

About a year ago I was accused of a crime I didn't commit. It violated my already existing probation regardless of my innocence. I was facing **a lot** of time in prison for the violation. During the extremely long process of waiting for my court date I had to do weekends in county jail. I've been to jail, but never went in clean. So, every Sunday night after working all day I would go check in to jail for two days, EVERY SUNDAY. For two months. During these little "vacations", I met and reconnected with many women who were still struggling with addiction, struggling with many issues, struggling with life in general. For the first couple weeks I was so self-absorbed, throwing myself a pity-party, and so angry that I couldn't see past these emotions. But then my HP did a great thing... He opened my eyes and my heart and allowed me to use my time in jail to carry the NA message to the women I was doing time with. That was the start of me finding my gratitude for the situation I was in.

Before I begin to talk about what it's like to be on community control (a church-ed up way of saying house arrest) I need to preface it with what happened in court when I went for my violation.

October 10th of last year was THE day. Surrounded by my family and my family of the heart I went to hear my fate. We filled that court room with letters and the presence of the people in my life today. Everyone was a nervous wreck. Nobody would say it out loud but we were all thinking that would be the last time I saw them for a very long time. I walk into court, in front of the honorable Judge Hart who is no stranger to my case seeing as I violated my probation before with dirty UA's. The letters were read, my family got up in front of the court to testify to my character today, my probation officer testified that I've changed from being in recovery. My lawyer argued for community control and proved to the court that I had the ability to pay off my restitution. The Judge heard them and then he wavered... He stated that I was facing a maximum penalty of 35 years in prison. My lawyer argued back. My family was clenching one another's hands and crying. I was silently holding my breath, shaking from the inside out. And then, my HP stepped in. I swear it to this day that I felt a breeze come through the room and Judge Hart said my sentence was 2 years of CC with early term after one year. Wooooooohhhhh... the biggest sigh of relief from all corners of that room! As I was being finger printed the deputies said "There is no way that you should be walking out of here today, you were supposed to be on your way to prison, you are so lucky" My response - "Not lucky... blessed"

That is the image that I have to refer back to when I lose my gratitude (which happens more often than I would like to admit).

Being on CC is a blessing. Trust me, I know it could be worse, way worse. But I'm not perfect, and I struggle. Until recently I struggled with the first step in this entire process, admitting the reality of it. That could be why it's taken me months to even write this article. Now that I have accepted that this is actually real life, and this is my situation, a burden has been lifted. I'm halfway through my sentence now, with no violations and I'm okay.

The hardest part for me is the feeling of isolation. The feeling of not being "a part of" anymore. I can't go to retreats or special events and I feel like since I'm not involved in things and I can't go out to fellowship I've lost a lot of friends, but that has also been a blessing. My God is always doing things for me that I cannot or will not do myself. He weeded out the unhealthy people, places, and things and allowed me to reconnect with Him and focus on building stronger relationships with my daughters and the handful of people that have stayed around during this process (credit to my sponsor for helping me see that).

I had to drop the majority of my commitments and service work, and my PO dropped my meetings to a maximum of 3 per week and for this addict that could have been detrimental to my recovery. So, I stayed in self-pity on that for quite some time. When I finally decided to take some responsibility and be part of the solution I reached out and volunteered for the help line and decided to use one of my meetings to go to ASC next month. I have been able to keep my service position as secretary of my home group and I was able to finish all 12 steps and am now working on the traditions.

Aside from isolation, I have the constant watchful eye on me. My schedule is super strict. The stress associated with having an exact time to arrive and depart from everywhere I go has definitely taken a toll on my psyche. My PO has the authority to come to my workplace and home anytime of the day or night, can conduct a search of my car or house whenever and for whatever reason. I'm allowed one shopping trip per week, no more. I literally cannot walk across the street. It's always in the back of my mind, did I make a mistake? Did I forget to write that down? Did I cross an "I" and dot a "T"?!

I remember in the beginning I wanted to rebel, I wanted to buck the system like my disease wants me to do. I thought about just saying forget all this and doing time in prison instead of sucking it up and being grateful for all I have here. It is only through my faith and the people in my life that can talk some sense into my crazy a** that I did not do that. Because like I said, I'm not perfect, I get caught up in selfishness and people pleasing and I lose my humility. Thankfully, I can reverse all that thinking today.

So, recovery and house arrest... it's the hardest thing I've ever done. Clean. It's hard because I can feel the feelings now. It's hard because I found a home in NA that I sometimes feel like I'm on the outskirts of. It's hard because I'm an addict and I like to complicate the hell out of things. Recovery and house arrest is also the biggest blessing I've ever received. Beside the fact that I'm free (or somewhat free) I have grown and learned an abundance of vital life lessons. Where I used to be late to everywhere, I have now learned to be punctual. I have built wonderful relationships. It has taught me humility. It has given me gratitude for the small things. It has brought me to a much deeper understanding of the steps. I have connected with my HP on a level I would have never dreamed of.

When I think about that day back in October, and the fear that had all but taken over my life I pause (PAUSE – pause and utilize step eleven *another one of my sponsors tricks*) and thank God for house arrest.