

DANGEROUS STORIES

FROM OUR FRIENDS AT ROOM IN THE INN

"From Junk to Strokes" --Andrew:

"Growing up, I lived in a scrap yard. My dad hated the word 'junkyard' hence the almost surrealness of *Sanford and Son* to our own lives. We weren't poor by any means but I'm sure it seemed like that way on the outside.

From an early age I would work out and study so that one day football and brains would take me to another place.

A friend of mine from the football team said once, "I always felt sorry for you living there."

I told him that helped to make a part of who I was. That wanting to get out of that situation drove me to accomplish more than I could have hoped for.

It's funny how the farther you get away from all the negatives, the popularity, the money, all of the things that I wanted. All of that paled in comparison to just being that kid who grew up in that junkyard.

I went to college. Football was painful on artificial turf. I earned a degree in speech and communication. All of that was taken away by head injuries and strokes. I would like to say it's kind of ironic or divine intervention for positivity. It sure is something for sure."

From Rose:

"Well, I'm not really talking about a story I will just say this: when I was growing up I always wanted to be like my sister. She took everything serious and she's very responsible--respectable and truthful and also a justice person about herself. I miss her whenever I was in trouble. She always got me out. I remember asking her to do something with me and she say "Rose, I'm too busy. Maybe Friday or Saturday we might go eat pizza, chicken, or Chinese food." I then say "okay, if I am around."

She knew how to do everything concerning work. I used to be so mad at her but now things she knew, now I'm trying to learn most of things."

DANGEROUS STORIES

FROM OUR FRIENDS AT ROOM IN THE INN

From Brad:

"While incarcerated, I met a young lady named Ms. Lusk. This lady impacted me by believing in me when I did not believe in myself. For about three or four years, I pretty much stayed in a state of depression. One specific encounter with Ms. Lusk that changed things for me was in a conversation I had with her. I told her I would never amount to anything. She replied, "I could be anything I wanted to be." Just one person looking beyond my past and believing in me changed my who perception of myself."

From William:

"My name is William. I am very happy and blessed to be here today. I was in college in 2004. I was in a car accident with an 18-wheeler on my way back to Memphis from Tallahassee to do an internship at FedEx. I broke my leg and hit my head to the point of losing my memory for a while. I stayed in the hospital for a couple of months and did out-patient rehab for a couple of months after that. I scored a perfect on my math test that let me know I was progressing back to myself; however, I know the only way to really be me is to keep improving and never get content."

DANGEROUS STORIES

NAME

DATE

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.



Visible & Invisible

An activity that helps learners to think about the visible and invisible things around them.

We often overlook people and things about them. Sometimes we even create our own stories about them that we count as truer than reality. This activity will help learners to think about the visible and invisible things they see in others and how others see them. It makes connections between what we see and what we overlook.

Background:

A circle game activity that allows learners to focus on the ways they are similar and different from others in the class and to realize which differences we can see, and which are hidden.

By encouraging learners to look beyond the first things we notice about others, you will hopefully help them build awareness of others and those we often leave unnoticed in our surroundings. Discussing the hidden similarities and differences should break down stereotypes, helping learners explore their awareness of others and the stories we tell about them, as well as bring acknowledgement to what and who we often overlook.

Activity:

1. Ask learners to sit in a pair with someone they know less well.
2. Ask each of them to find 3 visible similarities between them and their partner (e.g. both have two ears, both wearing shoes, both have brown eyes), then repeat for visible differences.
3. Next ask the learners to find 3 invisible similarities (e.g. both have 2 sisters) then repeat for invisible differences (different favorite subject would be an easy one, but learners will hopefully think of their own ideas). The second part of this activity encourages learners to ask questions to find out about their partner and discussions can take many interesting and challenging directions.
4. Ask the whole group these discussion questions:
 - Do you have things in common with your partner?
 - Do you have things that are different from each other?
 - Did you find out anything that surprised you about your partner or anyone else in the room?

Lead a discussion to draw out some of the things that were new information, and discuss why people were surprised. Then ask:

- Are there invisible things that only your friends know about you? What types of things?
- Are there assumptions you make about others and the invisible things about them? What types of assumptions have you made?
- When we make assumptions about others we tell ourselves stories about who they are that are often untrue. These stories can be stereotypes that lead us to overlooking people making them invisible. Have you ever experienced being “invisible” to someone? How did it make you feel?

