



Podcast: Parenting Inside Out Graduation

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(music: graduation march)

Trina Chaney: Welcome to Mission Creek's second Parenting Inside Out graduation. Parenting Inside Out is an outcomes based, developmentally-focused program that helps promote healthy child adjustment, promote healthy child behavior and interrupt a cycle of intergenerational criminality.

P-I-O consists of 60 hours of a learning centered design that promotes the coach and the parent to work together to create individualized plans for each child. P-I-O skills work for all aspects of their lives. This group of ladies have worked hard and have contributed immensely to the class and to each other. I want to thank you call for coming and being a part of our celebration.

(applause)

Now I'd like to introduce our student speaker, Miss Christopher.

(applause)

Susan Christopher: Hello. My name is Susan Christopher. I'd like to welcome you all to our Parenting Inside Out graduation and thank you for supporting us by being here. This class has been such an eye-opening experience. The one thing that all of us agreed on was that we

wish we could have taken this class before we went to prison, and maybe even before we even had children. We've learned how to regulate our emotions and we now know the different developmental stages of our children and how best to support and encourage them through those stages. We've learned essential skills in listening, speaking, and problem solving that are useful to us on a daily basis—not just with our children, but everyone we come in contact with. We've learned about nurturing children as individuals, the individuals that they are, and developing a healthy family structure by identifying and prioritizing our family values. I truly believe this course had changed each of our lives. It's made us not only better parents, better children, better spouses, better siblings, better friends, and better people in general.

I'd like to thank our parenting coaches, Sergeant Chaney and Ms. Lewis for their efforts and patience with us. They've become involved in our lives and they really care about us and the relationships with our children. Thank you for sharing your experiences with us and for all of your encouraging words. I'd also like to thank the Department of Corrections for binging us this program and allowing us to carry the egg around for ten days, and the bear for two months.

(laughter)

Even though we're now joking about it, the lessons we learned will stick with us for a lifetime. So once again, thank you to all those who made this program available to us. I'm sure our families will thank you in the long run a lot, too. Thank you once again and you're welcome.

(applause)

Trina Cheney: Thank you Miss Christopher and now I'd like to introduce our guest speaker, Bruce Wood.

(applause)

Bruce Wood: I just wanted to say before I start here that this is one of the most amazing groups I've ever had the opportunity to observe. You guys have synergy. You've supported each other, and you're an amazing group, just an amazing group. I've watch a lot of groups throughout the state and this particular group, for whatever reason, you guys really gelled with each other. You supported each other. You're just a really great group. You were just a pleasure to observe.

So today, one thing I'm going to day about myself is that I cry a lot. At movies and cartoons, sad stories. So I'm going to try and get through this as best I can.

The first thing I'd like to say is "Happy mother's day." So happy mother's day. So today we're going to celebrate mother's day. I had the honor and privilege to be able to observe these incredible women and some of their experiences in Parenting Inside Out. What I observed was transformational. I saw amazing strength, grace, honesty, humility and determination. I saw these women show grit, courage, patience and kindness to each other. I saw risk-taking and grappling on how they would take what they know and apply it to their children, their families and themselves. I saw these mothers taking stock of what they'd done, and take control of where they are going. In short, I saw these women climb mountains and not wonder if it would be hard to climb or wonder if they would be able to if they had the courage or wonder. These efforts are the ultimate expression of hope. Hope that they can rise above adversity in their lives. Hope that they can become an effective, skilled, nurturing parent. Hope that they can have a loving, close relationship with their children. Hope that they can help their children become the best that they are. Hope that their children will go on to be successful, nurturing parents themselves. Hope that their children will heal through the adversity and overcome. That hope without action is nothing more than a wish. I've seen you put tremendous effort and action in realizing your hope.

Graduating P-I-O is no easy thing. You've done countless role-plays. You've confronted difficult issues. You've explored painful pasts. You've tried new skills with caregivers and children, staff, learning to parent while on the inside, done a ton of homework. You had to take care of that egg baby for ten days and that bear for five weeks. You've cried. And laughed. And taken great personal risks to be here today. I can't help but wonder if your children can know how hard you've worked to be the best for them and what they would feel. I think it's possible that they would be quite proud of you.

I said earlier what I had observed was transformational. The word transform is to change shape. Oxford defines it as the act of transforming. To change. I think P-I-O has helped transform you into child-centered mothers. I think you guys transformed the coaches, who did such a skilled and talented job of facilitating the class. I think it may have been transformational for some of the staff as well as parents as well as inmates. It's certainly transformed me into a better person.

So in these small fragments of your life, knowing it is possible to survive and overcome incredible pain and adversity. Thank you for teaching me that.

P-I-O is voluntary. You did not have to sign up, or if you did, you didn't have to stay in. You did this for your children. You acted on your heart. Today, as we celebrate Mother's Day, on behalf of your children, on behalf of your families, on behalf of D-O-C, thank you. Congratulations. And happy Mother's Day.

(applause)

One last thing. You have two of some of the most awesome instructors. These guys are great. They have facilitated this class with integrity, authenticity, fidelity, which is my big thing, right? Very effectively and their hearts and their minds never leave us. And I'm just so grateful

we're able to have these two precious people be with us. So if it's OK with you, on behalf of the graduates, this is for you and Jacqueline.

(applause)

Trina Cheney:

Thank you Mr. Wood. So we're going to do certificates now. When I call your name, please come up.

Susan Christopher.

(applause)

Contessa Clay.

(applause)

Carla Diocales.

(applause)

Jessica Fetchik

(applause)

Angela McCalip

(applause)

Jessica Sellers

(applause)

And Patricia Tullock.

(applause)

Jacqueline Lewis: I just want to thank you all for coming today and supporting our graduates of Parenting Inside Out. It's been a long 18 weeks since we started this class. We've had great times together. We've laughed. We've cried. But most of all, they supported each other in learning the new tools to become better parents. We began this class with twelve students. But through C-P-A and work release and life, we only have seven here today. We have in total graduated 21 students from Parenting Inside Out and I just want to leave you with one remark. When you leave here today, do not let the mistakes you have made in the past determine who you will be in the future. Your future starts today.

(applause)

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