

EXPLORING INCARCERATED WOMEN'S MEMORABLE MESSAGES
AND THE EFFECTS OF PRISON RELATIONSHIPS ON DOING TIME

By

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ABSTRACT

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Pathways research have consistently cited relational problems as reasons women become involved in crime or maintain their criminal involvement. Yet once women enter prison, they employ relational strategies to make doing time easier. Thus, relationships play an important part in the lives of female offenders. However, little is known about the directional nature (i.e., positive and negative) of women's prison relationships or the verbal interactions that take place. Drawing from communication and relational theories, the purpose of the current study was to advance the understanding of the types of verbal memorable messages women receive from people in the prison environment, the types of behavior they associate with the messages, the positive and negative relationships women maintain in prison, and how prison relationships are connected to doing time.

Using in-depth interviews and surveys from a random sample of 60 women incarcerated in a single women's prison, data reveal the use of memorable messages as strategies to navigate the prison experience and self-assess personal behavior. Memorable messages were often received from other incarcerated women and came to mind when women engaged in behaviors they were proud of, not proud of and avoided. Most messages were positive and used to accomplish goals that would assist with reentry into the community. However, some messages were negative in nature and left a few women feeling discouraged, while other women went against the message in an effort to prove it wrong.

Women's positive relationships were characterized by positive behavior, trust and honesty, while negative relationships were characterized by negative behavior, backstabbing and abuse from a romantic partner. Though few relationships were maintained with correctional officers, women perceived officers as helpful. Most women spent their free time with at least one other woman, but detailed the importance of alone time. Findings suggest the need for staff and inmate training to improve communication skills, which can positively impact women during and post-incarceration. Training on strategies for identifying and terminating negative relationships is also suggested for women in prison.

I lovingly dedicate this dissertation to my mother, my hero.
Your sacrifices have been my successes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, women have become the fastest growing segment of the prison population, with the average annual rate growing nearly twice as fast as men (Harrison & Beck, 2006). Nationwide, from 2000 to 2010, the number of women incarcerated in state and federal prisons increased from 93,000 to almost 113,000 (Guerino, Harrison, & Sabol, 2011). Although the rate at which women are entering prison has exceeded that of men, there is still a greater emphasis on studying men in the criminal justice system. Insufficient attention to women in the correctional system is due, in part, to the fewer women who are incarcerated in comparison to men. Although women comprise of only 7 percent of the inmate population (Sabol, Couture, & Harrison, 2007), the growing increase in women entering prison has called for a better understanding of their experiences.

In 2011, approximately 635,000 prisoners were released from federal and state prisons, an increase of 50,000 since 2000 (Carson & Sabol, 2012). Moreover, the number of prisoners released exceeded the number of people entering prison in 2011 by approximately 20,000 (Carson & Sabol, 2012). As sentenced prisoners exit prison, most will do so “conditionally” (Carson & Sabol, 2012); that is, they will spend a specified period of time under parole supervision (Petersilia, 2003). In 2010, approximately 103,000 women were on parole in the United States, representing 12 percent of the national parolee population (Glaze & Bonczar, 2011). Despite the widespread use of parole, approximately 60 percent of women on parole will be rearrested within three years of release and about 30 percent will be sent back to prison (Deschenes, Owen, & Crow, 2007). The difficulty adjusting to life post-incarceration often poses substantial challenges to returning prisoners (e.g., gaining employment and housing, reporting to

a parole officer, and staying drug free), further hampering successful completion of parole (Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009). The growing number of women in prison and on parole can be attributed to the “war on drugs” and “get tough” correctional policies (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002; Prendergast, Wellisch, & Falkin, 1995; Richie, 1996). This has led to a large number of women imprisoned for minor property (30 percent) and drug (26 percent) offenses (Guerino et al., 2011). Such increases have called for a better understanding of women offenders’ experiences while incarcerated, which have implications for their reintegration back into the community.

Moreover, the challenges women experience in prison and upon release are further amplified by their past. Compared to males, most women in prison have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual abuse before the age of 18 (Bloom, Chesney-Lind, & Owen, 1994). They are also six to ten times more likely than women who have never been incarcerated to have a history of victimization (Pollock, 2002). Incarcerated women [IW] are often low-income, under-educated, single mothers, who have sporadic employment histories, and are disproportionately women of color (Bloom & Covington, 1998; Sabol et al., 2007). Additionally, women in the criminal justice system are disproportionately affected by mental health disorders (Covington, 2007; Henderson, Schaeffer, & Brown, 1998; Kane & DiBartolo, 2002; Salina, Lesondak, Razzano, & Weilbaecher, 2007) and have a history of substance abuse, which shape female criminality (Belknap, 1996; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Daly, 1998; Owen, 1998).

Female offenders’ personal histories differ from their male counterparts (Belknap, 2007; Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003; Owen, 1998; Pollock, 2002), thus, calling for gender-specific programs that meet women’s needs while incarcerated. Unfortunately, many women’s prisons lack appropriate treatment programs and a wide range of available vocational and education

programs compared to men's prisons (Pollock, 2002), which is in part due to the lack of understanding of women's needs and experiences. The lack of programming and services while incarcerated places returning female offenders at a disadvantage, increasing the challenges of reentry.

Not only must women deal with their past once they are incarcerated, but upon first entering prison women are faced with an environment much different than the outside world they came from. Acclimating to their new environment can be challenging, however, research has found that women in prison employ various strategies to make "doing time" easier (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Owen, 1998; Ward & Kassebaum, 1964). Developing relationships with other prisoners and staff or keeping to oneself are two common strategies (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005). Yet, few studies have explored women's perceptions of the relationships they maintain in prison and how relationships are connected to doing time. Additionally, relational problems have often been cited as reasons women get involved in crime (Leverentz, 2006; Wright, DeHart, Koons-Witt, & Crittenden, 2013), but little attention has been given to the positive impact relationships have on the lives of female offenders. Uncovering the positive aspects of relationships may be beneficial to prison programming, as they can influence how women adjust to prison life and how they interact with others behind prison walls. Though IW may or may not develop relationships in prison, the very nature of the environment precludes them from fully escaping interaction with staff and other inmates. Thus, understanding the components that yield positive and negative relationships and the influence relationships have on how women do time may not only improve prison adjustment, but may be useful in providing women with strategies for developing and maintaining successful relationships upon release from prison.

Furthermore, since relational problems can have an impact on women's behavior prior to

prison, understanding the interactions women have with people in the prison environment may impact their behavior in prison and as they prepare for release. Communication research suggests that verbal interaction can shape behavioral outcomes (Knapp, Stohl, & Reardon, 1981; Stohl, 1986), yet the types of verbal messages women in prison receive and how they impact women's behavior remains unknown.

Significance of the Study

This study fills three gaps in existing research. First, it focuses on a marginalized group, women offenders, who have not received the necessary research attention. Second, it examines the types of behavior that women in prison associate with the verbal memorable messages [MMs] they receive from people they interact with in the prison environment. Third, the study explores IWs perceptions of the relationships they maintain in prison and how women's prison relationships are connected to doing time.

This study is the first of its kind to examine the verbal messages women in prison receive from other people in the prison environment and how they are impacted by the messages. Understanding the behaviors women associate with the messages they receive and how they perceive their relationships in prison can provide a better understanding of how women do time, their experiences in prison, as well as have policy implications for prisoner outcomes. The study is timely, as there is recent acknowledgement that the use of incarceration in the U.S. fails to provide prisoners with the requisite skills and strategies to develop and maintain a positive lifestyle once released from prison (Visher & Travis, 2011).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Women Offenders' Pathways to Crime

Research indicates that women offenders take different pathways to crime than men (Belknap, 2007; Bloom et al., 2003; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Daly, 1992, 1994, 1998; Owen, 1998). In one of the first studies to detail women's pathways to crime, Daly (1992) argued that women take one of four criminal pathways: (1) they leave abusive homes, turning to street life (e.g., prostitution, drug dealing, theft) for survival; (2) through family or significant others, they become involved with the use, manufacture, and distribution of drugs; (3) they experienced abuse as a child or from an intimate partner; and (4) they are economically motivated to commit crimes.

Following Daly's (1994) study research continued to show that women's involvement in crime is typically a result of being in an abusive family (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Daly, 1994; Owen & Bloom, 1995) and can be viewed as a survival mechanism to combat abuse (Belknap, 2007; Owen, 1998). Girls who leave home at an early age typically do so to escape an abusive environment; yet, they often find themselves on the streets engaging in criminal behavior, such as drugs and prostitution (Chesney-Lind, 2000, 2002). Although many girls leave home to escape victimization, they often find themselves in romantic relationships characterized by abuse; thus, increasing the likelihood of criminal behavior (Chesney-Lind, 1997, 2000, 2002).

Feminist pathways research have consistently cited relational problems as reasons women become involved in crime or maintain their criminal involvement (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004; McDonald, Jouriles, Ramisetty-Mikler, Caetano, & Green, 2006; Richie, 1996). Studies suggest that many women engage in criminal activity because of their involvement with antisocial family members, peers, or significant others (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Owen, 1998; Owen

& Bloom, 1995; Pollock, 1998). For example, Koons, Burrow, Morash, and Bynum (1997) found that women's relationships with male partners, who are involved in crime, facilitated their pathway into crime. Therefore, if women's relationships prior to imprisonment can shape their pathways to crime, then the relationships women maintain inside prison, whether positive or negative, may also influence their behavior, ultimately impacting how they do time in prison.

Prison Adjustment and Doing Time

Upon imprisonment, individuals quickly lose the freedoms of daily life and are faced with learning the norms and values of prison life. They experience various forms of deprivation by living in a constrained environment (Sykes, 1958). The privileges that they once had (e.g., personal space, use of phone and television, medical care, food) are now limited. Austin and Irwin (2001) note that individuals in prison "cope with an extremely aggravating and threatening set of conditions brought on by crowding, racial conflict, new practices steaming from the punitive penological philosophy, and bureaucratic policies" (p. 100), which makes it difficult to adjust. Prison is seen as a total institution in which all who are in it are cut off from the rest of society and lead a formally supervised life (Goffman, 1961). Adjusting to this new style of living can be different for different types of offenders. Research suggests that demographic variables (e.g., age, race, sex) (Hochstetler, Murphy, & Simons, 2004), prior experiences (Owen, 2005), and prison conditions (e.g., available resources) impact prison adjustment (Hochstetler et al., 2004).

Though the deprivations of prison are real for everyone who steps out of the free world and into the total institution, women seem to face such deprivations different than men. Studies show that women in prison consistently report having the most difficulty adjusting to the absence of home, family, and friends (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Ward & Kassebaum, 1964). Unlike

men, who step into prison with “bravado” and seek out existing “social networks,” women typically do not (Owen, 2005). Women do, however, experience greater levels of depression and mental health disorders, which likely impact their feelings of loneliness and separation (Owen, 2005). Yet, the most difficult and painful aspect of prison adjustment, is the separation of imprisoned mothers from their children (Owen, 2005). Many imprisoned mothers fear that the little contact they have with their children will be severed and severely damage their relationship (Fogel, 1993). Consequently, maintaining ties with the outside world makes it even more difficult for women to adjust to prison and do their time (Owen, 1998).

An additional factor impacting how women adjust to prison is prior abuse. In their interviews with women in prison, Kruttschnitt, Gartner, and Miller (2000) found that abuse experienced prior to prison was an important determinant in how they responded to being incarcerated. Women drew parallels between the abuse they experienced on the outside to being controlled by correctional officers [COs] on the inside. In turn, some women became angry and noted the loss of identity and self-esteem. Adding to the abuse women feel they experience from COs is the lack of privacy in prison. Though modern prisons provide females with more privacy (e.g., single showers with curtains) compared to the older prisons (e.g., group showers), women cannot escape what Owen (2005) calls the “male gaze.” She notes that males make up most of the correctional staff, which means they supervise housing units and observe areas where women shower and dress. Thus, women in prison are always under the scrutiny of men and lack of privacy becomes another pain of imprisonment.

In the early 90s, a new perspective on penalty, which detailed the transformation of criminal punishment was highlighted by Feeley and Simon (1992). They describe the transformation of the old penology, which emphasized institutional-guided rehabilitation, to the

new penology, which places emphasis on individual responsibility and is primarily concerned with crime management. The new view of crime places a heightened focus on surveillance, control, regulation, and risk assessment in an attempt to manage danger (Feeley & Simon, 1992; Simon & Feeley, 2003). As it relates to women in prison, the new penology with its penal philosophies, has changed the “character and meaning of women’s imprisonment” (Kruttschnitt et al., 2000, p. 686) such that many female correctional facilities are characterized as having excessive security, strict management, and overcrowding issues.

To better understand how shifts in penology have affected female inmates daily lives, Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2005) conducted comparative research on women’s prison experience at the California Institution for Women (CIW) in the 1960s (the rehabilitative era) and Valley State Prison (VSP) in the 1990s (the neoliberal era). They found that the new penology changed how women in the 1990s California prison were being supervised and treated by correctional staff (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005). Specifically, women at VSP, which represents the new penology, were more distrustful of others in the prison than were the women who were imprisoned in the 1960s where the correctional facility was focused on rehabilitation. The distrust among women at VSP limited their interactions with female prisoners and correctional staff; yet, the pains of imprisonment and how they dealt with the problems that prison presented seemed to stay the same. As the practices of imprisonment changed, women came to expect less from the prison.

Given the various deprivations and challenges of incarceration, studies have found that women adjust to prison by adopting different styles to “doing time,” which shape their prison experience (see Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Owen, 1998; Ward & Kassebaum, 1964). For example, Owen (1998) found three common ways women “do time,” including: negotiating the

prison world (e.g., making decisions with whom to have relationships); adhering (or not) to the inmate code, which is a set of rules defined by those in prison that all incarcerated individuals are expected to follow (e.g., snitching or not snitching); or participation in the “mix,” which refers to the extent to which women are involved in troubling activity, such as engaging in conflict with staff, using drugs, and hustling other prisoners. Owen (1998) notes that doing time is related to the routine or program incarcerated individuals develop, settle into, and are satisfied with.

Additionally, Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2005) also explored how women do time using three sets of attitudinal and action-oriented questions: (1) attitudes and actions toward other prisoners, (2) attitudes and actions toward correctional staff, and (3) attitude toward the prison. Using latent class analysis to produce categories, they found three styles of doing time. With the adapted style of doing time, women were highly likely to associate with other prisoners, enjoy their associations, felt it more important to earn the respect of inmates than staff, and felt they had control over their day to day life in prison. The convict style differed from the adapted style in that women spent time with only one or two other females and reported having difficulty dealing with the guards. The third style of doing time, isolate, preferred to be alone and not associate with other women in the prison. Additionally, they had difficulty dealing with the guards and felt it was more important to receive the respect of staff than the respect of other women in prison.

The way women choose to “do time” can impact their adjustment to prison life and their post-release success. Although many women involved in crime tend to have unconstructive relationships prior to prison, they often place a high emphasis on connections with others, even when they are imprisoned. Women’s need for relationships is the foundation of relational theory.

Relational Theory and Prison Relationships

Relational theory posits that women's relationships are a central feature in her psychological development (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1976). More specifically, women are primarily motivated through their connections with others (Covington & Bloom, 2007). Covington and Bloom (2007) state that "Connection, not separation, is thus the guiding principle of growth for girls and women" (p.16). Relationships that women maintain outside of prison may end once they enter prison, but new relationships can be and are developed within the prison walls. Thus, it is not surprising that one common strategy women use to "do time" in prison is form "pseudo"- or "play"-families in which individuals in prison play various familial roles (e.g., mother, sister, cousin) (Giallombardo, 1966; Girshick, 1999; Heffernan, 1972; Owen, 1998; Pollock, 1997, 2002; Ward & Kassebaum, 1966). Much of the literature on women's relationships in prison have focused on pseudo-families. The literature suggests that IW develop pseudo-families to replace their kinship ties they lost from the outside world (Pollock, 1997) or to develop relationships that were not fulfilled in their lives prior to imprisonment (Heffernan, 1972). Such connections help to reduce the tension of prison life and aid in the socialization of new inmates. Recently, a few studies have found that the nature of prison pseudo-families may be diminishing in importance (Greer, 2000; Severance, 2005).

Pseudo-families can include the development of same-sex relationships, which are physical and/or emotional, typically formed in prison and used as a mechanism for women to cope with the pains of imprisonment (Giallombardo, 1966). Pseudo-families can consist of a father figure, known as the "butch" and a mother figure, known as the "femme." The "parents" help their "prison children" adapt to prison life (Giallombardo, 1966). One of the earliest studies on women's same-sex relationships found that these connections were used to adjust to

imprisonment, reduce emotional deprivation, and provide personal support (Ward & Kassebaum, 1964). Although there are a number of motivations (e.g., economic, loneliness, curiosity) for developing same-sex relationships behind bars, women have reported feeling comfortable and safe in prison after connecting with other females (see Greer, 2000). However, connecting with other females may serve as an adjustment strategy for some and not others. In Kruttschnitt and Gartner's (2005) study, they found that having few friends and keeping to oneself in prison were reported by some women in prison as the best way to do time. Moreover, while some women may engage in same-sex relationships while incarcerated, such relationships are likely to end upon release (Eigenberg, 2000; Ward & Kassebaum, 1964).

Forming relationships with other females in prison are but one type of relationship. Some women develop relationships with prison staff, which also affects how women "do time." Since prison staff are an "important connection prisoners have to the outside world" (Vuolo & Kruttschnitt, 2008, p. 309), some women attempt to negotiate relationships with them, sometimes in the form of sexual favors (Ross, 1994). Ross (1994) found that some women traded sex with guards for marijuana and alcohol. However, other research has found that some female prisoners refuse to be taken advantage of by COs and stand up to staff for their rights (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005). Women in Kruttschnitt and Gartner's (2005) study explained that standing up for their rights was a "losing game," but they must do it because they need to stand by the little rights they have. Faced with power differences and the real possibility of consequences, asserting one's autonomy and rightness seems to be "the inmate code" (Ward & Kassebaum, 1966). In a qualitative study examining the way women in prison negotiate power, a central theme that emerged was the strategy of "snitching" (Mageehon, 2008) or "informing" (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005), which staff often encouraged to maintain control and discipline

of prisoners (McCorkel, 2003). Yet, norms in prison are expressed in terms of the “inmate code of ethics,” which “pits prisoners against staff” (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005, p. 112) and punishes those who go against the prison culture (Silberman, 2001). Although inmates generally look down upon snitching, some believe there are justifiable reasons for doing so (e.g., help earn an early release date) (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Mageehon, 2008), and unlike in men’s prisons, snitching is less frowned upon in female prisons and recognized as part of “doing time” (Owen, 1998). Research has suggested that incarcerated females do not endorse a “uniform code of ethics” like incarcerated males (Kruttschnitt, 1981) and do not hold allegiance to the convict culture (Kruttschnitt, 1983; Owen, 1998). This may in part be due to the greater level of surveillance that came with the new penology, which discouraged women’s close relationships.

