

Creating Your Re-Entry Plan

Gatekeepers Business of Living Program

Introduction

The Business of Living

Introduction — The Business of Living

This course is a work plan for you to think about you. It is structured to identify what will be a challenge for you and to coach you on what you need to do to help you move forward. Our Business of Living approach is designed to help you identify and overcome any challenges you may face focusing on four aspects of living your life – occupational, educational, personal, and spiritual. It is our belief that when you do things from your soul, you will feel joy.

Now let's work together to identify and reach your goals.

Introduction
Link

Chapter One

First Minutes of Freedom

Chapter One — First Minutes of Freedom - Introduction

Getting released from prison can be one of the happiest moments for some. But that joy can fade quickly when the realities of life in the free world take hold. The reality is that most have great fear about facing the world—and failure—once again.

At the end of this chapter, you will be asked to make a decision that could alter your life placing you on a path of success or failure.....which will you choose?

Chapter One
Link

Chapter Two

Challenges for Returning Citizens

Chapter Two — Challenges for Returning Citizens - Introduction

Most inmates are totally unprepared for release. Some are so scared they may commit an infraction that will delay their release date, making their future even more uncertain except for one certainty...MORE TIME!

This chapter lists some of the challenges faced by inmates nearing release.

This workbook will help identify and deal with these challenges as an inmate prepares for release.

Chapter Two
Link

Chapter Three

Basic Needs

Chapter Three — Basic Needs - Introduction

Abraham Maslow, a psychologist, wrote a paper in 1943 proposing the theory that everyone has basic needs that must be taken care of (starting at the bottom layer of the diagram below) before a person could really start moving up to the next layer. As a person moves up layer after layer, they would, in theory, become more confident and successful.

When you look at the re-entry process, using Maslow's theory, you can see it makes sense because having a reliable source of food and safe shelter gives a person a sense of stability so they can then start to work on building relationships and finding a good job.

This workbook will help you look at all of these needs and make sure they get worked into your re-entry plan.

Chapter Three
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Chapter Four

A Completed Example Bullseye

Chapter Four — A Completed Example Bullseye

It is important that you understand the Bullseye, your life plan. The red is you and the yellow are your life goals (which can be long-term or moderate term). The orange are the resources you will need to use to reach the yellow. As you will see in the next Chapter, there are four aspects of your life that need to be addressed. The Bullseye is divided into four quadrants, with two sections in each quadrant.

Chapter Four
Link

Chapter Five

Business of Living Overview

Chapter Five — Business of Living Overview - Introduction

Gatekeepers' approaches re-entry from a unique and compassionate perspective called the Business of Living. This program is designed to help you identify and overcome those challenges to re-entry that might prevent you from being who you want to be. You have to accept the challenge for your own self-learning and be brave enough to make some necessary changes to the way you have been thinking and living. The Business of Living process will focus on four areas: occupational, educational, personal, and spiritual aspects of your life. It is important that you understand that these four areas, PILLARS, are intertwined- you need to work on all four of the areas for a successful life. Gatekeepers' Business of Living builds on the concept that when you do things from your soul, you will feel joy.

Chapter Five
Link

Chapter Six

Business of Living Plan Worksheet - Occupational

Chapter Six — Business of Living Plan Worksheet – Occupational - Introduction

A career provides purpose, responsibility, and accountability. Anyone can get a job, but it takes a focused person to develop a career. You must develop the skills that are needed for what your career goals are. You have to be realistic: your abilities need to match the career you desire. However, with training and education you could become a warehouse worker, an electrician, an executive chef, a commercial driver, or a business owner!

Chapter Six
Link

Chapter Seven

Business of Living Plan Worksheet - Educational

Chapter Seven — Business of Living Plan Worksheet – Educational - Introduction

Completing additional education develops time management skills, perseverance to attain goals, commitment, and fosters relationships. Attaining a degree or certificate proves your abilities to yourself and others.

Chapter Seven
Link

Chapter Eight

Business of Living Plan Worksheet - Personal

Chapter Eight — Business of Living Plan Worksheet— Personal - Introduction

Being honest with yourself about your personal issues is important. You need to see how they may have contributed to your past problems and find ways to resolve and overcome them.

Chapter Eight
Link

Chapter Nine

Business of Living Plan Worksheet - Spiritual

Chapter Nine — Business of Living Plan Worksheet – Spiritual - Introduction

The spirit within guides each of us to strive for meaning and purpose in our lives. The spirit guides our greatest dreams and is with us in our darkest moments. It inspires us to be the very best of which we are capable. The spirit is the inspiration of all that is joyful in each of us.

