

Subject: Post my feedback

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To: Angela Smith <angela@churchofphilosophicalexploration.org>

I went to Excel from Feb. 9th 2005 to Aug. 26th 2006. I just want to say that Excel saved my life. It is now January 22, 2020 and I'll be celebrating 15 years of sobriety on Feb 9th 2020. All this stuff she said is exaggerated and someone victimizing oneself. Excel wasn't a resort we went to on vacation. It was a place where kids like me and many others were sent because that was THE LAST OPTION for the people who loved us to turn to and try and save us.

We were all severely addicted to drugs and/or alcohol or had severe behavioral issues that most certainly would land us in prison. So we wore jumpsuits when we first arrived and had consequences when we acted out, defiant, broke rules etc... HELLO! That's what was supposed to happen! It was nothing like a prison or torture camp and any consequences were a direct result of OUR own actions and decisions. If we didn't want to keep getting in trouble or yelled at all we needed to do was be respectful, follow rules, and go to school.

Excel was designed to break us of the person we walked in as so we could have a chance at making great lives for ourselves as adults. No one seriously asked to much from any one of us. Im sorry but anyone who got their hair cut should have simply just started behaving themselves because the way she makes it sound is like she got her hair chopped off for not washing a plate. I had to do my fair share of manual labor, calastendics, running, etc... yes it sucked doing them in the Texas summer heat but I assure you there was always water and obviously the people who complained never had two a day football practices because those were much much harder than anything we had to do at Excel.

Certain things may seem kind of extreme to those who don't understand but that was the only way any of us would learn. None of us wanted to be there, we were forced, either by the courts or our families because of our behavior, actions, and decisions! We were thrown into an environment that was designed to force us to change and become better people and it was designed that way because nothing else had worked.

It was people like Heather that would consistently not behave or follow rules that brought the harsher onsequences on themselves. The more anyone misbehaved, acted out, and broke the rules the worse the consequences ended up being. It's no different

than in life. We have laws to follow and when we don't there are consequences and the consequences get worse for repeat offenders. Before excel we were protected because we were minors. After Excel we were adults and whatever happened at Excel seemed extreme to us at the time because we never followed the rules and did whatever we wanted to begin with.

I've read many of these "horror stories" from former students and most of them say they now are decent adults with good family and friend relationships. Wasn't that the reason we were sent there in the first place? Seems to me these people should be honest with themselves about what their lives would be like now if they hadn't gone there. The paths that we were all on before wouldn't have changed without some kind of extreme intervention. That's exactly what excel was. We all had the same opportunities there but individually we determined our experience at Excel.

Thank you,
Zach Kocon
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