Nevertheless, the relationships IW have with staff are not unidirectional, but rather occur on a positive to negative continuum (Owen, Wells, Pollock, Muscat, & Torres, 2008). At the positive end, some staff members are caring, supportive, and willing to help women when they feel threatened. However, at the negative end, some staff members are unsupportive and may use derogatory language that dehumanizes women (Owen et al., 2008). Regardless of whether IW have positive or negative interactions with guards, “staff behavior is a significant factor in ‘setting the tone’ in a unit” (Owen et al., 2008, p. 74). The relationship between officer and inmate can create an atmosphere of tension or peace; thus, influencing subsequent interactions. This has implications, as women who perceive their interactions with staff negatively may act out and violate the prison rules, while women who view their interactions with staff positively may be more compliant (Owen et al., 2008).

Research illustrates the multi-faceted relationships women offenders form inside of prison, but little is known about what constitutes a negative and positive relationship in prison

and how women's prison relationships are connected to doing time. Uncovering the positive aspects of relationships may be beneficial to prison programming, influencing how women adjust to prison life and how they interact with others behind prison walls. In addition, uncovering the positive aspects of relationships may prove to be beneficial once released. If relational problems are a common reason women become involved in crime, understanding the components that yield positive relationships may be useful in providing women with strategies for developing and maintaining successful relationships upon release from prison in an effort to decrease their chances of returning to a negative relationship and ultimately returning to prison.

Given the existing findings on relationships and how women do prison time, it is surprising studies have not yet explored the verbal interaction women in prison have with others in the institution, especially because communication theory suggests that verbal interaction can shape behavioral outcomes (Knapp et al., 1981; Stohl, 1986).

Communication Theories

Communication theories have been used in research investigating communication patterns between persons with and without authority. Two dimensions of communication have been found to exist between the two parties (Ritchie, 1991). The first dimension, conversation-orientation (Ritchie, 1991), encourages open discussion between all participants even when authoritarian figures are involved; and sharing of personal ideas and beliefs are encouraged (Koerner, 2009; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). On the contrary, the second dimension, conformity-orientation (Ritchie, 1991), encourages universal conformity of attitudes, beliefs, and values among all participants involved (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). This dimension emphasizes authoritarian compliance. Communication theory provides a framework for this study, as it aims to understand the verbal messages women in prison receive from people

they interact with in prison, some with greater authority than others, and the perceived impact the verbal messages have on women's behavior.

Communication theories have been used in studies to explore behavioral outcomes, such as aggression and affection (Afifi & Olson, 2005; Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2007; Schrodt, Ledbetter, & Ohrt, 2007). Research has shown that probation officers' relationship/communication style can impact offenders' criminal outcomes (Skeem, Louden, Polaschek, & Camp, 2007). For example, Angell and Mahoney (2007) found that probation officer "toughness" was related to new arrests of their clients. Additionally, communication theory has been used to explore psychosocial outcomes, including self-esteem and self-concept, physical and mental health, and relational satisfaction (Afifi & Olson, 2005; Kelly et al., 2002; Rangarajan & Kelly, 2006; Schrodt, 2005; Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2007; Schrodt et al., 2007; Sillars, Koerner, & Fitzpatrick, 2005). According to Skeem et al. (2007), the toughness scale "captures a[n] authoritarian supervisory style" (p.407), which the communication literature found to be weakly associated with positive psychosocial outcomes (e.g., self-esteem, mental health) (Schrodt, Witt, & Messersmith, 2008). On the other hand, the conversation orientation style, which encourages autonomy and one's own way of thinking, has led to positive psychosocial outcomes, such as higher self-esteem, reduced stress, and greater relational satisfaction (for review, see Schrodt et al., 2008).

Communication comes in various forms such as symbols, body and facial expressions, and written and verbal expressions. The communication theory guiding this study is *memorable messages*. MMs are a type of communication grounded in verbal expressions. To my knowledge, MM theory has not yet been used to understand the impact verbal messages have on IWs' behavior, but has been used to guide research in the fields of health and communication (Smith

& Ellis, 2001; Smith, Ellis, & Yoo, 2001; Smith et al., 2009). The verbal communication studied in these fields analyzes one's motivation to change through verbal, or MMs, received.

Memorable messages. Individuals receive hundreds of verbal messages each day from a variety of people via communication (Knapp et al., 1981). Most of the messages received are quickly forgotten, yet some remain with people for long periods of time and are perceived as meaningful, which can influence their lives (Knapp et al., 1981). The “verbal messages which may be remembered for extremely long periods of time and which people perceive as a major influence on the course of their lives” are known as *memorable messages* (Knapp et al., 1981, p. 27). Just about everyone, including women in prison, receive messages that may become memorable. MMs have been studied in many different contexts including conversations about religious faith (Keeley, 2004), navigating college life (Nazione et al., 2011), breast cancer protection (Smith et al., 2009), diabetes management (Drummond, 2005) and nurses’ support messages (Ford & Ellis, 1998). Although there is currently no research on the MMs women receive in prison and how they use the messages, the MM literature posits that messages can be used as strategies for dealing with new or different situations, which can result in a change in behavior in that particular circumstance (Knapp et al., 1981; Stohl, 1986). For example, Stohl (1986) found that MMs helped individuals in an organization behave as competent members of that organization. In other words, MMs helped socialize the employees to the values and expected behaviors of the organization. Additionally, Kranstuber, Carr, and Hosek (2012) asked 419 college students to report a MM they received from a parent about college. They found that MMs about college, which were received from parents, predict behaviors that can have an impact on college success. Not only have MMs been found to impact behavior, but attitudes as well. Research on MMs associated with breast cancer found that women who felt fear or anger from

the MM they received were more likely to participate in breast cancer prevention and detection behaviors than women who felt relief from the MM they received (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, if MMs can impact attitudes and result in a change in behavior among individuals working in an organization and college students, it is likely that the MMs women in prison receive will impact how they behave in prison.

Additionally, MMs have been found to impact identity, which impacts behavior. Studies have shown that people use the messages that they receive and remember to assess their personal behavior (Ellis & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ellis, 2001; Smith et al., 2001). If their behavior violates their self-assessment, they may alter their behavior to fit their personal standards. For example, Nazione and colleagues (2011) found that MMs appear to guide students' actions during their college experience. When faced with academic failure, some college students recalled a MM they had been given and took action to amend the failure, which was consistent with the message received. Additionally, supportive messages such as compliments and encouragement can reinforce behaviors and enhance self-efficacy, whereas, non-supportive messages undermine self-efficacy and negatively impact one's ability to follow through with positive behaviors or goals one has set for themselves (Dakof & Taylor, 1990; Drummond, 2005; Dunkel-Schetter, 1984). In her study on diabetes management, Drummond (2005) reported that the supportive messages participants received from friends and health care providers regarding diabetes reinforced their self-care behaviors (e.g., eating healthy, achieving one's goal weight). If MMs help guide the process of self-assessing and reinforcing behaviors, then messages that IW receive from others in prison will likely impact how they behave and how they do their prison time.

MMs help people make sense of new and challenging situations (Holladay, 2002). The messages may come to mind when women in prison engage in acts they are proud of such as

completing educational classes or prison programs, which may reinforce these positive behaviors. Messages may also keep women in prison from engaging in behaviors that would ensue regret or a new sanction. In this case, the message would be used to resist the urge to engage in unhelpful or negative behaviors. When an IW does something she is not proud of and later regrets, she may use the message to keep from engaging in similar behavior in the future. Furthermore, the impact that MMs have on women in prison may possibly carry with them once they are released. This could be both helpful and harmful to their post-release success depending on the type of behavior connected to the message.

Lastly, research has shown that people are confident in their ability to recall the messages that they receive (Barge & Schlueter, 2004; Holladay, 2002; Stohl, 1986). In their 1981 study, Knapp and colleagues found that participants were able to report the same message five months after they had originally reported it. As Stohl (1986) explained, a MM is different from the thousands of messages people receive each day because it is “the retrospective judgment by the individual that the message was/is significant and can be precisely recalled” (p. 234).

Additionally, MMs are usually delivered in a private setting (Barge & Schlueter, 2004; Knapp et al., 1981) and are often positive (Knapp et al., 1981; Stohl, 1986) and serious (Ford & Ellis, 1998; Knapp et al., 1981) in nature. It is thought that the individual delivering the message has good or meaningful motives (Knapp et al., 1981).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to understand the types of verbal MMs women receive from people in the prison environment and the types of behavior they associate with the messages. The study will also explore women's perceptions of the positive and negative relationships they maintain with people in prison and how prison relationships are connected to how women do time.

Using a highly qualitative research strategy, in-depth interviews and surveys were used to explore and answer the following five research questions.

1. What types of MMs do women who are incarcerated recall from COs and other IW?
2. How do the types of MMs women receive from other IW and COs differ?
3. How do women in prison perceive the effects of the MMs they receive from COs and other IW on their behavior while in prison?
4. What are the positive and negative relationships women currently have in prison and why do women perceive such relationships to be positive or negative?
5. How are women's relationships in prison connected to the way they do time?

Sampling strategy and recruitment. The sample consisted of 60 women incarcerated at an all-female prison. At the time of data collection the prison held approximately 900 women at four security levels (minimum, medium, close, and maximum). Participants were selected through random sampling. The random selection sampling method, which allows all members an equal chance of selection (Marshall, 1996), was chosen in order to generalize findings (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) to the prison population being studied. A list of all women incarcerated at the prison was provided by a prison coordinator and was used to randomly select 60 women.

Using a random number generator, 60 women were randomly selected from the list. Each of the 60 women were sent a brief recruitment letter (Appendix A) which explained the study and included a day and time to meet, learn additional details about the study, and make an informed decision of whether or not to participate.

An N of 60 was established for three reasons: (1) data saturation, as it was expected that no new themes would emerge by 60 interviews; (2) to increase power for quantitative analysis; and (3) to formulate large enough groups on MMs and relationship type to identify differences.

Private rooms in the prison were reserved for all interviews to take place. As each female prisoner arrived on her specified day and time, the study was explained and she was asked if she would like to participate. Interviews were voluntary; for each woman who declined ($n=12$)¹, the next randomly generated number was used to select an additional woman from the list. However, if a woman declined she was told she could stay in the room for 20 minutes before leaving. This was to prevent others, specifically staff, from knowing that she chose not to participate. None of the women who declined participation chose to stay in the room for the 20 minutes. For those who chose to take part in the study, a consent form was distributed and explained to each participant.² Interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes.

Part I: Interview guide and procedure. Before finalizing the interview guide and survey, they were both pre-tested with five formerly IW who were on parole. The women were recruited from a previous study they had participated in and at the time had mentioned to the

¹ Women declined for various reasons. When asked why, three women provided no reason, two women were not comfortable taking part in the study, two women compared it to research in another prison, one woman did not want to be a statistic, one woman said her roommate did not participate in the study and neither would she, one woman was “just not feeling it,” one woman said she had nothing to say because she was a short timer, and the last woman said that she was highly medicated and wanted to go back to sleep.

² None of the respondents were paid for their participation. This was required by the Department of Corrections. Prisoners may be influenced by their incarceration to participate in research. Any means of payment may be seen as coercive.

interviewer that they would be willing to take part in additional studies. Contact with the women was made by telephone. Pre-tests with the five women took place at a local coffee shop or fast food restaurant and at the conclusion women were given a ten dollar gift card for participating. Participants consistently noted that the questions brought about little to no discomfort. Some survey items and interview questions were modified to more accurately reflect what was being measured. One main goal for pre-testing the interview guide was to be certain that the MM concept was clearly understood with the existing explanation (see Appendix B). The five women provided invaluable instrument feedback. For example, the pre-test provided an idea of the time it would take to complete the interview and survey. This piece of information became important when scheduling interviews in the prison.

The first part of data collection, a semi-structured interview format, which allowed for considerable probing, consisted of three parts: Part 1, collected basic demographic data such as age, race, security level, and length of time incarcerated; Part 2 sought to elicit and understand the types and sources of MMs women in prison receive, and the behavior women associate with the messages they recall; and Part 3 attempted to elicit and understand the positive and negative relationships women in prison have with COs and other IW and how prison relationships are connected to how women do their prison time.

For Part 2 of the interview, women were asked a series of open-ended questions (see Appendix B for Interview Guide) about whether they received MMs from those they interact with in prison. Previous research on MMs have conceptualized MMs as verbal messages that leave a lasting impression on the individual and which influence behavior (Kranstuber et al., 2012; Lucas, 2011; Nazione et al., 2011; Strom & Boster, 2011). Thus, consistent with previous research, the interview included a discussion of the meaning of “memorable messages” (see

Appendix B), so that each woman understood the concept. Once the MM concept was explained, women were asked, “Do you have any verbal message that has become memorable to you that you received from someone in prison?” If they received a message, they were then asked to state the message word for word and report the role or position (e.g., CO, bunkmate, warden) of the person they received the message from. Women who did not initially report receiving a message from a CO or other woman in prison were specifically asked if a message had been received from either of those individuals. Moreover, to understand how IW associate the message(s) they receive with behavior, an additional three questions were posed for each message women reported: “Has the message come to mind when you did something that you were proud of?”, “Has the message come to mind when you did something you were not proud of?” and “Has the message come to mind when you avoided doing something that you would later regret? If women responded ‘yes’ to either question, they were asked to explain the scenario. Previous research on MMs have also used probing questions to elicit behavioral reactions. For example, Smith and Ellis (2001) asked college students if the behaviors they associated with the MMs they recalled exceeded or violated their personal expectations for themselves. Similarly, in 2004 Smith and Ellis asked undergraduate students to think of behaviors that exceeded or failed to meet their expectations when the MM came to mind. Likewise, Nazione and colleagues (2011) asked students what actions they enacted as a result of recalling the MM. All questions regarding MMs came from existing literature exploring individuals’ MMs and the behaviors they associate with the MMs they receive.

Part 3 of the interview questioned women on the current positive and negative relationships they have with people in prison and how they do their prison time. Women were first asked to discuss a positive relationship they have with someone in the prison and who the

relationship is with. Next, because women's ideas of what a positive relationship consists of may differ from others, respondents who reported a positive relationship were asked to detail what makes the relationship positive. However, if women reported not having a positive relationship, they, too, were further probed for why they do not have such relationships in prison. However, women who reported having a positive relationship were questioned on the approximate number they currently maintained. The same set of questions asked about a negative relationship women currently had with someone in prison. Owen (1998) notes that doing time is related to the routine or program incarcerated individuals develop, settle into, and are satisfied with, yet, research has not detailed how women spend their free time. Thus, to elicit information on how women do time and whether relationships are connected to how women do their prison time, they were simply asked, "When you are not locked in, how do you spend your free time?"

Part II: Survey and procedure. The second part of data collection consisted of a survey, which was given to all 60 women at the conclusion of the interview. Participants were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire, which included a measure of *relationships* and *doing time*. When each woman finished filling out the survey, it was examined for any missing data. If a question had been missed, respondents were asked if they had intentionally skipped the question. All women who were asked, "Did you intentionally skip the question?" reported "no" and proceeded to answer the question. As noted in chapter seven, with the exception of two women who did not have the opportunity to answer four of the doing time questions because they were added after they had participated in the study, there are no missing survey data.

Relationship survey items measuring women's perceptions of CO helpfulness were based on Vuolo and Kruttschnitt's (2008) study, which investigated IWs interactions with COs. Questions were duplicated to measure women's perceptions of other IWs helpfulness. Five items

were used for each concept. Thus, five questions focus on women's perceptions of COs helpfulness and five questions focus on women's perceptions of other IWs helpfulness. For a description of items see Appendix C. Participants were asked to respond on a 5-point scale from never to always. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of items related to each concept. The composite measure produced alpha scores of: .86 – CO helpfulness and .65 – IW helpfulness.

To measure how women spend their free time in prison, nine *Likert* scale items were developed using Kruttschnitt and Gartner's (2005) work on women in prison. Survey items for the doing time measure produced an extremely low alpha, having little to no internal consistency. Originally, an examination of whether there was a correlation between the doing time measure and relationship measure was to be carried out, but was excluded because of the low alpha for doing time. Thus, the nine doing time items are examined individually. Participants were asked to respond on a 5-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Item descriptions included "I spend most of my free time with friends" and "I spend most of my free time in the yard." The quantitative dimension was included for triangulation of the data to cross-check participant's qualitative responses and increase the validity of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using multiple data sources allows the phenomena to be viewed from different perspectives to present a clearer picture of its reality (Maxfield & Babbie, 1998).

Analysis

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed shortly after interviews were completed. NVivo, a qualitative software, was used to auto-code each transcription and organize the data. Transcripts were carefully read and coded by hand. Coding represents themes around types of MMs, behaviors connected to MMs, positive and negative relationships, and ways women do

time. However, before coding began, the data were unitized, which is the process of separating the data to reflect one idea or response (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Once the data were unitized, categories were created using constant comparative methodology. This process allows for categories to be developed rather than predetermined. As categories were developed they were further analyzed for sub-themes related to the major theme or category.

A count of all women who reported at least a single MM and those who did not was conducted. Of the women who reported a MM, a count of those who reported more than one MM was made as well as a count of who the message was received from. All messages were first coded together for common themes. MMs were then separated by who delivered the message (i.e., IW, CO). Themes that emerged for messages delivered by COs and messages delivered by other IW were analyzed for similarities and differences. Recall that women were asked three questions to elicit their perceptions of the connections their MMs had to their behavior. For example, women were asked if the message came to mind when they did something they were proud of. Responses to each of the three questions were coded separately and placed in developing categories.

From women's response to questions about positive and negative relationships they have in prison, a count of who the relationship is with/their position or role was made. Transcribed interviews were coded and categories developed for what makes the relationship positive and what makes the relationship negative. Categories were also created for women's responses to how they do time.