Chapter Nine
Link

Chapter Ten

Business of Living Worksheets

Chapter Ten — Business of Living Worksheets - Introduction

Now is the time to prepare your own personal Bullseye chart. If you have a Workbook or have obtained copies of the Bullseye, begin to fill in the draft copy and then when you are satisfied, fill in the final Bullseye, your Life Plan. If you have been unable to get copies of the circles, draw several yourself and fill them in.

Take the inputs from quadrants you filled in for each of the previous four Chapters (Occupational, Educational, Personal, and Spiritual) and put them on one Bullseye chart.

Chapter Ten
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Chapter Eleven

Re-Entry Checklist

CHAPTER ELEVEN - RE-ENTRY CHECKLIST

- The ***checklist which follows*** has a lot of the common things everyone needs to consider and, as needed, make a part of their personal re-entry plan. Copy the items on the **CHECKLIST** that apply to you and insert **NAMES** and **CONTACT NUMBERS**. Also, take the actions items you developed in the Occupational, Educational, Personal, and Spiritual sections and add them to the bottom of the **CHECKLIST** together with **NAMES** and **CONTACT NUMBERS**. If you don't know all the **NAMES** and **CONTACT NUMBERS** right now, that's okay, work on getting them !
- If you do not have a copy of the workbook ask your case manager, chaplain or Gatekeepers for a copy of this Checklist. This is a very important part of the Business of Living Program; it is the things you need to do to be successful. If you cannot get a copy take time to carefully make a checklist chart of your own. Review this attachment, write down what applies to you and add other things from your bullseye and anything else you feel is important. Remember to include names and contact information for each entry.
- You can get started on some items right now, some you can complete, and some you will start and complete after your release. We will work with you while inside to prepare, review, and finalize your checklist....**YOUR** re-entry plan! Just write us with questions and we will get back to you.

Chapter Eleven
Link

Chapter Twelve

Acknowledgements, Words of Support

Chapter Twelve — Acknowledgements, Words of Support - Introduction

This book has been written for inmates and ex-offenders entirely by ex-offenders who have experienced what it is like to re-enter society after having been incarcerated. The contributors all worked together to develop an approach to help others move forward. It is the product of people coming together over the past six years from all struggles and different walks of life to identify what is essential.

Chapter Twelve
Link

Chapter Thirteen

Biography



CHAPTER THIRTEEN - BIOGRAPHY

BILL GAERTNER'S BIOGRAPHY

Bill Gaertner is at work on two sides of restorative justice in Maryland. Gaertner is the founder and leader of Gatekeepers in Washington County, a program that helps ex-offenders transition back into their communities after serving time in prison.

How does he know what they need? He's been in their shoes. Gaertner served eight-and-a-half years in prison for domestic abuse. In fact, he didn't get off probation until September 2020.

The story of his own search for redemption would sound familiar to a Catholic audience. A Catholic deacon at the Metropolitan Transition Center gave him Henri Nouwen's Book, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, based on Rembrandt's painting. It became his Bible. He still carries it around with him wherever he goes. It was the foundation for his re-entry program. He got out Sept. 23, 2013, and six days later went to St. Mary's in Hagerstown. He walked into the 9:30 Mass and there was a life-sized painting of the Prodigal Son. He cried and knew then that this was where he belonged. That is how Gatekeepers started (in 2014). It is all based on the Prodigal Son.

Gatekeepers operates out of a sparse office in Hagerstown and runs on a "keep-it-simple" philosophy. One of its most valuable tools is a one-page checklist that helps ex-offenders navigate their return to the community. The No. 1 task? Being responsible by reporting to probation/parole, as required. But the sheet of paper is more than a to-do list. Gaertner also has worked with agencies and nonprofit organizations so he knows where to direct people who need clothes, a place to stay, or a hand in finding work.

Those who come through the Gatekeepers door also find they have to take responsibility for themselves. They learn, or re-learn, basic job readiness, job skills, and life skills. When inmates complain about things they cannot do, Gaertner reminds them of all that they can accomplish. After all, people who graduate from Harvard and Yale have limits, too – but those people don't dwell on what they cannot do.

If that sounds a little like coaching, the athletic shoe fits. Gaertner was the point guard on a junior college team from Independence, Kansas, that won a national championship. He coached at the college level, including a stint at Towson University. He coached with the legendary Jim Valvano at Johns Hopkins, the University of Connecticut and Iona. He was the head coach at Norwich University in Vermont.

He was inducted into the New England Basketball Hall of Fame in 2015 in the Pathfinders Category for people with New England roots who left the region and earned great distinction in basketball and/or society. Those coaching skills and basketball connections still pay dividends. Basketball is "the common language" inside prisons.

But faith remains his foundation. He attends Mass regularly and is now an oblate novice at the Benedictine community of St. Anselm's Abbey in Washington, D.C.

