

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW FROM PRISONER TO PARENT

Joshua Collins is a 19 year old convicted felon; he's serving 130 months inside a Federal Penitentiary for bank robbery. The Parent's Lounge asked him to help parents learn from his situation, so that their children want end up inside a Federal Penitentiary.

Cedric: Thanks for agreeing to talk with me. A lot of parents just don't know what to do with their children. Before we get to the solution, I want you to tell me what the problem is with our youth of today?

Joshua: Mainly...drugs. The type of environment that they grow up in plays a big role in their lives. Meaning that they're either using or selling drugs. And if they're not, chances are they eventually will be pressured to at school or around so called friends. They see drug dealers with big money and big cars. At home they see their parents struggling with big bills. At the time, selling drugs to help out at the crib sounds good, but in the end, no good things last forever.

Cedric: That's deep coming from a young brother such as yourself. So, how do parents compete with the drug dealer that wants to get their children on the block selling drugs?

Joshua: First of all, time is everything...And it means everything to your child. Drug dealers just want children to do their dirty work by any means necessary, because the penalty for selling drugs isn't the same for children as they are for adults. So, parents must help their children understand that they're being used --- and that's why parents must take time out their day every day to show their children how much they really love and care for them. If parents can successfully show children that drug dealers don't love them --- and they really do, it will have more of a positive effect on their children's decision making process. All parents need to do to compete is keep it real with their children, because the drug dealers ain't going to keep it real. They are going to testify and try to get the least amount of jail time possible --- and the most money they can possible make off of them.

Cedric: Little brother, if you were talking like this 2 years ago, you'd probably be on your way to college. Anyway, what goes through the mind of a child when he's approached by a drug dealer with the opportunity to make a \$1000 a week. Or what went through your mind when you was approached with the opportunity to rob a bank?

Joshua: Most of the time, you get approached with an unrealistic scenario --- like we can go into a bank and get \$100,000. Now, when you're living in government apartments, the housing authority can walk into your apartment at any time. You get tired of the invasion of privacy. So, you want out of the ghetto, like people in prison want out. So, you do what you feel you must do to get you and your family out of the projects.

Cedric: It got you a prison cell. And that's what we want children to see. Every thing isn't always what it seems to be. My last question...What advice would you give to parents that just don't know what to do with their children?

Joshua: Open up a dialogue with your children --- Instead of being a parent try being a friend. Meaning, opening up a friendship that lets their children know that they can come to them about every thing and any thing!

Cedric: Thanks, my brother. If parents want to write you or have their children write you, how can they contact you?

Joshua: My address is: Joshua Collins, #58610-019, USP Big Sandy, P.O. Box 2068, Inéz, KY 41224

By: Cedric Dean, author of *How To Stop Your Children From Going To Prison*
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