Validity and Reliability

Inductive methods were used to identify reoccurring concepts and repeating ideas (Field & Morse, 1985). Categories were created using a constant comparative methodology which

involves developing and reworking categories as the data are read and coded rather than preparing categories beforehand (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). To achieve internal validity in the analysis, the search for and explication of deviant cases (Strauss, 1987) were used. The analysis ensures that the concepts and illustrations typify the most common patterns in women offenders' responses; mention of exceptions to these patterns is made where appropriate.

To assess the reliability of the coding scheme, a codebook of categories and definitions to establish inter-rater reliability before all of the data were coded was developed. Reliability checks are encouraged when qualitative data are being used to increase the confidence that individuals looking at the same data are coming to similar conclusions of its meaning (Hammersley, 1992). Using the codebook, all major coding areas were coded by an independent coder.³ For each major coding area, all cases were coded. For example, a total of 66 MMs were reported from women in prison. An independent coder used the codebook to categorize all 66 messages.

Oftentimes a proportion is used to assess agreement rate between two coders, however, this can "overstate the true degree" of inter-coder reliability (Hruschka et al., 2004, p. 312). Thus, Cohen's kappa is used to measure the agreement rate among two raters as it also takes agreeing by chance into account. Kappa values⁴ can range from 1 to -1, with 1 signifying perfect agreement. Consistent with Landis and Koch (1977), all seven kappa values for the major coding areas represent excellent agreement (Table 1).

³ Two graduate students coded different major coding areas.

⁴ Kappa values: 0.81–1.00 = *excellent/almost perfect*; 0.61–0.80 = *substantial*; 0.41–0.60 = *moderate*; 0.21–0.40 = *fair*; 0.00–0.20 = *slight*; and < 0.00 = *poor*.

Table 1. Cohen's kappa for seven major coding areas

Coding Area	Cohen's Kappa
Memorable Messages	.86
Proud Behavior	.92
Not Proud Behavior	.92
Avoided Regretful Behavior	1.0
Positive Prison Relationships	.82
Negative Prison Relationships	.92
Doing Time	.86

All discrepancies between coders were discussed and resolved. Additionally, major coding areas varied in the number of cases and categories and may be reason for the higher kappa's. For example, avoided regretful behavior had a smaller number of categories and cases to code compared to positive prison relationships and MMs.

CHAPTER 4: TYPES OF MEMORABLE MESSAGES

Description of the Sample

The sample consists of 60 women who are incarcerated in a single women's prison in a Midwestern state.⁵ Their current age ranges from 19 to 69 years old with an average age of 33 (Table 2). With regards to race, 38 women self-identified as White or Caucasian (n=38, 63.3%), 20 women identified as Black or African American (n=20, 33.3%) and two women identified as Hispanic (n=2, 3.3%).⁶ Sentence length ranged from eight months to life without parole with an average sentence length of approximately 72 months.⁷

The women's prison had five levels of security: minimum, medium, close, maximum, and administrative maximum. However, at the time of data collection, no women were being held under administrative security and less than 1% of women were under maximum security. The majority of women were under minimum, medium, and close security.⁸ Women under close security are locked in their cell 21 hours a day while those under minimum and medium security have freedom to leave their cell and roam within their housing unit. Of the 60 women interviewed, 36.7% of the women (n=22) were under minimum security, 46.7% of the women (n=28) were under medium security, and the remaining women (n=10, 16.7%) were under close security.⁹

More than half of the women interviewed (n=33, 55%) were incarcerated for a violent offense while 18 women were incarcerated for a property or non-violent offense (n=18, 30%),

⁵ A list of all women in the sample and their pseudonyms can be found in Appendix D.

⁶ The sample is racially representative of the prison population.

⁷ For the two women who reported life without parole, 300 months or 25 years was used to calculate the average sentence length of the 60 women.

⁸ Women's security level could be distinguished by the color shirt they wore.

⁹ Women in the sample under minimum and medium security were representative of the prison population. However, women under close security were underrepresented in the sample (16.7% vs. 26%) and women under maximum security were not generated.

and nine women were incarcerated for a drug related offense (n=9, 15%). Violent offenses consisted mostly of robbery and felonious assault. Burglary was the most common non-violent/property offense. Additionally, about one-third of the women reported serving a prior prison term (n=21, 35%), which is consistent with national trends (Deschenes et al., 2007).

Memorable Messages Received

“Verbal messages which may be remembered for extremely long periods of time and which people perceive as a major influence on the course of their lives” are known as *memorable messages* (Knapp et al., 1981, p. 27). Sixty women from one all-female prison in a Midwestern state were interviewed. When asked if they have received a MM from someone in prison that has become memorable to them, 44 (73.33%) women reported that they had received a MM from someone in prison and 16 (26.67%) reported receiving no MM. Of the 44 women who reported receiving a MM from someone in prison, 18 (40.91%) reported receiving two messages from people within the prison and 2 (4.55%) of the women reported receiving three messages. Thus, a total of 66 MMs were reported by 44 of the 60 women interviewed.

Women recalled eight types of MMs that came from someone in the prison (i.e., staff, other incarcerated females, counselors, and teachers). However, three of the eight message categories are a combination of two single message types. The five single message types are: *advice*, *compliment*, *encouragement*, *negative statement*, and *religion*. The remaining three categories, which combine two of the five message types are: *encouragement* and *compliment*, *encouragement* and *advice*, and *advice* and *compliment*.

The *advice* category consisted of four types of advice: behavioral, strategies for doing time, recovery (becoming a better you), and past behavior (that hindered success). The *compliment* category included messages that complimented women and produced two repeating

ideas: personal characteristic (positive praise about one's character) and good behavior. The type of message that emerged within the *encouragement* category was that of moving forward and hope for the future. The *negative statement* category consisted of messages attacking women's personal character and their future behavior. The last single category, *religion*, included messages about a Higher Power and provided women with spiritual advice.

Memorable Messages from Other Incarcerated Women and Correctional Officers

The first research question for this study is: what types of MMs do women who are incarcerated recall from COs and other IW? Women were asked if they ever received a verbal MM from anyone in prison and, if so, who the message was from. Women who reported receiving a MM were then asked three additional questions to elicit the types of behavior associated with the message. After asking all questions related to the MM each woman reported, women were then asked if they had received any other verbal MMs from other IW or COs¹⁰. Thus, some women reported receiving multiple messages from various people in the prison.

Although a total of 66 messages were reported by the 44 women who received messages from someone within the prison, 38 of the 44 women reported receiving the message from COs and/or other IW, totaling 48 verbal MMs. Table 2 presents a comparison of demographics for the entire sample (n=60) and the sample of women (n=38) who reported receiving MMs from other IW and/or COs. Their distribution across current age, sentence level, offense, and prior prison categories are similar. However, the most notable discrepancy across samples is the larger proportion of women under minimum security for the sample of 38 women and the larger proportion of women who are Black for the sample of 60 women.

¹⁰ Correctional officers were defined as and included officers, captains, lieutenants and sergeants.

Table 2. Description of entire sample of women compared to sample of women who reported MMs from other IW and/or COs

Variables	N=60	N=38
Race		
Black	33.3%	26.3%
White	63.3%	68.0%
Hispanic	3.3%	5.3%
Current Age		
Mean (SD)	33 (9.93)	32.5 (10.57)
Range	19 – 69	19 – 69
Sentence Length (months)		
Mean (SD)	72 (71.80)	74 (69.24)
Range	8 – 300+	8 – 300+
Security Level		
Minimum	36.7%	44.7%
Medium	46.7%	39.5%
Close	16.7%	15.8%
Offense		
Violent	55.0%	55.3%
Property/Non-Violent	30.0%	26.3%
Drugs	15.0%	18.4%
Prison Prior		
Yes	35.0%	34.2%

This section will present and analyze the 48 MMs women reported receiving from other IW and/or COs. Of the 48 messages women received, more than two-thirds (n=31, 64.58%) of the messages were received from other women in prison, and one-third (n=15, 31.25%) of the messages were received from COs. Two of the messages (4.17%) women reported hearing from both other IW and COs.

Messages recalled from other IW and COs produced eight types of messages. Messages of *advice* (n=16, 33.33%), *compliment* (n=12, 25%), *encouragement* (n=5, 10.42%), *negative statement* (n=5, 10.42%), *religion* (n=4, 8.33%), *advice and encouragement* (n=2, 4.16%), *compliment and encouragement* (n=2, 4.16%), and *advice and compliment* (n=2, 4.16%).

Advice

One-third of the MMs women reported receiving from COs and other women in prison were messages of *advice* (n=16, 33.33%), making *advice* the most common type of message women reported receiving. Messages of *advice* expressed guidance or recommendations concerning women's future or past actions. These verbal messages included advice on what women should do, should not do, should have done or should not have done. However, various types of advice were present in the messages including behavioral suggestions, strategies for "doing time," recovery, and past behavior.

Behavioral. Of the 16 messages of *advice*, almost half (n=7, 43.75%) provided women advice on how to behave or act in prison. For example, when asked if she received any MMs from someone in prison, Jessica stated, "**Be patient with somebody else**"¹¹ [received from IW] ... "because people's attitudes in here are crazy." Women often spoke of the changing attitudes other women and staff had in prison, which added to the inconsistency of prison life. Similarly, Kyly received the message, "**You got to learn patience**" [IW]. She provided further explanation as to why the message was relevant:

Because [in prison] you have to wait in line for everything. You have to wait. You have to be patient. But if you're not [patient], then you're not going to be good when you get out of here. You're going to be impatient and get in more trouble.

Kyly not only connected the message to her current situation in prison, but also to reentry. She recognized that the behavior maintained in prison may likely continue once released. The reality of the prison environment is that there are set schedules, little privacy, and restricted movements (Bayse, Allgood, & Van Wyk, 1992). Women are expected to rise out of bed, turn their lights out, and be in their cell for "count" at required times. They can only make their way to the dining

¹¹ This section of the chapter explores the memorable messages that women receive from other IW and COs. Thus, in order for the messages to stand out they are all in bold print.

hall for breakfast, lunch, and dinner when their unit is called for “chow.” Women are often standing in lines, be it the chow line, medical line, shower line, phone line, or microwave line. Patience becomes key to avoiding conflict with other women and staff in these situations.

The amount of time women are allotted for carrying out each task (e.g., eating, recreational time, walking from the housing unit to programs/classes) is also controlled and running late can have consequences for women. Iris remembered a message she received from a CO: **“If you don’t keep on, if you don’t eat faster, if you don’t get here on time, you’re going to the hole** [solitary confinement].” Although the prison environment severely limits women’s control, they do attempt to maintain personal control (Goodstein, MacKenzie, & Shotland, 1984). For instance, Lisa recalled a message that continues to be memorable and useful for her: **“You can face things that are out of your control without acting out of control”** [IW]. She tied the message back to the prison environment she is living in: “It’s hard to not act out of control when everything else is [out of control] – so [the message] really means something to me because I have to remind myself of that all the time in here.” Studies have explored IWs agency and how they negotiate power in an environment that has much power over them (Carlen, 1985; Mageehon, 2008; Ross, 1994). Prison is a unique environment in which the power structure is very visible. However, women often develop strategies to navigate the prison experience.

Strategies for doing time. Strategies for “doing time” was another type of *advice* women reported receiving (n=5, 31.25%). When asked if she received any MMs from someone in prison, Rosalyn reported, **“Stay to yourself”** [IW]. She added, “Women on the inside start a lot of commotion. You could easily get caught up in it. So I see why [another woman in prison] told me that.” On the flip side, Vanessa received a message that did not advise her to stay to herself,

but to be cautious until she knew the relationship would be mutually beneficial. Meaning, what you give is what you will receive. When asked to state the MM word for word that she received from another confined female, Vanessa stated, **“You don’t crack bread until bread’s been cracked.”** She explained, “Like you don’t share your toothpaste until you know that they will do the same.” Women can easily be taken advantage of for goods they have and services they can provide, thus, mutually beneficial relationships become important for women in prison. Additionally, like Rosalyn and Vanessa, research has demonstrated that women do in fact develop strategies for doing time (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Kruttschnitt et al., 2000; Owen, 1998; Ward & Kassebaum, 1966); some women form relationships while others stay to themselves (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Kruttschnitt et al., 2000).

Not only did women receive messages advising them on how and how not to interact with people, but they also reported MMs on how to live each day in prison. The MM that Linda recalled was **“You can’t live in here [prison] and out there [out of prison]”** [IW], which was told to her when she became distraught over a letter she received after finding out her daughter underwent surgery unbeknownst to her. Linda came to realize that in prison “you can’t do anything about [what’s going on outside] so let it go. You can’t live in here and out there. You’ll go crazy.” Rita received a similar message: **“Allow your body to be locked up but your mind to be free”** [IW]. She explained:

What my friend meant by th[e] [message] is just allow your body to be locked up. Don't let this place take over your mind. And to me it's kind of hard when you're in here because you think about so much that goes on on the outside. And that's when she says you're supposed to let your mind be free. Think about the stuff that you did at home, think about the fun times that you had at home, think about what you want to do when you get out. She said it keeps your mind free from being incarcerated.

Both Linda and Rita's messages provide them with advice on how to do their time in prison. The advice Linda received about the difficulty of living in two worlds is not uncommon. In her interviews with women in a California prison, Owen (1998) heard similar sentiments from women who explained that trying to maintain relationships with family on the outside can make doing prison time that much more difficult. Consequently, women with close family ties outside of prison often find themselves in a bind; they value their relationships with family, especially with their children, but realize that they cannot be part of their daily activities and have no control over their children's day to day decisions. Choosing to live in the prison world and cutting oneself off from the outside world is but one strategy women use to do time.

Additionally, studies have found that women adjust to prison by adopting different styles to "doing time," which shape their prison experience (see Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Owen, 1998; Ward & Kassebaum, 1966). For example, Owen (1998) found three common ways women "do time," including: negotiating the prison world (e.g., making decisions with whom to have relationships); adhering (or not) to the inmate code (e.g., snitching or not snitching); or participation in the "mix," which refers to the extent to which women are involved in troubling activity (e.g. conflict with staff, drug use, and hustling other prisoners). Rosalyn's message, "**Stay to yourself,**" is an example of negotiating the prison world by choosing to either do her time alone or with others. The way women choose to "do time" can impact their adjustment to prison life. Chapter seven will explore how this sample of women "do time" in further detail.

Recovery. In addition to receiving messages of *advice* on how to do prison time, a couple of women also remembered receiving messages of *advice* that focused on their recovery or self-improvement (n=2, 12.50%). Amy, a recovering drug addict who spoke of the love she has for her son Brian, recalled a message that has become very memorable to her:

I had a friend that just went home. And I have been a drug addict for years. And I used to say that the first thing I wanted when I got out of prison was a shot of cocaine. And [my friend in prison] said “I want you to write Brian,” who is my son, **“I want you to write Brian and tell him that’s the first thing you want when you get out of prison”** [IW]. That’s something that’s stuck with me for the last eight months. Every day I think about it.

In an attempt to help her stay drug free, the sender of the message gave Amy advice that she knew she would not take. The thought of taking her friends advice and writing her son a letter detailing her thoughts of using drugs once released, seemed to be enough to keep her on the path to recovery.

Additionally, Claire explained that she has never tried to resist drugs until recently. When asked if she received any verbal messages that have become memorable to her, she stated:

As far as recovery, it’s the first time I’ve ever tried to be sober. Everybody always says it’s not going to be easy and right now, yeah, I think... I know I’m doing good right now. I’m not doing the drugs, although I could get them. I don’t want them right now, but sometimes I think that [staying clean is] going to be easy and I’m like “all right, I’ve got this.” But that’s when you fall short, when you think you’ve overcome it. My friend Jen, she’s from home, but she’s in here with me, she always tells me **“it’s not as easy as you think. Don’t give yourself credit too fast. Every day is going to be a struggle”** [IW].

The message of advice, “don’t give yourself credit too fast” seemed to be instrumental in her sobriety. She understands that staying sober may be easy at the moment while in prison, but in reality, will be a challenge to maintain, especially upon her release. Though messages of advice on recovery were not as common as other messages of advice, they did appear to have a positive impact on women, as women held onto these messages. Messages of recovery were received from other women incarcerated in the prison. This type of message may be especially important for women in prison to hear given the high number of females in prison dealing with substance abuse issues. In their review on the prevalence of substance abuse and dependence in prisoners at intake, Fazel, Bains, and Doll (2006) found that women offenders are ten times more likely than

women in the general population to be dependent upon drugs. Curbing women's desire for drugs in prison through the use of MMs may also be helpful once released. A new study on the MMs women on probation and parole receive from their probation and parole officers found that MMs were recalled when women engaged in everyday activities that took the place of drugs and crime, avoided behaviors that could lead to negative sanctions, and relapsed (Cornacchione et al., in press)

Past behavior. The last type of *advice* that was expressed in the MMs women reported was advice on their past behavior. Specifically, messages pertained to behavior that hindered success in and out of prison. This type of advice came through in two of the messages (12.50%), which were both reported by Karen:

In my therapeutic group, there's a lot of lifers in there. A lot of the [women incarcerated for life] say, "**If you just would've reached out for help**" [IW]. A lot of women are in here for domestic violence and they took the life of their spouse, and they went through so much abuse before the incident. If they would've reached out and asked for help, they wouldn't be doing a life sentence now. Obviously, they loved that person, but if they just would've asked for help. That's the main message that sticks out in my mind.

When asked if she received any other messages that have become memorable to her while in prison, Karen stated:

A lot of the officers say, "**If you women would stick together more, instead of working against each other you would get things done**" [CO]. Because I think the men [in prison] stick together more and they get things done. Like our Kiosk machine has been down for three weeks and we write informals [complaints] and everything, but things just don't get done around here like it does at the men's prison, because the men stick together more. The women are more back-biting and gossiping. I see a lot of people in relationships here and that causes a lot of problems.

Karen makes comparisons between men and women who are incarcerated. She surmised, "I think the men stick together more." This is not uncommon as studies have found that there is a general consensus that incarcerated men show more solidarity than the women (Kruttschnitt,

1983; Owen, 1998). Interestingly, between scheduled interviews, I often found myself speaking with COs as I waited to be escorted to the next interview. Smalltalk often occurred and it was not uncommon for COs to compare their past job(s) with incarcerated men to their current job with women during conversation. They, too, talked about IWs unwillingness to align with one another, and had a difficult time understanding why the women were so different from the men in that aspect.

