



#EVERYONE'S COLUMN

ISSUE 10B: REBUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

#Everyone's Column is made up of submissions from inmates, desistors, staff and volunteers. It aims to allow you a space of reflection and promote a sense of community. We hope that you will inspire and be inspired.

FEATURING SUBMISSIONS FROM RCU

RCU, also known as the Resolute Correctional Unit, is a transformative environment that supports and strengthens renouncees' prosocial identities and their resolve towards a gang-free lifestyle. Renouncees live as a community with a shared purpose and opportunities are provided to further strengthen their prosocial identity through a series of programmes and practices.

BREAKING PROMISES REBUILDING BONDS

Taking drugs transformed me into a different person—one who cared only for myself and betrayed the trust of my loved ones.

Each time I slipped or relapsed, I promised my mother that I would change, but these promises were empty. I never truly wanted to turn over a new leaf. Eventually, my mother stopped believing me, and I lost her trust.

I am now working to regain her trust. It is a challenging process, but I am determined to persevere. One of the biggest challenges I face is her reluctance to believe my promises. I understand this stems from the many times I have disappointed her in the past. While it is disheartening, I know I can overcome this hurdle by consistently following through on my commitments to maintain honest communication, transparent accountability, and spend more quality time with her.

This experience has taught me that rebuilding broken trust requires not just dedication, but also patience. We need to be patient with our loved ones and understand that they need time to overcome their doubts as well. To those who are going through the same journey of rebuilding trust with loved ones: take heart, be patient, and keep your eyes on the prize.

You will get there!



THE 60/40 RULE

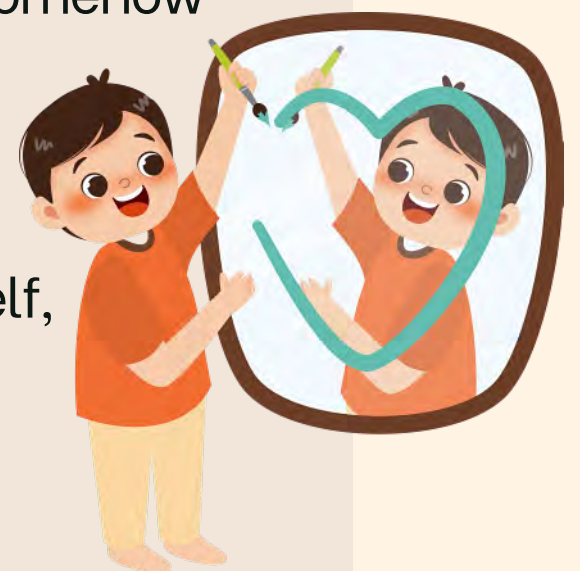


It all started with an unexpected phone call. A desperate voice could be heard—it was from her “goody two shoes” only child, who had to hastily explain his unfortunate plight of being caught with drugs and was about to be sent to DRC for an unknown number of months.

In that instant, her seemingly perfect world turned upside down. Her trusting relationship with a dependable son, who had always performed reasonably well in his studies and had a stable, promising career ahead, was shattered.

I can still vividly remember that moment on the phone when I heard her tears escalate within seconds. In an attempt to preserve the innocent façade of her precious boy, I made excuses to mask the fact that I was indeed an addict. For a long time, I repeated these false narratives in my head, and I almost convinced myself I was a victim—that someone had spiked my drink or that I had somehow inhaled excessively from second-hand methamphetamine smoke.

One day, advice from one of the facilitators resonated with me: **the “60/40 rule.”** It means **loving yourself 60% and others 40%.** What struck me most was that to love myself, I must be honest with myself. It was no one else but me who allowed myself to take that very first puff.



I began taking baby steps towards change. Admitting my actions was not easy, but consequently, things around me improved. During recent visits, I could see and feel that my mother was not as saddened. Messages from my friends have become increasingly heartwarming as they grow more empathetic towards my situation.

Being truthful has helped me piece together the broken shards of trust and, more importantly, has given me the peace and contentment I need.

HEART REFORMATION

THE ONLY PATH TO REBUILDING TRUST

When relationships experience rupture, I agree that repair becomes essential for rebuilding trust. The question is: how determined is a person to achieve it? How long does it take? Is it really an easy task, or does it require a plan?

When it comes to rebuilding trusting relationships, it sounds as though there should be a motivational book somewhere that I can simply learn from. I believe building trust in a relationship is possible, but rebuilding trusting relationships is another story entirely. Things aren't quite that simple. I think if you asked me to build a house, that would be more manageable than explaining how to rebuild trusting relationships. You can't simply ask someone to trust you after what they've been through, right? And you can't buy trust—you either earn it or gain it. It takes time, and the process could take a very long time, perhaps even your whole life.

Start with the realisation that the key to it all is internal—your heart. Undergo heart reformation. Fix your heart to fix the problem. I believe this is the only way to rebuild trusting relationships. Be sincere with yourself, admit your mistakes, learn from them, and don't repeat the misdeeds you committed in the past. Seek forgiveness from those you hurt when your relationships ruptured. Especially with loved ones—allow me to share my story.

There was an incident when my late mother was still around and I was still using drugs. My family demanded that I give up drugs, and I promised I would, but to no avail. My addiction was stronger. My family, especially my mother, surrounded me to force me to cut off my friends. I told them I would, then kept lying and finding excuses to leave and see my friends.

