

My Gettin Ahead in a Just Gettin By Story



I was working as an Employment Specialist for Urban Strategies Memphis HOPE, when I was introduced to Ms. Jan Young and her team. Ms. Young with the Assisi Foundation sponsored the first Getting Ahead class in the Memphis TN area where I was tasked to co-facilitate with Ms. Karla Davis. Being a part of the class was an eye opener for me. Even though I was aware of the different classes, I was only aware of the hidden rules that existed in poverty and lower middle class. However, I have always had the desire to improve my situation and here we are teaching that education is the way out.

So I decided to apply the process to my life. I went back to school to complete my Bachelors degree, which I was able to complete in 2010. I then thought to myself "WOW"...this feels good! I felt so empowered. I stated to remember also, the things that were taught in the Getting Ahead class. Now the desire to better myself seems like a work in progress. Although, there was no change in my finances, there was change in my self-worth and the goal was getting closer. So now I find myself enrolling in school to pursue my masters. I would be the first in my family to set out to reach that goal. Wow again, God is awesome and the GA principles are working in my life.

I now share the information everywhere and with everyone that I can. While working on my Masters, I was offered an appointed position with the State of TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development. This is the best job that I had ever had in my life. I am so excited about the new role and the information I have to share. My new role required me to travel across the state to train staff on how to move the underserved population to self-sufficiency. I applied the principles of GA to the process and was very successful in training the staff. I also applied the procedures with the clients in regards to moving them to self-sufficiency. This was also very successful. I was personally able to assist 219 clients to education and or employment, and I also used the principles of GA.

I worked in this role for a little less than 2 years. At that time the Commissioner resigned and the new Commissioner said my services were no longer needed. Therefore, since April of 2013, I have been experiencing this thing call situational poverty. Go Figure! This is a horrible state of affairs, but because of the training I received in the GA class, I know that I have a future STORY.

PATHWAY to DIGNITY

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I have started a grassroots non-profit program, Pathway to Dignity (www.pathwaytodignity.org). This is a Re-Entering Citizen's program where we are using the curriculum as the starting point of the program. It has been a slow process and the classes are free to the clients as we have no funding thus far. We are yet hopeful. The class meets on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6 to 8pm. The clients love it and they are now working on their future stories. We are not able to pay the stipends but we do intend to make good on them, we have recently been able to provide a meal during the class through donations from board members. We are excited about the things to come!! **Any help, suggestions, donations, or support that the GA can contribute would be greatly appreciated!**

If I had not got the training in the GA class, I can honestly say, going through the lost of a job, I don't know if I would have the knowledge or the desire to continue to work on my future Story. I will be forever grateful for the training.