Compliment

The second most common category (n=12, 25%), or type of message women reported receiving were *compliments*. Messages which were complimentary to women consisted of polite expressions of praise or admiration; a remark that expressed something positive about the woman or what she was doing. Two types of *compliments* were present in the messages: women's personal character and women's good behavior.

Personal character. Two-thirds (n=8, 66.67%) of the complimentary messages were about women's personal character. Nicole recalled that people close to her in the prison often tell her, **"You're smart and a really good person"** [IW], which was echoed in Kira's MM, **"You have a good heart"** [IW]. Andrea, who told the story of losing her daughter also received a message complimenting her character, which she was surprised to have received. She explained:

Just [other women in prison] tell me **"I'm the strongest woman they've ever met"** [IW]. I have women in here tell me that, you know? I didn't realize how much of an influence I have on people like how much I inspire other people until people tell me and then I'm like "whoa," you know?

Unlike Andrea, Tina, was not at all surprised to hear the message she recalled:

I would have to say, I'm silly and I say that because not only one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, I mean, many a people have told me, **"You are so silly"** [CO and IW]. That just sticks with me all the time. I think that's what makes my personality more bubbly, too,

because I get along with everyone -- every race, every ethnicity, everything. I get along with people so great.

Tina thought more about the message and went on to say:

And you know what was so wild about that [message] is that my last bid [prison sentence], I got all the time [from people] was, “You need to get your anger under control. You need to get your temper under control.” This was my last bid. This [wa]s not too far away. This was in 2007. And I did three years and I guess the whole three years I was bitter and evil. So I think that was really wild because this time I guess I did it not knowing that I did a different approach, which now I just laugh a lot, I tell jokes and just be silly and I guess I did something right because last time I used to just have a lot of anger issues.

How people come to identify themselves serves as a powerful motivator for desisting from crime (Paternoster & Shaw, 2009). Scholars have found that individuals who have begun the desistance process experience a change in identity, which is a critical step to long-term behavioral change (Adler, 1992; Laub & Sampson, 2001; Maruna, 2001). Although it cannot be inferred that Tina has desisted, she does detail the change that she has made within herself from her last imprisonment, which may be indicative that she is on the path towards desistance.

Good behavior. The remaining four (33.33%) complimentary messages recognized women’s good behavior. When asked if she received any MMs from anyone in prison Shawanda said, “Well yeah, one of the COs always tell me that, **‘that's some grown woman S-H-I-T’** [CO]. What that means... it’s because I go to school and I do groups and stuff.” Shawanda was delighted to hear such a message because it confirmed for her that she was making a positive change and behaving like an adult. When asked why she thought the CO told her the message she replied, “Because well, for one thing I did a lot of programs when I first got here and there was a lot of people that been here like years and years and haven't done no programs.”

Other women like Betty and Jenny also received messages complimenting their behavior. However, the messages they recalled directly connected their behavior to the amount of

supervision COs felt the women required. Jenny had one CO tell her, **“If all the inmates were like you, I’d be out of a job [CO].** So there’s one phrase that stuck with me.” And Betty recalled a CO telling her that **“If all the women were acting as good as you do, I wouldn’t have a job. And I wouldn’t have to lock your [cell] doors because we could all have a key” [CO].** Betty, a 56 year old woman served her first prison sentence in 1978. In those 36 years she has been to prison nine times. Currently, she is serving a 17 year sentence and has completed four years of that sentence. When asked why she was told the message, she explained, “I don’t cause any problems. I don’t have any tickets [misconduct violations]. I don’t get “hole shots” [solitary confinement].” Like Betty, Jenny’s sentence is also lengthy (15 years to life), but she is much younger (25 years old) than Betty and has never been to prison prior to her current sentence. She had a similar explanation as to why she received the message:

I’m respectful, I don’t... I just stay out the way. I just don’t cause trouble with anybody. I would rather go in my room and whatever. If I’m out somewhere I’m following the rules I’m not just violating... things like that so the COs don’t bother me. If they even look me up, they’re gonna see I don’t have no tickets. They respect that, they really do because they know that you’re a well behaved person.

Research has shown that good behavior is typically exemplified by those with longer sentences (Flanagan, 1980, 1981; R. Johnson & Dobrzanska, 2005). Women who know they are going to be in prison for an extended period of time sometimes stay “under the radar.” Women explained staying under the radar as being “quiet” and sticking with their “own group.” Doing so draws the attention away from them making it less likely to receive misconduct violations from COs. The concept of staying “under the radar” is illustrated by Betty and Jenny who equate the messages they received from the COs with having no tickets [misconduct violations] or “hole shots” [solitary confinement]; a big accomplishment in an environment laced with ever-changing rules and attitudes.

Encouragement

In addition to advice and complimentary behavior, women reported receiving messages of *encouragement* (n=5, 10.42%). These messages consisted of words of support, hope, and confidence. The messages are motivational in nature and encourage women to move forward and hope for the future. Ashley who received the message, **“We are just bent, we are not broken”** [IW] noted:

Just because we are here [in prison] and not [on the outside] with our families we are not broke. We are just bent right now. It’s like when you get down and out, like you are not broken, you’re just bent right now. You’re not broken, like this place ain’t breaking you. You are just bent a little bit.

Ashley was adamant in conveying the message she received and explaining that even though “prison” may “bend” her, it will not “break” her. Her explanation of the message leaves the impression that she wants people to know that she is not different than anyone who is not in prison. She may have made a mistake and at the moment may be “bent,” but she will straighten out and be just like everyone else in society who has not been to prison.

Rita recalled a similar message: **“This place can either do two things to you. It will make you or it will break you”** [IW]. She explained that “this place will either make you stronger than what you were before you came in and you’ll learn and you’ll grow from being here or it will break you meaning you will take this place for a joke, you won’t learn from anything. It will break you down completely.” The messages Ashley and Rita received differ in meaning. Rita’s message that prison can “break you” reflects the prisons ability to break one down because of the environment, the “total institution,” they are in. Although the prison has the power to control the rules that are in place and availability of programming, women ultimately have the choice to follow the rules, stay “under the radar” and sign up for programming. Thus, if chosen, incarceration can be a time of self-improvement and prison can “make you.” However, without

consciously choosing that route, the prison will “break you” and “you won’t learn from anything.” Ashley, on the other hand, interprets her message of being “broken” in contrast to being “bent.” She makes it clear that going to prison does not equate to being labeled as “broken” or unfixable.

Moreover, Laura, who at the time of receiving her MM was getting upset over an issue noted:

[M]y shoes got stolen and I got them back so it wasn’t that big a deal, but I was really mad about it and [another woman in prison] used to always say, **“If that’s the worst thing that happens to you in your whole life then you’ve lived a good life”** [IW]. So that’s something that I think about all the time.

The message Laura received from another woman confined with her was meant to encourage her in the current situation she was dealing with. The sender of the message was comparing losing a pair of shoes to worst things that could happen.

A handful of women recalled encouraging MMs they received in prison. These messages made women think about themselves in relation to their current situation. Not only do encouraging messages have the potential to impact behavior in prison but research has found that encouraging comments, especially from family members, is related to post-release success (Visher & Travis, 2003).

Negative Statement

In addition, a few women reported receiving *negative* verbal messages (n=5, 10.42%). These messages included negative remarks or statements about women’s personal character as well as their future behavior. For example, Tye remembered the message: **“Come on cattle”** [CO] and explained that the officers were referring to women in prison “like sheep, like a heard of sheep.” Others recalled negative statements that targeted their personal character. For instance, Tina received the message **“You’re bossy”** [IW]. And Nicole stated that she recalled

another woman in prison stating, **“You’re selfish”** [IW]. Though Nicole acknowledged that at times she was selfish, she admitted that the message “bothers me cause I don’t want to be selfish.” With a mixture of sadness and frustration, she asserted:

I’m a perfectionist and I always want to be right and I always think back to that [message]. Like somebody asked me for something and I still have a problem with freely giving it to people, which is what I believe I should do, but I don’t. And then every time I don’t [give to people] I feel like I was just really selfish [sighs] just like she [the incarcerated woman] always said.

As noted in chapter two, studies have shown that people use the verbal messages they receive and remember to assess their behavior (Ellis & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ellis, 2001; Smith et al., 2001). If their behavior violates their self-assessment, they may alter their behavior to fit their personal standards. Nicole is clearly assessing her “selfish” behavior as she wrestles over agreeing with the woman who told her she was “selfish,” while not wanting to be viewed in such a way. Chapter five will dig deeper into how women use the messages they receive.

Like Nicole, Rebecca received a message that she too was bothered by but did not go into self-assessing her behavior:

We have three phones now [in our housing unit]. We only had two phones [before]. That’s exciting because we don’t have to fight to talk to our family. I wasn’t really ease dropping, but I guess I was. I heard her [another incarcerated woman] say, “We have three phones now.” I was like, “Really?” I was like, “That’s good.” She was like, **“Who are you”** [IW]? You know what I’m saying? And that just made me feel like I was nothing; just like I have my whole life You don’t understand how that one comment will probably affect me for the rest of my life.

Rebecca admitted that most of her adult relationships made her feel inferior; thus, this comment left her struggling with feelings of worthlessness.

Lastly, Gretchen recollected a message that attacked her future behavior: **“Oh, don’t worry. When you get out, you’ll be back. Ninety percent of the women always come back”**

[CO]. Gretchen, too, expressed disappointment in the message she recalled receiving and continued:

That sticks with me because me, myself, I don't want to come back. I'm going to make it a goal not to come back here. When a CO just says, "oh, don't worry. You'll be back. Ninety percent of the women always come back," that's like – it sticks with me because it's so negative. I'm trying to do something positive with my life and he's trying to bring me back down.

Although the majority of messages women reported were of a positive nature, women did report negative messages they received from both COs and IW, a few of which they took to heart and saw as disheartening. Studies on women in the criminal justice system and their level of self-esteem have been mixed. Earlier studies show incarcerated women's self-esteem to be a factor contributing to their illegal behavior (Camp, Daggett, Kwon, & Klein-Saffran, 2008; Gray, Mays, & Stohr, 1995; Prendergast et al., 1995). Following this premise, if negative messages about women's personal character were to lower their self-esteem, negative behavior in prison could follow. However, Pollack (2000) writes that self-esteem may have very little to do with criminal behaviors; there are many women who feel good about themselves and "love" themselves, but commit illegal acts out of need.

Religion

The fifth MM category that some respondents reported receiving pertained to messages about *religion* or spirituality (n=4, 8.33%). Like the *advice* category, *religious* messages offered advice and also encouragement, but through a spiritual lens. For example, Molly reported receiving the message, "**Just have faith**" [IW], which she explained is a common message that people use and say around the prison: "[I]f you have faith and believe in God, He'll make sure everything turns out okay – it might not seem okay right now but there's a purpose." Likewise, the message: "**Follow God. God isn't the author of deception**" [CO] became memorable to

Tye. When asked what the message meant, Tye responded, “Always remember to put God first in your life and you will never go wrong. Everything else will follow.” And Amanda recalled receiving a spiritual message about second chances: **“Dear past, thank you for the lessons. Dear future I’m ready. Dear God, thank you for a second chance”** [IW]. She connected this message to her struggle with drugs, which continued upon entrance to prison:

When I first got to prison and I started getting involved with the drugs that’s here inside and I was doing them a lot, paying a lot of money for them and she [another woman in prison] was trying to revert my thinking patterns into positive instead of negative like pulling me away from what got me here in the first place and she would just give me positive affirmations and that was one of them that stuck with me.

Moreover, Rosie received the message **“Life is serious and death is sudden”** [IW]. She described a transition that she made: “I converted over to being a Muslim and she [another IW] told me you have to remember that life is serious and death is sudden. So you have to change your life in some way because you’ll end up in this place again.”

Religiosity in prison has been linked to prison adjustment (Clear & Sumter, 2002), self-efficacy (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006), fewer disciplinary problems (Camp et al., 2008), and reintegration post-prison release (Higgins & Severson, 2009; Jensen & Gibbons, 2002; B. R. Johnson, 2004). Additionally, a recent study exploring participation in religious engagement in a sample of females serving life in prison found that religious engagement helped women deal with depression (Dye, Aday, Farney, & Raley, 2014). Although religious messages were not common, they still remained important and memorable to the women who remembered them.

Multiple Message Categories

An additional six messages (n=6, 12.5%) were reported by women in prison. However, these messages were a combination of two themes: *compliment* and *encouragement*, *encouragement* and *advice*, and *advice* and *compliment*. Amy received a message providing both

encouragement and *advice*: **“Keep your head up and keep doing what you’re doing”** [CO].

Also, Rosie’s message included *advice* and a *compliment*: **“Don’t come back. This is not the place for you. This is not where you belong”** [IW and CO]. Pertaining to complimentary and encouraging messages, Martina recalled a CO tell her **“you’re better than this. I know you are because I’ve looked at your file and I know who you are. Good people do bad things every day, you don’t have to continue on that road”** [CO]. Despite having never served a prior term of imprisonment, Martina acknowledged the message was received “after my third hole shot [solitary confinement]” in six months. Asked why she thought the officer told her that message, she responded: “He knows me to be a quiet person. I really pretty much stay to myself. I think he knows that I was having a, just having a really hard time adjusting.” This finding is consistent with prior studies that show an association between prison adjustment and prison violations; the more one adjusts to prison, the less likely they will behave in ways that require sanctioning (Gover, Pérez, & Jennings, 2008; Warren, Hurt, Loper, & Chauhan, 2004).

Differences in Types of Memorable Messages Received

The second research question for this study is: how do the types of MMs women receive from other IW and COs differ? The most common type of MM women received was advice. However, the type of advice that women received from other IW differed from the advice women received from COs. Messages of *advice* on strategies for doing time (e.g., “Allow your body to be locked up, but your mind to be free”) and advice on recovery (e.g., “It’s not as easy as you think. Don’t give yourself credit too fast. Every day is going to be a struggle”) was only received from other women in prison. However, messages of *advice* on past and present behavior (e.g., “Look at the people you’re hanging around and that’s going to be how you are when you leave”) were mostly received from COs.

The second most salient MM theme was *compliment*. Women reported receiving complimentary messages from other IW and COs. Like *advice*, the type of complimentary message differed depending on who the message was received from. *Complimentary* MMs received from other females behind bars complimented women on personal character (e.g., “You’re the strongest woman I’ve ever met”), whereas, messages received from COs complimented women on their behavior (e.g., “If all inmates were like you, I’d be out of a job”).

It is not surprising that women received messages focused on behavior from COs. Prison officers are responsible for the management of the incarcerated. It is the officers’ responsibility to provide security and supervision to those within the prison (Liebling, Price, & Shefer, 2011). It is to the officers’ benefit that women behave in a manner that keeps everyone safe, as it makes their job easier. The original MM study conducted by Knapp et al. (1981) who interviewed both college students and parents of college students and other adults, found that most MMs are rule based and are part of the parent-child dialogue. The officer-inmate relationship is somewhat similar. Like the parent who has authority over the child so does the officer over the imprisoned. It is equally understandable that women received messages from other women in prison on recovery and how to do time. The women providing the messages likely had an experience that triggered the message. Who better to advise women on how to do time than the actual women who are serving time? Knapp et al. (1981) also noted that MMs can offer “strategies for dealing with situations” (p. 39), which was a type of message received from other women in prison.

Messages that *encouraged* women to move forward and hope for the future (e.g., “We are just bent, we are not broken”) came only from other women who were behind bars. Again, the officers’ job is not to encourage or motivate women, but to maintain a controlled and safe environment. This is not to say that receiving encouragement from COs would not be beneficial.

The MM literature states that messages received from those of higher authority legitimize the message (Knapp et al., 1981; Stohl, 1986). Studies show that messages that motivate women have the potential to change or impact behavior (Nazione et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2009); thus, correctional staff may also have the potential to have a profound impact on IWs pro-social behaviors.

In addition, women in the study also reported receiving *negative* messages from other IW and COs. All negative MMs received from other IW attacked women's personal character (e.g., "You're selfish"). Negative messages women received from COs also attacked women's personal character and a single message commented on future behavior (i.e., "Oh, don't worry. When you get out, you'll be back. Ninety percent of the women always come back").

Lastly, all but one (i.e., "Follow God. God isn't the author of deception") *religious* message were received from other IW. However, the type of spiritual message received from other IW differed. Two messages from other IW were focused on providing spiritual advice (e.g., "Just have faith") while another spiritual message concerned second chances (i.e., "Dear past, thank you for the lessons. Dear future I'm ready, Dear God, thank you for a second chance). Religion has not only been used in prison to help with coping, but it also provides the individuals locked up with a sense of group association; religious services can be a place where incarcerated individuals interact with other confined individuals in a positive manner (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006). Thus, it is understandable that women would receive a greater number of messages from females in prison than from the COs; COs are not the ones attending religious services in prison.

Discussion

Until now, there have been no studies reporting the MMs that women in prison receive and remember. This chapter has demonstrated that IW do receive and recall MMs from other IW and COs and has outlined the types of MMs they receive. A total of five single message types

were revealed: *advice*, *compliment*, *encouragement*, *negative statement* and *religion*. An additional three categories were created, each combining two of the five single message categories: *encouragement* and *compliment*, *encouragement* and *advice*, and *advice* and *compliment*. *Advice* was the most common type of message that women reported receiving followed by *compliment*. Although most messages rang positive to women, negative messages did not go unreported.

Messages of advice on behavior and recovery were sometimes talked about in conjunction with reentry. The messages seemed to help push women to think about how behaviors maintained in prison might translate to how they act once released. Similarly, messages of encouragement had women thinking about self-improvement and making use of the prison experience so that once released doing time will have been worth it; they will have “learned something.” Lastly, messages of religion also produced this thinking about change so as not to land in prison again. Just as women connected reentry and self-improvement to the positive messages they received, women who reported *negative* messages also made connections to reentry and how they felt about themselves. However, the connections had a negative feel leaving women with thoughts of worthlessness and pessimism about their reentry success.