To acquire drugs, I started stealing from my mother and siblings. I hurt my loved ones, but I was unable to stop. At that point, my life deteriorated. I felt abandoned and rejected, which only made me hurt more and use more drugs. With my addiction, bad circle of friends, and harmful actions, I had lost the trust of my entire family, especially my mother. I didn't care much—my corrupted mind was only focused on using drugs. I was being completely selfish. Eventually, I was caught. My whole life was over. No one could save me, not even my friends. That's when I realised how important family was to me.

Now, with all these misdeeds I've committed against my family, how am I going to repair my relationships with them, especially with my mother? The only solution I can think of is to repent and ask for their forgiveness. I realise that what I put myself through was not only trauma to my body and mind but also broke the trust of my loved ones. Yes, I really need to repent and change my life. There's no time for grieving or feeling sorry for myself. I must stop fighting the grieving process that is necessary for me to begin healing, trusting, and changing. I must learn the gift of humility and trust. No matter the shame I feel, I should ask for help and accept it when it's offered.



THE FORCE OF RENEWAL: REBUILDING TRUST THROUGH TIME

The day I landed in DRC 2 was the most regretful and remorseful day of my life. I not only broke my promises and the trust of my late mother, my family, brother, and sister, but during those painful moments of being confined and incarcerated, feeling helpless, I couldn't even fulfil my duties as a son to accompany her on her final journey.

Life in DRC 2 taught me through my foolish mistake of relapsing into drugs again. I simply asked myself,

"What am I meant to learn from this?"

Perhaps it is because I have experienced pain that I am able to embrace it. Because I have made mistakes, I am able to forgive others for theirs. May all my suffering become the seed of compassion.

To mend the trust and love with my family, I truly listen to them, devoting my whole mind and tender heart to hearing their words of affirmation.

Their words of affirmation, when spoken and listened to with sincerity, become medicine—encouragement and verbal empathy. Their words do not falter; they affirm without inflating, and they nourish.

Time is the process of healing and mending trust. It is the most democratically distributed yet unequally invested resource in relationships. Trust is often developed through focused time together as a core ingredient of secure bonding.

I now understand the importance of honest communication and non-negotiable commitment boundaries. When we open our hearts and listen with great care and empathy, they will come to feel that **"I am trustworthy"**.

Please trust the force of renewal.

To cook something delicious, you need fire for the ingredients to marinate. To mend and build long-lasting relationships, you need time for trust to develop.



A LETTER TO MAMA: FINDING FORGIVENESS BEHIND BARS

Dear Mama,

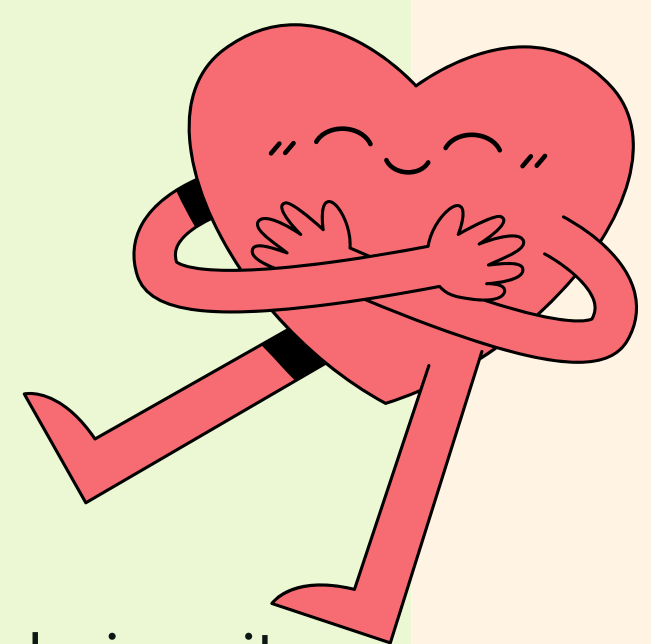
No parent has ever wanted their son to be a drug addict. On the day you found out I was secretly taking drugs, I put my addiction to a halt. Sadly, luck wasn't on my side—CNB came and raided my room and took me to the station. It saddened me that your last words were “You said you weren't taking it, why did you lie to me?” I didn't manage to explain to you as they took me away.

I was released as a negative discharge and came home to my family to rebuild and regain the trust that was lost. It wasn't long enough—my days were numbered, and I was sentenced to DRC for drug consumption. Those days weren't enough to hear you say, “I forgive you.”

I spent all my prayer time raising my hands, praying you would forgive me for all my sins and wrongdoings. I was pulled into a void, waiting for at least someone to send just one letter. I became depressed. I told myself to be patient and trust the process, because one mistake doesn't get fixed overnight—it takes time.

Soon after, I received my first e-letter from big brother saying you had forgiven me. We both know it takes precedence. I was scheduled for my first face-to-face visit, where I got to wish you happy birthday, and you got to wish me the same, because our birthdays were two days apart. After exchanging wishes, I offered my sincerest apology to you both. When you forgave me, a huge wave of relief overcame the void I was in. Conditional trust must be regained—it won't happen overnight, but it's a process. I know it takes great strength to face me after I broke your trust.

Only during that open visit organised by SPS did you learn what I had gone through before my addiction. It was then that both of us forgave each other to start afresh—no secrets. From the start, when I saw Dad's tears rolling and yours too, it was an agreement that change was on the way.



With much sincerity,
Your son



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**THANK YOU FOR READING THIS ISSUE OF #EVERYONE'S COLUMN!
THIS PUBLICATION IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY DRC(S1) CRSES.**