

## Cell Phone Use By Philip Melendez

I used phones in prison to connect with everyone I lost contact with. I felt lonely. I had a need for companionship and family bonding.

I gave in to these needs and feelings and called everyone I knew as well as meet new people.

My impulsivity and lack of respect for authority helped me break the rules. I didn't consider the dangers of phones or the ripple effect from buying them. I know that they're used to complete illegal transactions, call "hits" on people, and to use and manipulate people. Buying them or even using them provides an illegal business opportunity. It helps the underground economy flourish.

I connect my cell phone use to most of my addictions in that it helped me escape reality. I also connect it to my childhood and those feelings that come from being neglected and paternally denied. I felt that people connecting with me equaled love, worthiness, and value.

The neglect of my mother that confused me as to who my mom was; her or my grandma, is the same thing that led me to womanize as a youth. I did these things to validate myself as a human being. This stayed with me during my incarceration as well and was present in my cell phone use.

As I look at my actions I try to go deep to get at the roots of the problems as well as look at all angles of the problem. Doing this helps me look at my criminal thinking. I notice this is prevalent in many of my actions and behaviors. I learned this from CGA (Criminal and Gangs Anonymous).

At first, my abstinence was only fear-based and consequential. Going to CGA and Restorative Justice helped me look at criminality in a different light. CGA helped me see how addicted I was to crime. I see how it was part of my life for many years and that I need to be vigilant of every act I do so that I don't start to progress from minor infractions to serious things. I need to keep in mind that even the slightest act of bending the rules is crime.

Restorative Justice helped me look at ripple effects through it's "web of relationships". I see that we're all connected and that all actions need to be considered for what they truly are and who they effect.