An interesting finding was the type of advice that was received from other IW verses COs. Differences in the type of message received stood out in the *advice*, *compliment*, and *encouragement* categories. Messages received from other women in prison spoke to the prison experience and how to navigate it, while messages from COs centered on how to “behave” in prison. However, when thinking about the role of each group (i.e., IW and COs), the difference in the type of message received from both groups does not seem unreasonable. Already IW can use their time and experience, some more than others, to provide other women in prison advice

on how to best succeed in a constrained environment. On the other hand, COs may be the most informative group of people to advise women on how to behave as they are the ones enforcing the prison rules. Additionally, the complimentary MMs women received from COs praised them on their good behavior. It may be that the women receiving messages about their behavior have a lower number of misconduct violations than women who are receiving other types of messages from COs or no message at all.

CHAPTER 5: MEMORABLE MESSAGES AND BEHAVIOR

Chapter four explored the types of MMs women reported receiving from other IW and COs as well as the differences in types of messages women received from other IW and COs. Chapter five will explore the effects of the MMs on women's behavior. Thus, the third research question for this study is: how do women in prison perceive the effects of the MMs they receive from COs and other IW on their behavior while in prison? Women were asked three questions to elicit their reactions to the verbal messages they received. The first question asked women if the message came to mind when they did something they were proud of. The second question asked women if the message came to mind when they did something they were not proud of. The third and final question asked women if the message came to mind when they avoided doing something they would later regret. Women who responded 'yes' to any or all of the three questions were then asked to explain the situation.¹²

Proud Behavior

After responding 'yes' to receiving a MM while in prison, women were asked if the message came to mind when they did something that they were proud of. Thirty-three (68.75%) messages elicited proud behavior. There were four common types of proud behavior women recalled: *accomplishment*, *behavioral control*, *social support* and *perseverance*.¹³

Accomplishment

Of the messages that were connected to proud behavior, nearly one-third (30.3%) reported thinking about the message when something was accomplished or achieved successfully in prison (e.g., schooling, treatment, programming). Women either thought of the message when

¹² Of the 48 MMs that women reported receiving, seven of the messages were not associated with a behavioral reaction

¹³ One message yielded two types of proud behavior, *behavioral control* and *accomplishment*.

they engaged in an act or obtained something that brought about a positive, happy feeling. For the most part, respondents in the study often connected the message back to accomplishing an educational endeavor or entering a treatment program the prison was offering. When asked, “Has the message [“Life is serious and death is sudden”- IW] come to mind when you did something you were proud of?” Rosie spoke of obtaining her GED:

When I got my GED. I have some rough communication with my family. You know, being that I’m here [and] they are out there. And you know I remember [the prison] had a graduation ceremony for us and the only person that came to my graduation was my boss. And he knew how important it was for me to have someone there and a positive influence and so I thought of [the message] as the lady was giving her little speech or whatever. And I was thinking to myself, I’m like, “Damn, life is serious and death is sudden.” Like I could have died out there, but I’m being serious about my life right now and hopefully I don’t catch that “sudden.”

Here, Rosie links her religious message to an accomplishment. Similarly, Tye connected her “*religious*” message, “Follow God. God isn’t the author of deception” [CO], to an *accomplishment* of having “graduated HVAC [heating, ventilating, and air conditioning] class.” Research shows that many women are under-educated and nearly half of all women in state prison have neither graduated from high school nor received a GED (Harlow, 2003). Thus, graduating from a class or receiving a GED in prison is a major accomplishment of which many women were proud to achieve.

Similar types of *accomplishments* were echoed by other women who received MMs and associated the messages with proud behavior. Amy associated the message she received to beginning a drug program and graduating from it:

Yes. I started IOP, which is [an] Intensive Out-Patient drug program, and I graduated from it. I earned my certificate, so [the message, “I want you to write Brian and tell him cocaine is the first thing you want when you get out of prison” - IW] it kind of stuck with me. It’s one of the first things I thought about was, “well, I don’t really want that shot of cocaine when I get out of prison anymore.”

Approximately 60 percent of women entering prison have a drug abuse or drug dependence problem (Mumola & Karberg, 2006). Thus, their proud reaction of accomplishing a drug treatment program is quite deserved, especially since women in the study explained that they were not required to take part in drug and alcohol programs. It was their choice to sign up. However, women were not always guaranteed entrance into the class because of limited availability. As a result, women were also proud when they accomplished getting into a class. Asked if the message, “You have to do good. Work on you. You have to do good” [CO], came to mind when she did something she was proud of, Sonja replied, “I felt proud when I finally got to start school, and when I got into the NA [Narcotics Anonymous] meetings. I felt like I accomplished something, like something was lifted off my back.”

Substance abuse treatment, education, and health services are common services offered in prison. However, there are often more women in prison who need these services than there are availability (Mumola & Karberg, 2006). Although the prison in which the respondents were in required those who did not have their GED or high school diploma to take GED courses, other classes and programs offered in the prison require that women be within one year of their release date to enroll. During interviews, women often voiced their frustration with getting into classes and treatment programs, particularly those with lengthy sentences, as they were ineligible for some programs. Thus, getting into some prison classes was a major feat in and of itself.

In general, women were able to use the various messages they received to *accomplish* something positive while in prison, which, in turn, made them proud. However, the only type of message that women did not connect to *accomplishments* they were proud of were messages in the *negative statement* category. Women who reported messages that attacked their personal character were not associated with *accomplishments*. Although, some women did associate

negative statements to positive behavior, which is later discussed, this was not the case for *accomplishments*. Lastly, the type of *accomplishment* did not differ when messages received from other IW were compared to messages received from COs.

Behavioral Control

An additional type of proud behavior that women associated with the MMs they reported was *behavioral control* (n=8, 24.24%). Rather than acting out and doing what they perceived to be inappropriate or unacceptable behavior, women often spoke of their ability to control their behavior by resisting the urge to fight and following the rules. As it relates to refraining from physical conflict, Jessica who received the message, “Be patient with somebody else” from another woman in prison, recounts that the message came to mind when she did something that she was proud of: “Not fighting. You know what I mean, like I be patient and just step away like step away instead of jumping into something.” Similarly, Lisa thought of the message: “You can face things that are out of [your] control without acting out of control” [IW], when she handled a situation in the laundry and mending unit that could have easily escalated. When asked if the message came to mind when she did something she was proud of, Lisa recounted:

Yeah. With me being able to handle myself and a lot of stuff, it seems like every day in prison is like a test. You know what I mean? Especially because I’m getting closer to going home. I feel like the closer I get to going home – I filed judicial, and I had a probation video conference. It seems like you know the more and more situations keep coming [up]. Yeah, like I work in the laundry and mending unit. We have a lot of confrontation with the laundry workers and stuff like that. I’ve been able to swallow my pride and just handle situations instead of acting how I feel like I want to act so, yeah.

Lisa admitted, “I just want[ed] to say whatever I want[ed] to say and ... put my hands on [her]” but she refused because it would not only put her at risk of losing her prison job but losing her early release. For women at this particular correctional facility they could earn “good days” through involvement in programs and classes to put toward early release.

Messages women reported receiving from COs were associated with controlling their behavior by following the rules. This, in turn, decreased women's chances of receiving a "ticket" (i.e., misconduct violation). Asked if the message ["If all inmates were like you, I'd be out of a job" - CO] Jenny received came to mind when you did something she was proud of:

Sometimes it does. Like when I think about my tickets [misconduct violations] and stuff. Well, the lack of tickets. I think about what [t]he [CO] says and I think "Yeah that's true."

Jenny seems to use the message she received to remind herself of her good behavior. Similar sentiments were echoed by Betty. For her, the MM ["If all the women were acting as good as I do, he wouldn't have a job. And he wouldn't have to lock our doors because we could all have a key" - CO] she received made her proud to follow institutional rules:

Just when I know I do things the way it's supposed to be [done]. I know that people – the COs notice. It's not so much the inmates notice because they [are] always saying you're trying to be a goody two shoes or whatever. But the staff knows who's doing what they're supposed to and not supposed to do.

Overall, women who received MMs from COs associated the message with controlling their behavior in the form of following the rules, while messages women received from other women in prison were associated with resisting the urge to fight. Although little attention has been paid to the "prison officer" and his or her role, they are the "peacekeepers" who solve situations and defuse tension within the prison (Liebling et al., 2011). It has been argued that their overall role is to keep those who are in the prison safe (Thomas, 1972). Thus, women in prison who follow the rules would require less attention from the officers. Understandably, officers would be more likely than other women in prison to provide women with messages about following the rules to bring ease to their job.

Social Support

A third common behavior women were proud of and associated with the MM they received was *social support*. Of the 33 (68.75%) messages received from other IW and COs that were associated with proud behavior, eight (24.24%) were connected to social support. Women were particularly proud of themselves when they provided assistance or support to someone else in the prison. The assistance or support was either verbal or through material goods. Like *behavioral control*, the type of *social support* differed depending on who the message was received from (i.e., other IW or COs).

Women who reported messages from other IW were proud of the “material” support they provided other women in prison as reflected in Kira and Nicole’s statement. Asked if the message “You have a good heart,” received from another woman in prison came to mind when she did something she was proud of, Kira stated:

Absolutely. All the time. I just helped someone that didn’t have shoes. I might have three pair of shoes and I see a lady with holes. I give them to her. My friends be like, “That was so nice of you.” You know what I mean?

Similarly, Nicole’s message, “You’re selfish,” which was also received from a woman in the prison came to mind when she did something she was proud of, Nicole explained:

When I give – Like for Christmas I made up a bunch of goodie bags for people that don’t get to shop [at commissary] and stuff like that and Christmas morning I slid them under the doors before they got up. And it was like their little Christmas present. And like when that happened you know I was thinking, “See I’m not selfish.” Stuff like that.

Kira and Nicole were both proud when they provided women with material support. Specifically, Nicole, who received the message “you’re selfish” from another female behind bars made it a point to express that she did something that went against the “*negative*” message she received, which attacked her personal character. In the previous chapter Nicole acknowledged that at times she has been “selfish” and admitted “[the message] bothers me cause I don’t want to be selfish.”

The MM that Nicole received and the proud behavior that resulted is a clear example of how individuals use the messages they receive and remember to assess their personal behavior and if needed, alter it to fit personal standards. Nicole's selfish behavior violated her personal standards. Therefore, she changed her behavior to coincide with her individual principles. For some, receiving "negative" messages led them to do something positive.

Women who reported MMs received from COs also associated the message with being proud of providing other women in prison *social support*. However, the *social support* they associated with messages received from officers was that of "verbal" support. Alison who received the message, "[You] don't belong in [prison]" [CO], explains a time when she thought about the message while talking with a woman in the prison who seemed troubled:

Like if I'm walking the walk jog and I'm talking to a younger person that's always in trouble and the CO is standing on the end watching the yard then I know he's thinking, "There she is again walking and helping people." So that makes me feel proud.

Likewise, Martina remembered recalling the message she received when she helped another woman in prison from cutting her skin. Asked if the message ["you're better than this. I know you are because I've looked at your file and I know who you are. Good people do bad things every day, you don't have to continue on that road" - CO] came to mind when she did something she was proud of, Martina stated: "I had used it, now that you brought it up, to try and help a girl to stop from cutting herself." Various women in the sample spoke of cutting themselves or knowing someone who cuts themselves, often using the blade in their razor to commit the act. The complimentary messages Alison and Martina received from the COs were recalled and then used to provide support to other women in prison who believed they had no reason to live or were often in trouble; thus, living up to messages of positive personal character.

Karen also discussed a time when she and another woman provided support to a few of the females behind bars by befriending them because they were outcasts due to their crimes. She explained how the message [If you women would stick together more instead of working against each other"... "you would get things done" - CO] was remembered when she did something she was proud of:

Yeah, there are a couple of people in here that have done pretty horrendous crimes and they're outcasts. I try to be friends – I am friends with them and a lot of people are like, "Why do you even talk to her? Do you know what she did?" I say, "I do know, but her crime doesn't define her." So me and another girl are about the only people that talk to them.

Karen served a prior prison term when she was 44 years of age. At the time of the interview, she had approximately six weeks left until she would be released. She explained "horrendous crimes" committed against children and elderly and spoke of one woman, Gloria, whose crime was against a child. She struggled with knowing women's crimes and trying not to judge them for the crime they committed, praying, "God please help me to look at her [Gloria] through your eyes and not through judgment[al] eyes. Because I don't know what happened and it's not for me to judge." She continued, "This has been an experience being in prison, and hopefully when I go home I can change something by helping someone or do something to help some of these women in here." It is clear that Karen tried to use the MM she reported receiving by "sticking with" other women in the prison rather than "working against" them even though she struggled with making sense of the crimes some committed. Karen goes against the grain as research has shown that those in prison who have committed sex crimes are at the bottom of the prison hierarchy, often subject to denigration and harassment (Schwaebe, 2005).

Perseverance

The fourth and last theme of proud behavior associated with the verbal MMs women reported was *perseverance* (n=6, 18.18%). Women connected the messages they received from other women in prison and officers to not giving up and the drive to continue moving forward. Christy who received her GED explained, “I was really proud because I wanted to give up because I got denied my judicial [early release], but then [another IW] just told me [the message, Do your time for you and just get this time done and over with. It’s just a short part of life that you just got to get done and over with].” Rather than giving up because she was denied early release, Christy continued on with her schooling. Christy used the message to help herself persevere; a quality that will be needed once she is released from prison. Similarly, Shawanda who received the message, “That’s some grown woman S-H-I-T” [CO], also associated the message with not giving up in school even when she could have easily stopped going:

I went to college here for 14 weeks and the first 14 weeks I went during midterms. They told me they didn’t pay [for the classes] so I was going to school for nothing. So in the middle of midterms they dropped me out of school, but I didn’t stop [going]. I kept going and then I went back the next semester. I never stopped.

Even though Shawanda would not receive credits for continuing in the class that semester, she continued to see it through until the conclusion of the semester. She then attended school the following semester and ultimately became the recipient of a certificate in chemical dependency counseling. In the end, both Christy and Shawanda had gained certificates. In addition to their certificates, they also gained a sense of personal pride and satisfaction for continuing what they had started even when they faced difficulties along the way.

The MM literature posits that messages can be used as strategies for dealing with new and different situations and has the potential to influence behavior in that particular situation

(Knapp et al., 1981; Stohl, 1986). Rita who had already served six and a half years of her eight year sentence recounted a time when she thought about the message, “This place can either do two things to you. It will make you or it will break you” [IW], she received. Although she did not gain a physical item like Christy and Shawanda had, she used the message as a strategy to keep herself from breaking by not giving up:

Well I almost lost my mom a year and a half ago and I wanted to give up. And my mom has been there for me since the beginning through whatever, in prison, while I was at home. And the thought of me losing her while I was in here, I just wanted to give up on everything and that message came to me: “This place will either make you stronger or it will break you.” And me feeling like I wanted to give up, that’s a sign of this place breaking me down. So I didn’t want that to happen. I also knew that I needed to be strong for my mother and my baby brother and sister who was at home because they’re teenagers.

Rita used the message she received from another IW to pull herself up during her time of bereavement over the loss of her mother. Receiving the news of losing a loved one is devastating for anyone, but even more difficult for people in prison who do not have the choice of attending memorial services or clinging close to family and friends during a time of need. When negative events that women in prison have no control over occur on the outside it is easy to see how anger and depression can easily take control. Yet, these feelings do not make it any easier for women to do their time. Thus, perseverance becomes an important quality for women in prison to have and maintain during challenging times.

Overall, *perseverance* was the least common type of proud behavior women associated with the messages they received. This may be because of the environment women are in. During interviews, women often commented that “The only consistency [in prison] is the inconsistency,” which may make it difficult to follow through on personal goals if women’s surroundings are frequently changing. Additionally, like *accomplishments*, the type of *perseverance* did not differ for messages received from other IW and messages received from COs.

Not Proud Behavior

To further understand the impact MMs have on women's behavior, women were asked if the message came to mind when they did something they were not proud of. Eighteen (37.5%) of the 48 messages reported elicited behavior women were not proud of. The most common types of behavior women were not proud of included *involvement in an altercation*, *lack of consideration for others* and *personal let down*.¹⁴

Involvement in an Altercation

An abundance of research on violence in men's prisons has been conducted (for a review see Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). Although the same attention has not been given to women, recently, studies have examined sexual assault in women's prisons (Alarid, 2000; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2002, 2006) and predictors of prison violations (see Celinska & Sung, 2014). In her book, "In the Mix," Owen (1998) discusses the 'fighting mix' which includes verbal and physical conflict that usually takes place face-to-face with cellmates or workmates. Women in the current study recalled verbal and physical prison altercations (n=7, 38.88%) that they were not proud of, but recalled the MM during their involvement in each.

Verbal altercations with other women in prison were more prevalent than physical altercations. For example, Rosie recalled how her MM of "Life is serious and death is sudden" [IW] led her to behave in such a way that left her feeling ashamed:

I used to have a really, really, really, really vicious mouth. I used to say things that were not very nice. Because I didn't care about myself. I didn't love myself and I didn't care about others. So I used to say a lot of stuff that was really bad. And I said something vicious to this girl one time and you know she got released and she ended up going out and she overdosed [on drugs] and died.

¹⁴ Three women reported involvement in negative relationships as a behavior they were not proud of and associated with the MM they received.

When asked what the vicious comment was, Rosie responded, “I’d rather not say.” Similarly, Shawanda recalled the message [“That’s some grown woman S-H-I-T” – CO] when she engaged in arguments with other women in prison of which she was not proud: “Yeah, arguing with girls [in prison]. And I know I shouldn’t be and I know I’m better than that, I should just walk away and I don’t.” Shawanda further explained that she recalls the MM after her arguments with other women. She noted, “I argue and then ‘click’, you’re better than that. Why are you arguing with them?” Although after the fact, Shawanda used the message to self-assess her behavior, which she discovered she is not proud of. Earlier in the chapter she also used the message to persevere with her schooling, which elicited proud behavior. Thus, some women recalled the message when they did things they were both proud and not proud of.

Although “verbal” altercations were more likely to occur than “physical” altercations, there were still a couple of instances of physical altercations that took place in prison and led women to recall the MM they received. For instance, Martina, a woman who had recently lost her son disclosed an incident which got her 21 days in the “hole” [solitary confinement]. When asked if the message, “Martina, you’re better than this. I know you are because I’ve looked at your file and I know who you are. Good people do bad things every day, you don’t have to continue on that road” [CO], came to mind when she did something she was not proud of,

Martina replied:

Getting into a fight. It’s like “really, again”; I mean I had a real bad temper when I came [to prison]. I was just angry with myself and the whole situation and ... somebody said something pertaining to the loss of my son and it just set me off and I, I ended up swinging and I didn’t stop. It took mace and three COs to get me to stop.