"The only way I can say I am sorry to my victim and others I harmed is to wake up every day and do the best I can and be the best person I can be that day."

[Chapter Thirteen](#)
[Link](#)

Please click the link and download the PowerPoint Presentation

Appendix A

Business of Living Coaching Agreement

APPENDIX A - BUSINESS OF LIVING COACHING AGREEMENT

Gatekeepers' mission is to motivate, empower, and encourage inmates and ex-offenders through its **Business of Living Program**. Gatekeepers' coaches will challenge you to make positive choices that will help create your personal re-entry plan. This Coaching Agreement outlines what we are expecting from you and want you to commit to during the time you are in the **Business of Living Program**.

Expectations

- 1) Open and honest communication.
- 2) Active contribution to individual and group discussions, including thoughtful feedback.
- 3) Full participation in all program activities.
- 4) Consistent and on-time attendance for all classes, meetings, and appointments.
- 5) Respectful use of everyone's time.
- 6) At least 24-hour notice before missing a class, meeting, or appointment.
- 7) Maintaining a positive attitude.
- 8) Respect and support others in the **Business of Living Program**.

Program Commitments

- 1) Set up and complete your first appointment with a Coach within two weeks of joining the **Business of Living Program**.
- 2) Attend scheduled **Business of Living** classes and one Resource Club meeting per week.
- 3) Attend one coaching meeting per week (as arranged with your Coach).
- 4) Fill out and complete your Re-Entry Checklist (found in Chapter 11).

I understand and agree to honor the Gatekeepers' Expectations and Program Commitments.

Client signature

Date

Printed Name

Telephone

Coach

Date



Appendix A
Link

Appendix B

Managing Your Money

APPENDIX B - MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Here are four key topics on money. Talk to your Business of Living Coach, a trusted friend, or a financial advisor to get help with your specific needs.

- 1. BUDGETS** Having a budget helps you have money for the things you need! It keeps you out of debt or helps you work your way out of debt if you are currently in debt. Having a good budget is important to your success. Set up a monthly budget as soon as you get a job! Review your budget often and stick to it. Be honest with yourself and make it real. Know the difference between NEEDS and WANTS! Pay the most important things first like housing, food, and utilities. Types of other expenses may include: church offering, savings, court-ordered payments, car loan, car insurance, gas for your car, cell phone, internet, credit cards, entertainment, clothing, medical insurance, and Christmas and birthday gifts.
- 2. BANKING** You need a basic bank account so you can track and pay your bills. Ask about fees the bank has before opening an account. Most bank accounts come with a debit card which is not a credit card but can have the Visa or MasterCard logo on it. A debit card is linked to your bank account and your 'credit line' is whatever your account balance is. Keep track of your spending as some transactions may take a few days to show up in your account. If you are not careful, you will overdraw your account and get a lot of expensive bank charges. Your goal is to avoid this!
- 3. CREDIT REPORTS AND REPAIRS** If you have been locked up for a while, there is a good chance your personal finances are in a mess. You may have closed accounts and debt collectors calling you. It will take some time to clear up your credit report. By federal law, you can get a free annual credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus (Experian, Equifax, and Transunion). Go to www.annualcreditreport.com to get your reports and see what is on them. There are programs you can sign up for that will help you fix your credit reports.
- 4. FEDERAL AND STATE INCOME TAXES** If you have a job, you need to file both federal and state income tax reports by April 15th of each year. You may owe money or you may get money back. The forms can be complicated and it is ok to ask for help!

[Appendix B](#)
[Link](#)

Appendix C

Completion Certificate

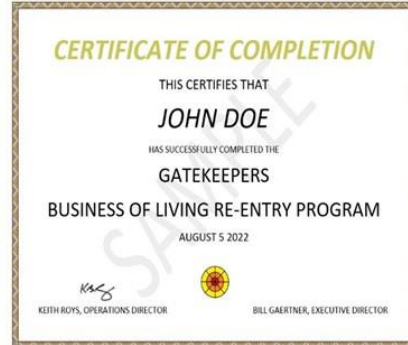
APPENDIX C – COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

Once you have completed the Workbook, you can request a Business of Living Program Completion Certificate.

Mail us a copy of your completed Bullseye and we will mail you back a Completion Certificate. We will also post your Bullseye on our Completion Wall in our office!

Our address is:

Gatekeepers
223 N. Prospect St
Hagerstown, MD 21740



Congratulations on completing **Appendices A, B, and C**. You have now successfully completed the course, **Gatekeepers, the Business of Living**.

The **Order of Malta Federal Association** has provided course scholarships to generously bring you Catholic Education free of charge.

Appendix C
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