

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jason Cyr is Cree currently at Willow Cree Healing Lodge, located on the Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation's Reserves, Saskatchewan.

A REFLECTION

I have been in prison for 17 years. Time flew by.

I did 16 years in the Regional Psychiatric Centre in Saskatoon.

When I earned my grade 12, I was in school for almost 15 years before I graduated.

I had initially received my grade 10 upgrading in Fort Qu'Appelle.

Every day I look at my high school equivalency diploma. I remember I succeeded.

Now I can get a job when I get parole. This idea of parole is my only way out.

I have a Dangerous Offender designation, but it is only my first federal sentence.

I think if I ever get a second chance or if I could live my life over again, I would do it differently.

I am currently at a minimum-security prison called Willow Cree, also taking a psychology course.

It is difficult with a lot of reading.

The elder here said to me "Akameme". It is a Cree word for never give up.

I made it my goal to finish my psychology course. It will take years, but I have time.

I am able to read and I am grateful. I remember to pray every day. I remember to smudge.

I remember to respect myself and other people.

I had to teach myself Cree language and I am still learning Cree.

If I can give advice to anyone it is to never forget where you came from.