Likewise, Tina’s message, “You are so silly” [IW and CO], came to mind when she hit a girl who was her friend. She, too, was not proud of her behavior:

I had a good friend of mines – her and I were really close or whatever. We got in a big argument or whatever and my good friend, I had hit her. And she didn't hit me back. And then a couple of days later I felt so bad. Like, "Oh my gosh, this is my best friend, why did I even do that?" And I went back and I apologized to her. And we got [our] friends[hip] back again but just that made me feel disappointed in myself because that's not me no more.

As previously mentioned, Tina reported that many people told her she had an anger problem during her last imprisonment; yet, she managed to change the way she did her current prison term. Consequently, she was not proud of her action with the girl because she had made a positive change, but reverted back to her old character. Not only did Tina's message state that she was "so silly," but Tina too self-assessed herself as "silly" and "bubbly." When her behavior violated her own self-assessment of herself she felt "disappointed" and explained "that's not me no more." It is not an easy task to refrain from going back to one's old mentality. This is something many desisters face and must deal with, especially once released from prison and back around the same people, places, and things.¹⁵

Lack of Consideration for Others

The second type of behavior women were not proud of, but associated with the MM they received was, *lack of consideration for others* (n=4, 22.22%). This included avoiding helping someone, keeping secrets or telling lies, and stealing. Karen who earlier spoke of being proud for befriending the outcasts also recalled the message ["If you women would stick together more instead of working against each other"... "you would get things done" - CO] she received from an officer when she did something she was not proud of:

A few times I've avoided them [other IW in here], and one's a cutter; she cuts herself and I avoided her because I just wasn't in the mood. Maybe something was going on with me that day and I just wasn't in the mood to be around them.

She continued:

¹⁵ There were no differences in the type of altercation among messages received from COs and other IW.

Later on I got convicted by the Holy Spirit. I'm like, "What if something was to happen to her? What if she was to go to her room and cut herself?" Because she's cut herself with razors before and everything. So I try to always speak to [the cutters] and give them a hug, and they just always seem to kind of cling to me, you know.... I just avoided her for a few days, and I felt bad about it.

Although in this specific incidence Karen did something that she was not proud of, she continued to try and befriend people who needed help or did not have any other friends. She appeared to be trying to embody the message she received by engaging with other women, specifically the outcasts, rather than working against them.

In addition, some women used the MM to justify the bad action(s) they took. Ashley, who at the time was serving her first prison sentence used the message "We are just bent, we are not broken" [IW] as a justification for her bad action against another woman in prison. Although not proud of what she did, she stated "I'm still bent right now. I'm not, I'm not fully recovered. You know, like I can't change everything in one day." She detailed the incident:

Ashley: This girl had some money sent to my friend on the streets. Instead of giving her the money that I was supposed to give her I just kept the money.

Interviewer: So a girl in here sent money –?

Ashley: Her boyfriend [on the outside] sent money to my friend on the street. And my friend on the streets kept half and gave me half.

Interviewer: Where was the money supposed to go?

Ashley: It was supposed to go on her "books" [in prison].

Interviewer: Oh, okay. In here. And so did you think about the message when that happened?

Ashley: Yeah a little bit cause like I feel bad for doing it. But I'm still bent right now.

Women in prison can have individuals on the outside put money on their "books," which is a personal account that can be used to buy items at commissary. In addition to receiving money from people on the outside, money that women make from their prison job also goes on their "books." Rather than the money going on another incarcerated woman's "book," Ashley kept the

money for herself; a behavior of which she was not proud, but felt somewhat justified in. Ashley was one of the few women to use the message to provide justification for her behavior.

Though some women used the message to justify behavior they were not proud of, other women agreed with messages that elicited behavior they were not proud of. Nicole who received the message “You’re selfish” [IW], agreed with the message she received from another IW as she recalled a behavior she was not proud of: “When I told people ‘no’. When I really had the [commissary items], when I should have gave it.” Asked what she was thinking at the time, she responded “that I was selfish.” Earlier, Nicole recalled an unselfish act in which she made up goodie bags at Christmas time for other women in the prison and stated “See I’m not selfish.” Yet, here she struggles with the opposite and calls herself ‘selfish.’ For Nicole, the message “You’re selfish” impacts her view of herself:

So like this morning I was making my commissary list and my friend didn’t have any money and we help each other out. And I was like, usually I was going to split everything up and not get anything that I didn’t need or what we wasn’t splitting and I was like, “You know? Quit being selfish. Just share what you got and get her a couple things that she needs.” So I did. And to me that’s what I should be doing but in the back of my mind it’s like, “Why do you make such a big deal out of this? Why is this such an issue?” Like I made a comment to my bunkie [cellmate] about it, like it’s something that really affects me. Like it makes me feel guilty about how I act about it and like kind of makes me feel like there’s something wrong with me because why do I make such a big deal out of such a small issue? When I do have [i]t I should share it.

Nicole questioned “Why do I make such a big deal out of such a small issue.” However, it is important to note that although she refers to sharing commissary items¹⁶ as a “small issue,” it is

¹⁶ During one interview, a women brought a pint of ice cream with her. She expressed that she only gets ice cream once every few months and that it’s like “gold.” She had just finished shopping at commissary and because the women in prison do not have the luxury of a freezer, she asked if it was okay if she ate it during the interview so that it did not melt.

in fact a big issue in prison. Commissary items are used to make bargains and trades in prison, as women who do not have money on their books are not able to buy from commissary.¹⁷

Personal Let Down

Verbal messages also came to mind when women personally let themselves down (n=4, 22.22%) and for that they were not proud. *Personal let downs* included failing at an act that was trying to be accomplished and engaging in a senseless action. Eden was very serious about and took to heart her cooking skills: “I’m over and beyond in the cooking department over there [points to her unit] with the microwave.” She reported having received the message, “I don’t eat other people’s cooking like that” from another woman in prison, Darla. Eden spoke very highly of Darla and explained the significance of Darla eating her food:

And so – it’s, it’s such a big deal to me that she [Darla] will eat my food. Because she’s been down [in prison] for so long that certain people become – not institutionalized, but they just have their way about doing things and they don’t – they don’t step outside of that box very easily or often. And she did for me [when she ate my cooking].

When asked if the message came to mind when she did something she was not proud of, Eden replied:

When I make [food] that burned or didn’t turn out right. If I make something and I’m like, “Oh, this tastes like crap,” then I won’t feed it to her [Darla]. I’ll be like, “Oh, no. We have to order a pizza [laughs], sorry.

Asked why she would not feed it to her, Eden explained, “Because it’s a failure. And I don’t – I don’t – I don’t want to have anybody know. I wouldn’t feed it to my husband either.” Eden expressed much disappointment in herself when her cooking did not stand up to the worth of the message she received.

¹⁷ The type of consideration that women reported lacking did not differ for messages received from other women in prison and COs.

Another type of *personal let down* was engaging in a senseless action. Deana and Anna commented on the “stupid” decisions they have made in prison. When asked if the message [“Look at the people you’re hanging around and that’s going to be how you are when you leave” - CO] came to mind when she did something she was not proud of, Deana responded:

I mean sometimes. When I get in trouble for just *stupid* things – getting involved in the unnecessary drama. I need to grow up. I don’t care what the [COs] say, but sometimes I’m embarrassed. Not because the [COs] told me so, but because, damn I’m 23 years old. I feel like I need to grow up.

Similarly, Anna explained that the MM [“Don’t let it [prison] get you down. You’re real young, you’ve got potential. Most of these women in here don’t have another chance. You can just go out there [into the world] and do it” - IW] she received also came to mind “a little bit. Like with my *stupid* tattoos that I got in here. You know what I mean? That’s about the only thing I can look at, like, “Well, I was really young.”” Neither Deana nor Anna were proud of their actions, but they associated their MM with their behavior. For Anna, the message, “You’re young...” became an explanation for why she engaged in the behavior (i.e., getting a tattoo) of which she was not proud.¹⁸

Overall, women who reported behavior they were not proud of often felt remorseful, but at times a few women used the message they received as an explanation for why they behaved how they did. Additionally, types of behavior women were not proud of did not differ for messages received from other IW and COs.

Avoided Regretful Behavior

The third and last question women were asked in order to understand the behavioral reactions that they associated with the MMs they received was: did the message come to mind

¹⁸ The type of personal let down did not differ when examining who the message was received from.

when you avoided doing something you would later regret?¹⁹ A total of twenty (41.66%) messages were connected to behavior that women avoided because they would later regret it. However, the two most common themes that emerged were: *avoided initiating conflict* and *avoided being irresponsible*.²⁰

Avoided Initiating Conflict

The most common type of regretful behavior women reported avoiding was *initiating conflict* (n=11, 55%). Similar to behavior that women were not proud of, avoiding initiating conflict included refraining from verbal and physical altercations. However, some women just stated that they avoided confrontation. Much of the potential conflict stemmed from unavailability of prison resources.

Each housing unit within the prison has approximately two microwaves, two phones and six to eight showers which 200 women must share. The availability is sparse and can easily cause confrontation. When asked if the message [“Why would someone choose to be miserable? Why would someone choose to be unhappy?”] she received from a CO came to mind when she avoided doing something that she would later regret, Porsha discussed a time that she avoided initiating conflict:

Yeah, when I walk away from like the microwave line. I get skipped in the microwave line and they’ll [other women in prison] be like “well I skipped you,” and I’m like, “okay, just go ahead.” So instead of initiating a conflict I just pretty much walk away and just say “hey whatever.” Then I’ll finish cooking later. I’m not even going to get mad, you know, I self-talk myself.

Martina echoed similar feelings, stating: “I mean there’s a lot of things you gotta walk away from and tell yourself, ‘this is not one of those battles.’” The conversation continued and Martina

¹⁹ For some women, this question was difficult to understand. Thus, it was sometimes rephrased: were you ever about to do something, but then you thought about the MM and decided not to do it?

²⁰ Two of the twenty participants avoided being selfish and one of the twenty responses did not fit within the two themes of regretful behavior women avoided.

was asked if she could provide an example of when the message [Martina, you're better than this. I know you are because I've looked at your file and I know who you are. Good people do bad things every day, you don't have to continue on that road" - CO] came to mind when she avoided something she would later regret. She recalled:

I was up at the phones one day and a girl came off the phone, she goes, "I'm getting back on again next." I said, "No you're not. I've been standing in line for 35 minutes." I says, "You're gonna go back downstairs and you're gonna get in line like everybody else did. "No, you ain't gonna tell me what to do and I'm not gonna argue with you because this is your home [you're in here for life] and this is where you live, I get to leave" [the girl said to me]. I say, "Why don't you tell me something I don't know. Is that supposed to hurt my feelings? Because it doesn't." I said, "Just remember one thing little girl." I said, "Bad things happen to good people all the time. And you are just not worth my time." And she got really upset and she just started yelling and the CO came up and made her go down [the stairs in the housing unit], so I just kinda put it that way but -Yeah. You gotta pick and choose. It would have been that easy for me to go off. I mean just to swing [at her]...

Earlier in the chapter Martina recalled a time she was disappointed in herself because she engaged in a physical fight that sent her to solitary confinement, yet in this instance Martina uses the message she received from a CO to resist the urge to fight, a behavior she knows she would regret. The part of the message "you don't have to continue down that [negative] road" is demonstrated by Martina when she chooses a more positive path. Women in the study used the messages they received to make conscious decisions in situations that could have easily resulted in conflict.

When women associated the message they received to behavior they avoided, they also reflected on the consequences that would arise if they did not avoid the behavior. Amy stated, "If I screw up and do something to get into a fight or go to the 28, which is the hole. If I go to the hole, then I lose my TC [Transitional Control]. It's where anywhere from your last six to your last three months, they send you to a halfway house." And Christy asserted:

Well this one girl, I wanted to fight her because she's talking about my family but then I was like "No, don't do it because she's just a girl." I ain't gonna talk to her ever again and because I don't want to go to the hole.

Amy and Christy knew that fighting would earn time in the "hole" [solitary confinement], which is not a place either one wanted to be, likely because of the additional consequences it brings as Lisa verified:

Yeah, [I] avoided like physical confrontation I would've regretted right then. I have too much to lose. I have a 12 year old son at home. I mean any day that I can get home early [for good behavior] is too much to lose. Right now like I've been in IOP [Intensive Out-Patient]. If I go to the hole I get kicked out of IOP. I get good days for that. I get a good day a month, every month for that. I have that to lose. I don't want to lose my job really. Why would I go to the hole and miss being able to call my son on the phone or miss my visits or any of that?

Additionally, Rosie reflected on wanting to fight with a girl, but remembered the message she received from another woman in prison and used it to think about how she would feel if she was physical with another woman. She explained, "I just really want to punch this girl in the face, but 'life is serious and death is sudden' [MM]. If she die[s] tomorrow just by accident and I really punch this little girl in the mouth then I'm going to feel really bad about it tomorrow." Many women thought of the message(s) they received, thought of the action they might take toward someone and then weighed the consequences. One woman, Kyly, reported thinking about cutting the commissary line herself, which she knew would start confrontation, but decided not to because of the consequences:

There'd be times where I'm in the commissary line and it's freezing outside. And I wanted to cut in front of people, you know? But I know I couldn't do that because I can probably get into a fight because people were going crazy out there. It's freezing out here. Nobody about to cut in front of me. And I'm like "I'm going to cut." Then I think about like no. I got to think about the consequences behind it. I'm just going to stay where I'm at and be patient.

Kyly's statement "I'm just going to stay where I'm at and be patient" reflects the MM she received from another imprisoned woman: "You've got to learn patience." It appears the

message she received is being incorporated into her behavioral thoughts on how to act in certain situations.

The MMs which triggered behavior related to *avoided initiating conflict* came from other IW and COs. Thus, there were no differences between who the message was received from and the behavior of *avoided initiating conflict*. However, of the two themes (i.e., *avoided initiating conflict* and *avoided being irresponsible*) which arose, when asked if the message came to mind when avoided doing something women would later regret, *avoided initiating conflict* was the only theme women connected to messages received from COs.

Avoided Being Irresponsible

The second type of regretful behavior women reported associating with the MMs they received was *avoid being irresponsible* (n=6, 30%). Women voiced their ability to be accountable for personal obligations and responsibilities. Rather than skipping work, AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] meetings, or church, women stuck with their commitment to these activities. This type of behavior was only used with messages received from other IW. For instance, Dana talked about her commitment to church and “keeping on track,” but not always wanting to go to church. She received the message, “I’m proud of you in the woman that you’ve grown into,” from another woman in prison. When asked if the message came to mind when she avoided doing something she would later regret, she stated:

Yeah. Just little things like, I go to church. So little things like I don’t want to go to church tonight, but then I try and [say] stuff like that, the message she had said would pop in [my mind] and it’s like “no, you need to go because you need to keep on track.”

And Andrea recalled a time when she did not want to speak at an AA meeting, but remembered the message [“I’m the strongest woman they’ve ever met” - IW] she received from other women in the prison: “Yeah, like when I know I need to speak at an AA meeting or my mentor group,

like I need to say something but I don't want to say it, but then they're like 'Andrea, what is wrong with you, like say what's on your mind, be strong and do it.' And I do it." For Dana and Andrea, the messages became a strategy which helped them to keep on track with the commitments they had made and it turn, they avoided regretful behavior.

Other women spoke of avoiding being irresponsible because of their commitment to staying drug and misconduct free. For example, Amanda stated, "I mean like I said, I've got money and I can buy drugs, but I choose not to even though I think about it sometimes [MM: "Dear past, thank you for the lessons. Dear future I'm ready. Dear God, thank you for a second chance" - IW]. And Sonja mentioned that she "think[s] about the message a lot." For example, "Like going to chow early. I sit and think, 'yeah, I want to go, but it's not worth getting a ticket over it.'" Her message ["This may be a negative situation, but you can always turn it into a positive. You can either better yourself, or just ride with it, like some people do" - IW] was received from another IW. Moreover, Amanda and Sonja associate irresponsible actions in prison to irresponsible actions once released. Sonja said "If you do bad here [in prison], you're going to do bad out there [in the world]." Similarly, Amanda stated "If I can't change my ways here [in prison] I'm not going to change my ways out there [in the world]."

Messages that women associated with *avoiding being irresponsible* only came from other women in prison. This is a little surprising given that COs would expect women to be responsible and follow the rules. However, it may be that most of the behaviors that women reported being responsible for are personal behaviors, such as going to church, speaking at AA meetings, and exercising. Officers may be more concerned about behaviors that impact the safety of others (i.e., fighting).

Discussion

Most of the women who reported receiving MMs from another female in prison or a CO also recalled thinking about or using the message in specific situations. Proud behavior was the most common type of behavior women associated with the message(s) they received. Many of the situations in which the message came to mind and elicited proud behavior were *accomplishments* that could positively impact success upon release from prison (e.g., obtaining a GED and other various licenses, completing college courses, and entering and graduating from substance abuse classes). *Perseverance*, although not as common, was another type of proud behavior and skill that is greatly needed as one reenters society and is faced with the challenges of reentry (e.g., securing employment with a criminal record, maintaining sobriety, finding affordable and secure housing).

Consistent with the MM literature, women used the MMs in two ways. First, women used the messages they received to assess their personal behavior. Some women violated the personal standards they had set for themselves. This is seen in the acts women were not proud of. Yet, for the situations women were proud of or avoided because it would ensue regret, women changed their behavior to adhere to the MM and/or their personal standards. Second, women used the messages as strategies to not only help themselves, but to help other women in prison who were in various situations in which conflict arose. Though women did not make mention of it, it is possible that messages which stop women from doing something they would later regret could potentially make them targets of harassment from others. If women continuously avoid conflict, they could be seen as an easy target and repeatedly taken advantage of. Thus, additional research in this area is needed.

Lastly for some women, the messages elicited more than one type of behavior (i.e., proud, not proud, avoided). However, it is not clear which behavior came first. It was clear, however, that even when women engaged in acts that elicited behavior they were not proud of, they often felt guilty and turned back to the message they had received to understand why the decision was a poor choice. Future research should further explore MMs through time for a better understanding of how messages can impact consistency in behavior.

