

My young brothers and sisters:

I've been in prison altogether for more than 20 years of my life. I hope that this brief message will get you to think about your future and the future of America.

In Chicago, there were over 300 murders in the first nine months of 2010. One-hundred-thirty-two were youth just like you. (62% were gang related) Thirty-one school kids were killed, and 218 were shot during the 2009 - 2010 school year. What's happening in Chicago is occurring all over the United States. Additionally, over 200,000 youth enter the criminal justice system yearly - usually after dropping out of school. (Over 7,000 youth dropout of school daily).

The crisis of criminal conduct and violence has stained the fabric of our great nation. It has divided families and destroyed communities. It is obvious today that America is doomed unless you begin to take life more seriously. You are the future if this nation and the future of this world. Without you, there is no future. Without your great minds there will be no new inventions or creations.

So I am asking you today to restore the future of America by restoring the values of America. Values are the standards that you should live by - your beliefs and laws. Now is the time to move from the dim and depressing desert of destruction to the sunny pathway of decency. Now is the time to unlock the gates of opportunity for all of America's youth. Now is the time to save our country from the villains of violence and the demons of death.

You must strive to be better than others expect you to be in order to be someone in this world. You must strive to exceed your own expectations in order to have the things that you want in life. If you cannot change when circumstances demand it, how can you expect your life to change for the better? The day I am afraid to change for the better is the day that I am no longer fit to live.

The hearts, souls, and minds of each of you can rise. Power is not in violence. Power is in your ability to use your mind. The more you think, the more powerful you become.

Young men, there is a thing called respect. First, you must always respect yourself. You must always treat others the way you want to be treated. You should never disrespect women. Women delivered us into this world - without females males wouldn't exist. The next time you disrespect a female, think about how you would feel if someone disrespected your own mother or grandmother. That's how others feel as well. Nowadays instead of doing things to please females, males are doing things to please other males. THIS IS MY DOG! A dog is an animal, and as long as you act like a dog you will get treated like an animal. And wild animals stay chained up and confined.

In closing, I just want you to know that your failure is America's failure. You can be whatever you will if you give yourselves a chance. Always love yourselves and everyone else. In God's eyes we're all the same. I cannot save you, but you can save yourselves.

Cedric Dean - Someone who really cares about you.