



... is doing what's right.™

## PHOTOS SPEAK M1



Photos courtesy of Ron Jimmerson



# OVERCOMING PRISON AND MISTRUST

# IMAGINE

... being told as a kid you're not smart enough to make it in the world. How would you respond? What would you do? This is what happened to Ron.

The Canton Street Gang roamed the streets. They sprayed graffiti on buildings and threw rocks at car windows. They also got into fights. Ron Jimmerson was a part of this wild group of boys. He joined the gang after his father left his family. He wasn't a supportive father to Ron. "My father was never taught any parenting skills. When my report card came, it was, 'You're dumb, you're stupid. You'll never be anything.' I had started to believe him." When he was sixteen, Ron dropped out of school.

As a child, he was told not to trust people of other races. Ron says, "I was hopeless. I grew up hating white folks." Soon he started drinking and doing drugs. Eventually, he went to prison. There, two white teachers spent time with all the inmates. They helped Ron graduate from high school. Through their actions, they taught him that white people could be trusted.

Ron saw that society was an unjust place. He and many others were being treated unfairly. This made him feel hopeless and bitter for years. But then he realized that he didn't have to be discouraged. Ron knew he could have integrity and encourage those around him to have integrity, too. Even if others weren't choosing to do the right thing, he still could. He also showed his integrity in other ways. He decided to treat himself and others with love and respect. He eventually became a social worker so he could help others in need.

After his job as a social worker, he became a factory worker. His new boss, Fred, was also a man of integrity. He respected Ron and saw his potential for success. He knew that Ron had overcome his troubled past. He also saw that Ron had social work experience and was now a factory worker. Fred wanted to put all

of Ron's skills together. He empowered Ron to help people on welfare succeed in their work. He invited Ron to work alongside him. Fred hoped they could tackle this task together.

They developed a program that helps people succeed in their work and in their daily lives. Ron continues to show his integrity in his work. He builds trust and helps others by listening to their situations. He also shares his story of overcoming struggles. His story gives others hope for improving their own lives. Ron shares, "As a child, I had this dream that I was a superhero, helping lift up the poor." That dream has come true. Ron's advice is this: "Love and respect yourself and find the role you were meant to play to make your community work the best it can." That is what TrueSuccess is; enjoying using your talents to help others and support yourself. How can you learn from Ron and write your own best *True Success*™ lifestory?

## QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING M2/5

1. What struggles in Ron's life led to disappointment and him feeling hopeless?  
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2. How did other people in Ron's life show integrity and positively impact Ron?  
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3. How can you learn from Ron's story of overcoming being treated poorly and positively impact those around you?  
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