CHAPTER 6: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PRISON RELATIONSHIPS

Women did associate the MMs they received from other IW and COs with behaviors they were proud of, not proud of, and avoided. Most of the messages were received from other imprisoned women. This is not surprising given that respondents in the study were surrounded by so many other imprisoned women on a daily basis. Not only are the verbal interactions with other people in prison important to understand, but the relationships that women maintain in prison can impact how they do their prison time. Studies on women's relationships in prison have largely centered on the pseudo-families that women develop in prison. However, little is known about the positive and negative relationships that women maintain with others in the prison environment.

The fourth research question for this study is: what are the positive and negative relationships women currently have in prison and why do women perceive such relationships to be positive or negative? To understand types of relationships that women maintain, they were first asked to talk about a positive relationship they currently have in prison. Most women answered this question by stating who the relationship was with. Women were further probed to explain what makes the relationship positive and how many beneficial relationships they currently have. For the women who reported not having a current positive relationship, they were further probed for why they do not have any constructive relationships. Once all questions were asked about positive relationships in prison, women were asked the same questions about current negative relationships in prison. This chapter will compare and contrast women's positive and negative relationships.

Additionally, the survey included a quantitative measure for women's perceptions of other IW and COs behavior towards them. The composite 'CO helpfulness' variable included

five items and the composite 'IW helpfulness' variable included five items. The quantitative findings will be presented first.

Incarcerated Women and Correctional Officer Helpfulness

On the survey, women were provided five individual questions to elicit their perceptions of how helpful they thought COs to be. Respondents were asked to answer on a 5-point *Likert* scale that ranged from 'never' to 'always'. The composite revealed that a large number of women perceived that COs were never/rarely helpful to them (Table 3). Although half of the women reported that COs sometimes give them good advice. Specifically, many felt that COs never/rarely increase their self-esteem. Yet, nearly half reported that they are often/always treated with respect from COs. A relatively high alpha score (.86) was generated for CO helpfulness, which reflects reliability of the measure.

Table 3. Women's perceptions of COs helpfulness (n=60)

CO Helpfulness (Individual Items)	Mean (SD) (1=never; 5=always)	Never/Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often/Always %
1 – Gives me good advice	2.7 (1.0)	37%	50%	13%
2 – Listens to my problems	2.2 (.98)	57%	37%	7%
3 – Increases my self-esteem	2.1 (1.0)	68%	18%	13%
4 – Treats me with respect	3.2 (.95)	22%	37%	42%
5 – Keeps me out of trouble	2.6 (1.2)	45%	32%	23%
Composite Measure*	2.6 (.84)	46%	35%	20%

*Cronbach's Alpha: .86

The same five questions were asked about other IW (Table 4). Overall, the composite shows that a larger proportion of women perceived other IW to sometimes be helpful than they did COs, 44% vs. 35% respectively. Approximately half of the respondents felt that other IW sometimes give good advice, listen to their problems, and increase their self-esteem. Similar to women's perceptions of COs, over half of the women reported that other women always show them respect. All five items were within one standard deviation of the mean, however, the

Cronbach alpha (.65) score generated was low in internal consistency. Typically, an alpha of .7 or higher is acceptable and a .6 is questionable. Future research should further explore how to measure IWs helpfulness.

Table 4. Women's perceptions of IWs helpfulness (n=60)

IW Helpfulness (Individual Items)	Mean (SD) (1=never; 5=always)	Never/Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often/Always %
1 – Gives me good advice	3.1 (.77)	18%	50%	32%
2 – Listens to my problems	2.8 (.81)	35%	47%	18%
3 – Increases my self-esteem	2.9 (.91)	30%	47%	23%
4 – Treats me with respect	3.7 (.80)	7%	35%	58%
5 – Keeps me out of trouble	2.6 (.97)	47%	40%	3%
Composite Measure*	3 (.55)	27%	44%	27%

*Cronbach's Alpha: .65

Interestingly a greater number of women reported that COs often or always keep them out of trouble than other IW, 23% vs. 3% respectively. Although the job of a CO is to enforce the rules and penalize those who break the rules, it may be that he or she is also trying to help women follow the rules. Overall, women perceived other IW to be more helpful than they did COs. Using qualitative data, the remainder of the chapter will examine the positive and negative relationships women maintain in prison.

Positive and Negative Prison Relationships

Of the 60 women who were interviewed, 53 (88.33%) reported that they had at least one current positive relationship with someone in prison. Conversely, just over one-quarter (n=17, 28.33%) reported having at least one current negative relationship.

Of the 53 women who reported a favorable relationship, most (n=49, 92.45%) reported having more than one at the time. More than three-quarters (n=44; 83.02%) of the respondents stated having between one and six favorable relationships at the time of the interview. However, nine (16.98%) women reported ten or more current positive relationships. Additionally, 51

(96.23%) of the 53 women who reported a positive relationship noted that the relationship was with another IW.²¹ It is important to note that most women were easily able to state how many fruitful relationships they currently had in prison. Most women began stating names aloud and counting on their fingers. This speaks to their perception of what a positive relationship is; that is, they appeared to have specific criteria in their mind and knew who fit that criteria.

Of the 17 women who reported an undesirable relationship, approximately two-thirds reported having only a single negative relationship (n=11, 64.7%). Two women stated two negative relationships, two women stated four, one woman reported ten, and the last woman did not provide a number but said there were others. Additionally, 14 (82.35%) of the 17 women who reported a current unpleasant relationship stated that the relationship was with another incarcerated female. Of the last three remaining women, one woman's negative relationship was with a case manager, another woman stated it was with staff, and the last woman said it was with both other IW and COs.

Perceptions of Positive and Negative Prison Relationships

Once women stated that they had a current positive relationship in prison, they were asked to explain what makes the relationship positive. There were five common factors or themes that emerged. The most common theme women reported that defined their fruitful relationship in prison was *social support* followed by *positive behavior*, *honesty*, *compatibility*, and *trust*. One-third of women perceived their relationship to be beneficial because it included more than one of the five factors.²² Additionally, approximately half of the women spoke of their relationship as being mutually beneficial.

²¹ Of the remaining two women, one reported a constructive relationship with a male CO and the other woman spoke of a beneficial relationship with her male boss who runs one of the prison programs.

²² Categories are not mutually exclusive.

Next, when women were asked to consider why the connections they had with people in prison were negative, three themes emerged. The most common element women reported that defined a negative relationship in prison was *confrontation* followed by *backstabbing* and *negative behavior*.²³

Social Support

The most common theme that emerged describing women's positive relationships was *social support*. Thirty-six (60%) of the 53 women who reported a positive relationship, perceived it to be constructive because the relationship included some form of social support. *Social support* is defined as assistance from another individual in the prison. Various types of social support or assistance emerged and included: emotional, esteem, and informational.²⁴

Emotional. The most common type of *social support* that women expressed when detailing why they considered their relationship with other women in prison to be positive was emotional support. Approximately half of the women explained that their relationship is a positive one because it includes talking, listening, empathizing or physical contact. Linda, who reported a positive relationship with another woman whom she called her "friend" noted that her relationship with this woman is beneficial because:

On my worst day she's always there. She's not overbearing but she just sits there when I need her. Like, if I'm crying or having a bad day, she's there. If I'm having a happy day and want to tell her something she's there to laugh with me.

Eden voiced a similar explanation of why her relationship with another woman in prison is positive, but unlike Linda, she explained that the relationship is reciprocal:

[W]e are emotionally there for each other...My happy stuff, I share with her. My sad stuff, I share with her. She didn't get her Judicial [early release] last week and so we – we cried about that.

²³ Three explanations of what a negative relationship consisted of did not fit within one of the three major themes and one woman was unwilling to explain why she felt the relationship was negative.

²⁴ A couple of women noted tangible support; providing physical items such as a scoop of coffee.

Women felt that their relationships with other women in prison were positive if one or both parties were available to talk with and listen. Additionally, although not common, but contrary to how some women described their positive relationships, Tina who reported a negative relationship with another women in prison stated that it was negative because the relationship was not reciprocal. Tina spoke of the help she provided to another woman, but the lack of assistance she received in return. Referencing the aid she gave her bunkie with commissary and schoolwork, Tina stated, “I didn’t get the same respect back.” Interestingly, Tina went on and explained that she had just returned from an “intervention” the COs gave: “And the guard was telling me, “Well, you know you can’t expect – when you do stuff for people, you can’t expect it back.”” This is a fitting response as no one in prison is penalized if they fail to pay back a favor. Reciprocity has been cited as a factor in women’s prison friendships (Owen, 1998). Thus, it is fitting that lack of reciprocity would be a factor in negative relationships.

Other women were brief in their responses to what makes their relationships in prison positive. For example, Gretchen simply stated about another incarcerated female: “She’s always there to listen when I need her, vice versa.” Jessica echoed the same sentiments about another woman behind bars: “Yeah, I mean she’ll listen to me when I need someone to listen.” And Felicia explained, “I mean everybody has their ups and down – like we’ll help each other and talk each other through it.” Generally, these women considered their relationships with other IW to be positive if they were able to share what was on their mind to someone on the other end who was willing to listen. This idea of emotional support was described by Tori as a “leaning post.” Consistent with the survey results, a large proportion of women reported that other IW ‘often’ or ‘always’ listened to their problems.

Most women who defined their relationship as providing emotional support, expressed the support in the form of being able to approach the person whom the positive relationship was with: “[S]he[s] just one of the people that you can just go and talk to about anything.” However, Alison described her relationship with another woman as fruitful because she was the provider of the emotional support:

I encourage people and I love people, but as far as like telling people my darkest deepest secrets, I do not. The only person I used to tell that to [went] home a month ago. I have a lot of people who are close to me that confide in me that I mentor. Like Sheena, I hug her, I tell her I love her.

When women enter prison, they are removed from their relationships with people on the outside. As already discussed, research has shown that women in prison sometimes develop pseudo-families to replace the kinship they have lost in the outside world (Owen, 1998). Although women in this study do not describe their relationships with other women in prison as taking on familial roles, it comes as no surprise that women who are incarcerated desire emotional support to replace the support they may have had prior to prison.

Esteem. Half of the women classified their positive relationship as providing esteem support. Esteem support included expressions of confidence or encouragement provided to or received from another person in prison. This is also similar to the results of the quantitative piece in which over half of the respondents reported that other IW increased their self-esteem ‘sometimes’ to ‘often/always’. When asked what makes her relationship with another woman behind bars positive, Jenny replied:

She encourages me. Not many people around here do that. You’ll get your groups that do that, but not many people around here are encouraging. They’re always so worried about their selves before they want to encourage somebody else so somebody that encourages me and tells me I’m doing a good job and when I doubt myself, that’s what makes me comfortable and that’s what makes it easier for me to be comfortable around her.

Not only did Jenny appreciate the encouragement that she received, but it made her feel more comfortable in an environment that is restrictive and strips people of their liberty and autonomy (Sykes, 1958). Most women touched on the esteem support they receive, however, Celena described the support she gives to a woman she has a positive relationship with:

I mean I just try to show her some self-control. Because everything she says is like a negative thing. It's not towards me, but she's a negative person saying stuff or not believing in herself and know that she can just do things and get out there with her kids. I mean, "you don't need to say [negative things], you gonna go home."

Other women like Amy found their relationships to be beneficial because women in prison encouraged them to "go to church, And to go to the NA [Narcotics Anonymous] and AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] meetings." This type of encouragement was perceived as "genuinely" wanting the best for a fellow imprisoned woman. The encouragement received, in turn made women feel better about themselves as Sonja explained:

She encourages me to do good. She's a positive person. She gets me. When I got here, I was so mad. "No, I don't want to go to meetings. That ain't for me, that ain't going to help, whatever. I can't get into no groups, because my out date is so far away." I always used that as an excuse. She said, "No, come on. Let's go do this." She's been in programs a little longer. She's been here a little longer. She's been here almost three years, I think. She knows how I feel. So she tries to encourage. She told me, "Come on, let's go. You're going to those meetings." Once I started going, it makes you feel better about yourself. She's positive, all the time. "Are you okay today?" She's a very positive person. I can't really explain her. She's very encouraging.

According to the relational model, which is a theory of women's psychological development, the quality of women's relationships with others impact their identity, self-worth, and sense of empowerment (Gilligan, 1982; Kaplan, 1984; Miller, 1976; Miller & Stiver, 1988). The encouragement that respondents received from women they reported having positive relationships with appeared to have an impact on their self-identity and motivated them to stay strong and work on themselves through schooling and programming.

Some women, as they spoke of the encouragement that they were receiving, specifically stated that their relationship was constructive because they were not discouraged by the other person in the relationship. When asked what makes their relationship with another IW positive, Latisha stated:

Because if I make a mistake, she doesn't bash me; she encourages me. She lifts me up. When I do wrong, she doesn't downplay me. She lifts me up, and helps me. She picks me up and helps me move forward. She's just making my whole day just go so good when I speak to her because she's like a light, like a sunshine. She is so positive, and I really like that.

Likewise, Gretchen replied:

I'll go to her if I'm having a problem and she'll help me out. She'll set me, like – she'll encourage me to stay strong and do the right things, and – she brings my spirits up. She doesn't put me down like other people do or blow me off.

Research on women's pathways to prison finds that women's incarceration is oftentimes the consequence of negative relationships on the outside (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004; McDonald et al., 2006; Richie, 1996). The positive encouragement women expressed receiving from their constructive relationships with other IW is encouraging to future program development; placing emphasis on ways to identify positive and negative relationships could have a positive impact on the relationships women develop once released.

Though rare, one person reported a positive relationship with a CO. Faith perceived the relationship as beneficial because: "He tries to lift me up without hurting me at the same time without hindering me. He generally cares. It's not just a job to him. He just looks out for and not just me but I guess all the inmates interests." Although Faith's positive relationship is with a CO and not another IW, she defined it as positive for the very same reason women described having positive relationships with other IW. That is, the relationship was characterized as encouraging and uplifting.

Informational. Some of the women who spoke of their relationship as being positive did so in the form of informational support. Informational support included advice-giving or sharing information. It is somewhat surprising that during interviews only a handful of women mentioned informational support when asked why they perceive their prison relationships as positive given that on the survey one-third of women responded ‘often’ to ‘always’ when asked if other IW give good advice. Asked what makes their relationship positive, Nadine and Janet responded: “Because we [me and another IW] give each other good outpoints on things,” and Janet said, “she can give me advice and we like really just crutch on each other.” Additionally, Christy explained how her mood often changes based on the feedback she receives from another woman in the correctional facility: “Because she never gives me negative feedback and every time I go to her and I talk to her I just get in a better mood, she helps me get out of the mood I’m in.” Vicki on the other hand stated a specific type of information she received from another woman in the prison: “She’s always telling me to get in my Bible and to pray.”

Lastly, Faith, whose positive relationship is with a male CO recounted: “He never steered me wrong and he always gives the best advice.” For the most part, women appeared happy to receive advice from other women in prison. Sometimes the advice or information received altered the state of mind the woman was in for the better.

Confrontation

On the contrary, 7 (41.17%) of the 17 women who reported having negative relationships described it was *confrontational* in nature. Such relationships entailed either verbal arguments or physical fights and lacked any type of positive support. Kyly, who called another woman in prison her friend, explained that they have a love-hate relationship. Although they are friends,

they tend to frequently argue over “nothing.” When asked to explain why her relationship with her friend is negative, she stated:

We have like a love-hate relationship. Like we clash too much because – not because of other people, just us, like she’s very argumentative. And me, I don’t want to say argumentative. I guess debate. Because I like to debate about stuff. If I don’t feel like something is right, then my opinion, I’m going to speak on my opinion. And she’s the same way. And it’d be like little stupid stuff. You know what I mean? So we’ll go back and forth and get mad at each other for like two days. And then we’re back talking. I don’t think that’s healthy to do something like that because this argument can progress into something serious. Then we’re going to fight. And I don’t want that type of relationship.

Kyly realized that the arguments she has with another female in prison are over small issues but can easily progress into something more. Prison can be a very lonely place and like Kyly, even though she considers her relationship with her “friend” negative, she continues to maintain it.

Women also develop relationships that are more than friendships while they are in prison. These intimate relationships in prison seem to cause additional confrontation. Rita told a story of her and her prison girlfriend, whose relationship started off positive, but soon took a turn for the worst:

Well it didn’t start off negative. Once we got together as a couple things started to change within nine months of us being in that relationship together. She would call me names, she would want to put her hands on me, she would fight me, [and] she would interact with girls. And it made me negative because I wanted to act off my feelings being hurt.

Relationships in prison that are more than “friendships” can escalate the confrontation that goes on between the two people in the relationship, but can also bring a third party into the situation.

Rita continued:

She got out. She’s back. And she came down here [to the housing unit] wanting to argue and fight with me because I’ve moved on. And I was with her for two years but I knew that she wasn’t healthy for me meaning she wasn’t a person that I needed in my life with me trying to change. And so she came back, she wanted to fight me; she wanted to fight the girl I was with.

Similarly, Chloe who is also in an intimate relationship with another woman in the prison, described her relationship as uninviting because, “We argue, we fight, we don’t understand each other, we don’t communicate well.” Though some women were involved in intimate relations with others, it was often fraught with problems and perceived by respondents to be an adversarial relationship.

Although research shows that women in prison sometimes “stay to themselves” as a way to “do time” (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005) it is not always that easy. Depending on the type of job another female has, she may have to interact with people she does not care for. In describing a negative relationship, Lisa stated, “I have issues with the laundry aids.” Lisa works in the laundry room at the prison with a group of other IW who are laundry aids. When asked to explain why her relationship with them is negative she said, “[W]e have a[n] issue over the laundry room. It’s kind of like a power struggle. Everybody takes hustle loads, and we get paid for it.” Asked to explain a “hustle load”:

It’s where like if they don’t get to sign the laundry list they have to pay to do their laundry. I don’t really care about that. We like fight over our days in the laundry room. Other people try to make up other people’s schedules and try and cut them out of their days. It’s been a power struggle. Mine’s is more like a pride struggle.

Some women perceived their relationships with other women in the facility to be antagonistic because of the fighting and arguing that takes place between them.

Positive Behavior vs. Negative Behavior

Fourteen (26.41%) of the women defined their relationship as beneficial when positive behavior was involved, which included behavioral change, staying out of trouble, and program involvement. With regards to changing behavior, Jada noted that she talks with another IW about the changes they both want to make to avoid making similar mistakes that led them to prison:

We talk about the changes we want to make at home and the people we're leaving behind that loves us and really cares for us and the things that we want to do better to prevent us from not making the same mistakes and just doing differently and we just – it's positive. I don't know really how to explain it. It's real positive, and it's good.

