more so than anger.

1. In the earlier years of my life, I had always expressed my anger in ways that I saw anger being expressed by others in my community, and in my family, which wasn't always appropriate (lashing out, becoming physical, and verbally inappropriate). As a result implementing these practices and behaviors, I have subjected myself to a great deal negative consequences in my life. However, it is through these consequences that I have grown and learned to express my anger and feelings in a more appropriate manner. When those occasions now occur, I can communicate what the source or cause of my anger is, and effectively addresses it. When I am angry now, remove myself from the presence of other so that I can think about what is making me angry, and how best to address it. Someone observing me would probably think that I had "issues" or just don't want to be

around anyone because I am upset, not because I am thinking of how to address whatever it is that is making me angry.

2. While I am now much happier in my present life, unfortunately, I have not experienced a great deal of happiness in my past, so experiences of happiness are probably very limited in comparison to someone who didn't have the experiences and upbringing that I had. However, there have been some experiences in my life that I have had such an absolute sense of happiness that I could never forget the feeling no matter what (being present to see my children born, my first G.I. Joe toy, learning how to swim, and getting released from prison). There have been others, but during those occasions, I smiled and sang a lot. I also laughed and joked with the people around me because I really am a goof when I am happy. Being happy really is the best feeling, and seeing me when I am happy, I can imagine that people would either think that I am a clown, or a comedian!
3. Along with the anger, fear is also something that I have experienced a lot of. However, looking back on my life, I realize that fear and anger are something that I often felt simultaneously. I'm not really sure if one caused the other, or they just happen to coexist within the same emotions, but I really cannot recall experiencing one without the presence of the other. In hindsight, I recognize that my fear wasn't of some particular person but rather the consummation of whether or not the circumstances of my early life would ever change (the physical, verbal, and sexual abuse). Consequently, I addressed my fears in much the same way as I did my anger (lashing out, becoming physical, and verbally inappropriate), which would lead me to imagine that people would probably think the same thing seeing me angry, considering that, for me, the two feelings are so closely related/associated.

4. For me, sadness is one the emotions that is very simple in meaning as well as experience.

In spite of my personal experiences, it is probably very clear that I have dealt with sadness, however, the sadness was much shorter lived than the anger and fear. I'm not sure if this is so because that is actually the case, or if the anger and fear overshadowed the sadness, either way, I don't recall as much sadness as I do the anger and fear. The other thing is that I recall events that caused me sadness rather than situations, circumstances, or people (even though there have been some of each in my life at least once). As for events that caused me sadness in my life, there was the passing of my first son, my mother, grandfather, grandmother, one of my closest cousins, the loss of my father to a life sentence in prison, and even the loss of my own freedom when it happened, due to some poor choices that I had made. However, when I am sad, I am very quiet and withdrawn (the very opposite from when I am experiencing anger/fear), and it is usually very observable in my mannerism, and in my facial features. For someone to see me experiencing this emotion, I would say that this is one that would easily be recognized, by most people, for what it is.

In closing, the emotion that I am choosing to address is anxiety. This is something that I feel a lot because of all of the positive changes that I have made in my life, and the belief that making better choices will improve the quality of my life. Sometimes, wanting instant gratification is the one of the biggest causes of anxiety for me because I am often worried that things won't work out for me, or that something will go wrong, leaving all of my efforts in vain which is very frustrating to think about when my personal expectations are so much different (and sometimes a little stretched). When I'm feeling anxious about something, or a particular situation, I usually find myself doing something that requires a lot of attention to take my mind off of the situation

(playing pool, darts, riding my motorcycle, etc.). Also, just being with or around someone that I love works well for me, however, in the event of really anxious times, I find that sleeping is what works the best, and is how I sometimes find solutions to the cause(s) of anxiety that I am feeling during that time. Sometimes I found myself not eating like I should. I now address the issue of my anxiety with a Cognitive Behavioral Approach, in that I constantly reassure myself that no matter what I think, or how anxious I allow myself to become, that no amount of anxiety can change the outcome of any situation.