Similarly, Amanda declared, "We don't sit around and talk about our tricking days and our drug days and getting high. We talk about what we are going to do when we get out of here, what we could do while we are in here to make better changes or when we get out." And Sheree reported about a woman she has a positive relationship with:

We just talk about things that we need to do and accomplish while we're in here, and stuff that we have learned, and things like that. And things we've accomplished, and certain things that we need to do every day. It's just positive things we talk about, like, every day.

Asked to provide an example of something that they talk about, Sheree stated, "Yeah, as far as school and programs, and things like that." These positive relationships women maintained focused on improving oneself in the present (i.e., prison) and in the future (i.e., once released). Additionally, the women were engaging in "change talk," which can be defined as "language in favor of changing a target behavior" (Glynn & Moyers, 2010, p. 65). Change talk can predict behavioral change and has been associated with reductions in drinking and drug use (Amrhein, Miller, Yahne, Palmer, & Fulcher, 2003; Moyers et al., 2007; Strang & McCambridge, 2004). Some women who perceived their relationships as positive, at the very least, were beginning to think about and verbalize the changes they wanted to make. This type of behavior may be positive for women who are nearing their release, as these positive changes need to be at the forefront and maintained once released from prison.

Other women considered their relationship to be positive because one or both of them were staying out of trouble in prison. For example, Meghan considered her relationship with another IW positive because "She's not somebody who is an ideal trouble maker." Likewise, of

her relationship with another female in the correctional facility, Felicia stated, “She is not you know, into all the negative things...she just don’t seem like she’s trying to like do anything wrong in here.” Asked what the negative things are, Felicia reflected:

I mean people in here they get high all the time or they are smoking cigarettes or you know, just once the CO tells you to do something you just disobey them because you feel like you are entitled to be able to do it, so you know what I mean? She just follows the rules and stuff like that too and she doesn’t really hang out with a whole lot of people either.

Although not explicitly stated, it appeared that these women felt that they would stay out of trouble as long as they were associating with other people who were on the straight and narrow. Interestingly, though women did not reference COs keeping them out of trouble during the interviews, they did on the survey. Fifty-five percent of women reported that COs ‘sometimes’ (32%) to ‘often/always’ (23%) keep them out of trouble compared to other IW at 43%. Women had positive interactions with COs but very few mentioned COs when asked to talk about a positive relationship with someone.

While some considered relationships to be positive because of behavioral change and positive behavior, others reported such relationships were the result of involvement in prison programs. Debra specifically commented not on the programming she takes part in, but the programming that the woman she has a positive relationship with was engaged in: “A lot of people in here can’t wait to get back out and get high and are always negative like [but] she does all the programing that she can and she has a positive outlook, like going home to her little boy that’s now three, she’s just positive.” Similarly, Molly stated:

We get involved in as many educational programs, groups, anything positive instead of just sitting here like a lot of women do and they just wait for their time to pass by so they can just go home instead of bettering themselves. So we just kind of bounce off of each other and try to keep each other grounded like that.

As some women spoke of the positive relationships they currently had in prison, they compared their actions to those of other women behind bars, stating that their relationships are positive because they are not engaging in negative behaviors like others in the institution.

On the contrary, a few women (n=3, 17.65%) perceived their relationship with other women in prison as undesirable because of the negative behavior the women were engaging in, such as drug use and lack of focus on programming and/or classes. Shelly, who said she has approximately ten unfavorable relationships explained that the things she personally does with the other IW are negative: “What our relationship involves is probably negative. Like when we’re together we’re bad or [we] do negative things like drugs or just stuff like that they’re negative friendships.” Interestingly, Shelly did not deny that she too was engaging in negative behavior and also plays a part in the negative relationship. Others, however, noted the changes in behavior with the people they maintained negative relationships with. For example, in her discussion of a unhealthy relationship, Rosie claimed, “She’s changed dramatically from the person that I first met. Like when I first met her she was positive, she was about recovery and she wasn’t with all the gossip and the drama. And then she got involved with a girl and now it’s just drama, drama, drama.” Similarly, Shawanda explained that her relationship with her girlfriend in prison is negative because while her girlfriend is not into going to classes or programs, she is:

I’m a nerd for school, I love school so I’m in school and she don’t got her GED or anything so she don’t want to do nothing. So there be programs I usually go through and I sign her up in it. She don’t want to go so a couple weeks ago she told me “I got 16 more years, I don’t got to do no school – I got 16 years to do groups.” Her attitude is negative about every little thing, every little thing.

While they do not have similar views, Shawanda does not put all the blame on her girlfriend for her attitude: “Her attitude just sucks and it’s because of the environment that we’re in. This place, we’re very vulnerable in this place.”

Honesty vs. Backstabbing

Eight (15.5%) of the 53 women who reported a positive relationship spoke of honesty when detailing why they considered their relationships with other IW in prison to be advantageous. Some women spoke of others calling them out on their faults even when the truth might be difficult to hear. Lisa and Tina both described being “called out” by another woman in prison they have a favorable relationship with:

Lisa: Well for one thing, she calls me on my bullshit. I call her on hers. We did IOP [Intensive Out-Patient] together. But we had a good friendship before that even. I can be honest. She’s going to be honest with me and tell me her opinion on it or like I said, and tell me if I’m doing wrong.

And Tina stated:

Well, for one, she’ll see my faults and call me on it. She’s like very, very few. Like I said, you look at me, I look intimidating. But I’m not. Say I might say something wrong to you. You’re not going to come back to me and say, “Oh, you hurt my feelings when you said that, Tina.” You’re just going to let it slide and then maybe if I continue to mess with you – not mess with you but talk to you and be around you or whatever, then your guard’ll come down. She’s the one that’ll tell me from the door, “Look, I’m not going to put up with your attitude today.” She’s real stern. She’ll call me on my stuff and she’s not afraid to, with whatever.

Honesty also came across in Claire’s description of a positive relationship that she has with a female behind bars. The woman does not tell her what she *wants* to hear, but what she *needs* to hear:

She points out my faults and she’s not just trying to tell me what I want to hear or whatever. She tells me what I need to hear. You know what I’m saying? She’s not a fake friend. I mean she tells me the truth, what I need to hear, not a kiss-butt or anything.

On the flip side, four (23.53%) of the 17 women described their relationship with other women in prison as undesirable because it was characterized as *backstabbing*. That is, rather than being honest and upfront respondents reported being talked about behind their back. As illustrated by Amy of her cellmate: “She talks about me to other people outside of our room, but she won’t say anything directly to me, which is probably one reason we haven’t been to the hole yet.” Though bothered by this association, Amy tries not to let it bother her, as she stated, “I just ignore her and pray for her.” Other women spoke of the drama that comes with backstabbing relationships in prison. Of four females in prison, Meghan lamented:

I have some girls that I associate with that’s always into drama They always like to talk about people. They just not positive at all I don’t really talk to too many people in [prison]. It’s best when you’re in prison that you try to stay low key, like to yourself and mind your own business. Because when you get around a whole bunch of girls, that’s when all the drama starts because this person is always talking about this person, or this person is with this girl’s girlfriend or this one wants to get her. Oh my God, it’s a mess.

Consequently, these backstabbing relationships, which are seen as being filled with drama have the potential to bring about unwanted attention from the administration, which could result in women being written up and “good days” taken away.

Lastly, Felicia was a bit more specific in explaining what another woman said about her to someone else in the prison. Felicia and the woman she has an undesirable relationship with both attend the same re-entry program:

There’s this girl that she’s actually in [another housing unit] and she just feels like she always has to outdo you or – it’s like she went and told somebody, because she goes to [the re-entry program] the same day that I do, “Felicia’s codependent” because I always – I guess I’m a people pleaser. I always like to make sure everything is okay. She’s like, “oh, she’s going to relapse when she gets out” and I mean she always is so negative about everybody else to take the attention off of her you know?

Women perceived their current relationships to be adverse if the person they had a relationship with spoke about them behind their back. This is contrary to the theme of *honesty*, which was an important characteristic that women deemed necessary in a positive relationship. Women who described the positive relationships they have also seemed to appreciate and respect the candor they received from others in prison, as they perceived it as an act of “caring” as well as someone who is not a “fake friend.”

Compatibility

Compatibility was another theme that emerged which women used to describe favorable relationships with others in prison. Seven (13.21%) of the 53 women described positive connections with other women in prison as having something in common with them. They may have known another woman from home, be of a similar age, or have similar experiences, which made some women feel comfortable. When asked why she considers her relationship with another incarcerated female a positive one, Laura stated, “We know each other from home and I’ve known her about ten years and it makes me feel like I’ve got somebody in here that I can relate to and somebody who knows what I’m going through without me having to sit down and tell them my life story.” Knowing someone from home, in turn, made Laura feel comfortable because “I know her outside of here. Because in here you never really know who you’re talking to.” And for Rosie knowing each other from home meant: “we have a lot of the same values and norms that are normal to us.” Similarly, Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2005) found that relationships in prison can evolve from knowing one another from the “streets.”

Possessing similar characteristics was another factor women used to describe their relationship as positive. Amy stated:

We’re all kind of similar. We’re very quiet, we sit down and talk and laugh, and we sit around in the rec room and watch TV. We go eat meals together, they

finally got me to go to church for the first time last night. We go to AA and the NA meetings together.

And Heather, a 49-year-old woman, described her connection with another woman in prison as constructive because they are close in age:

For starters, she's close to my age. Most women here are young. That right there, having an older person to talk to is nice. Plus I also knew her [on the outside]; we've got a little bit in common. We talk about our job out there. We just talk about everything, kids, what we want to do, what our fears are when we leave because we are older. She's 53.

Finally, Andrea, who is one of the two women whose positive relationship was with someone other than a confined female explained that her relationship with her male boss who runs one of the prison programs is positive because he has been right where she is: “[H]e’s been in my shoes, he’s been in prison and so he knows exactly how it feels to be an addict and he knows exactly how it feels to be in here. And so for him to show me how I can live if I just stay clean and go to school and I just love that.” Having something in common with someone else in the prison, in turn, made some women feel comfortable and was one reason women felt the relationship was positive. Although not a concern of women in this study, similarities can also contribute to negative or complicated relationships once released (Greer, 2000). If two women are recovering substance users, but upon release one woman relapses, it could be problematic for the other.

Trust

The least common (N=6; 11.32%) theme that emerged when women were asked to explain why their prison relationships were considered positive was *trust*. However, the word “trust” in prison is quite complex. In the interviews it was seldom used and women often stated that prison is not a place for trust. To the women interviewed, trust meant the ability to share verbal sentiments with the assurance that they would not be repeated to anyone. Thus, once it is believed that a person will keep another’s information confidential, trust may be had.

Asked why her relationship with another female in prison is a positive one, Lisa stated, “I know that no matter what I can talk to her and it’s not going to go anywhere.” Laura agreed, “I’ve got somebody in here that I can really trust...Because in here you never really know who you’re talking to.” Past research has found trust to be a factor in determining type of relationship. Women who described other IW as “acquaintances” reported lack of trust, however, trust was a critical element when other women in prison were described as “friend” (Severance, 2005). Women in this study were not asked to classify their relationship(s), but to detail what makes their relationships positive and negative.

Christy, who earlier described her relationship with another female as beneficial because of the emotional support she received from her also brought up the “trust” factor: “I don’t trust a lot of these girls in here but she is one I do trust.” When asked why she does not trust a lot of girls, she surmised:

Because they are just – they like to – if you argue with them they’ll go tell everybody what you said even if it’s about your family or nothing, you know what I mean? And they just like to make things up like when you tell them something, they’ll switch the story and make it different. So it’s hard to trust girls in here.

Asked what trust meant, Dana explained:

I talk to her. I share. I can talk to her about things that I wouldn’t talk to other people about because I personally wouldn’t tell somebody about my children or this or that. Her, I feel like I can do that. We both talk to each other. I can trust her with that. I can trust her with my not just information but with my belongings or my – she wouldn’t do anything to hurt my wellbeing or you know? There are a lot of vindictive people in here and things you have to worry about and I just feel like in all aspects I can trust her.

Dana has a positive relationship with is her cellmate and she does not fear that her cellmate will steal anything from her. Unlike the other women, Dana’s trust extends to her personal

belongings. This type of trust was also cited by Severance (2005) in her qualitative study of women in prison. Asked if trust is common in prison, Karen explained:

You get a lot of mistrust. You have to set boundaries in here. I'm a giving person, but people will just – I try to see the good in people and we're in prison, but "Hello," there's a lot of scam artists. There's users in here, there's people that are going to take advantage of you, steal from you, or just take advantage of your emotions, so it's just hard in here. And when you have your word, your word is your bond, you know. So trust is very hard in prison.

However, when asked what makes her relationship with another woman in prison positive, she replied, "I trust her with whatever I tell her; she's not going to repeat it."

Women understand that trust is not overly common in prison, but they do not altogether give up on it. Women like Karen who know that there is a lot of "mistrust" are also able to find and maintain relationships that include trust. However, Greer (2000) reported that women in her study "painted a picture" of the prison environment "as one based on manipulation and mistrust" (p.447). I would argue that the women in this study would in part disagree. Though manipulation and mistrust exist, it can be personally controlled by choosing who and who not to maintain relationships with as evidenced by women's low reporting of negative relationships and perceptions of positive relationships.

Both negative and positive relationships were present, however, negative relationships were not as prominent as positive ones. For the few women who at the time of the interview did not have a fruitful relationship, they were asked why they do not have a positive relationship. For the remaining women who did not report a negative relationship, they were asked why they were not currently maintaining a negative relationship in prison. It is to these findings we now turn.

No Positive Relationships

Seven (11.66%) of the sixty women reported having no current positive relationship at the time of the interview. Although a small n size, there were two reasons that emerged: *drama* and *deception*.

Drama

When asked why they did not have a positive relationship with anyone in the correctional facility Kyly and Shawanda explained that relationships are laced with drama. For example, a positive prison relationship for Shawanda consisted of two things: “Not being gay and staying focused.” Earlier in the interview Shawanda expressed that she herself was gay and the stress that comes with it: “It’s terrible, it’s stressful. Don’t ask, I wish I never – I’ve been gay, I can talk about it, I don’t care. I’ve been dating women for 14 years, yes, I do have a girlfriend that’s here. It’s stressful.” Although Shawanda does not further explain why it is stressful to have a homosexual relationship in prison, many of the women who were interviewed, like Kyly, discussed the “drama” that comes with prison relationships. Kyly reasoned that she did not have a beneficial relationship in prison “Because this prison consists of a lot of drama. You can have friends that you start off positive [with] but after a while, it’s like you let a lot of people get in between your friendship or relationships. And at times it [becomes] a negative relationship. And then you have to cut that person off.”

Deception

A few women like Terry, Deana, and Shelly noted that they did not have fruitful prison relationships because such relationships are perceived as phony and deceptive. For example, Terry who did not have a current positive relationship in prison described other women in the institution as “flip-artists” and reasoned that her lack of positive relationships is because:

[T]hese women are flip artists. Like my new roommate, we got cool or whatever. She looked out for me and bought me some personals because I've been kind of broke and messed up and she was so happy when I moved in her room because we were cool before I moved into her room and so after a minute she started to question that maybe I'm using her, but I'm genuinely her friend, but she's so used to people trying to use her.

Deana echoed the same sentiments asserting, "I have the worst luck with people." She went on to state that a positive relationship consists of someone who "isn't after your money or your drugs or your sex or something you have." Additionally, Shelly surmised that her lack of positive prison relationships is not only due to her perceptions of other women's attitudes, but her own attitude toward women:

I don't really get close to people, so – I don't know. I don't think people are genuine. I mean, I'm not genuine. I don't have any intentions of seeing these people when I get out, but I'm going to be cool with them while I'm in here.

She continued, "I think that [relationships] may be positive at the beginning, but I think they usually turn bad. You know what I mean? There's ulterior motive." Perhaps Shelly's lack of distrust can be attributed to a past relationship she had that started off positive but ended negative. Lack of relationships in prison may be difficult to maintain if loneliness sets in.

Women surely have positive relationships with other people in prison, mostly other women who are also incarcerated, but it is also not unusual for some women to report an absence of positive relationships with people behind the prison walls. This begs the question: why don't some women have any negative relationships in prison?

No Negative Relationships

Forty-three (71.66%) of the sixty women reported having no current negative relationships at the time of the interview. Of the 43 women who reported no current undesirable

relationship, 32 were asked why they do not have a negative relationship.²⁵ Two themes emerged: *personal choice* and *stay to myself*.

Personal Choice

More than half (n=23, 53.48%) of the women who reported no current negative relationship expressed that the reason behind it was *personal choice*. For example, of women who were verbally and mentally abusive to her in the past, Tammy stated: “I no longer connect with any of them. Some of them are here, some got transferred here and we don’t have any interactions. Not because of the prison but because of my choices and their choices.” Asked if there was a specific event that took place which impacted their split, Tammy replied:

Yeah, actually when I started the dog program in 2005 I had to make a choice and Ms. Bridge who was our unit manager at the time said, “You can’t do the dog program and still be doing the crap that you’re doing,” She told me I had to make a choice. At first I still chose to try and balance the two and that’s impossible so I chose the dogs.

Like Tammy, Laura had negative prison relationships in the past, but has chosen to walk away:

“If I start feeling like somebody is being negative toward me, I just don’t talk to them anymore I would never keep that kind of negativity around me, especially not in here.” Asked why she would not keep that kind of negativity around her in prison:

Because that’s not how I try to do my time. I’m naturally a really happy, optimistic, carefree kind of person and I also know about myself that I’m the kind of person that I feed off of the energy around me. If I’m sitting in a room full of quiet people, I’m going to tend to be sitting there being quiet. If I’m in a room full of people going crazy and being wild, I’m probably going to stand up. I feed off the energy around me and I know that about myself so I really try to keep the negative energy away from me because it will suck me right down into it.

Both Tammy and Laura make conscious choices to stay away from people who are negative or could have a negative influence on them. Failing to walk away from negativity in prison “could

²⁵ Due to time constraints, some women were not asked why they have no negative prison relationships.

lead to something more, going to the hole, getting a ticket – I don't want that" as Claire stated.

Although women are deprived of many things once they enter the prison walls, they still have the ability to exert their agency in certain situations. Maintaining this mentality once released may prove to be invaluable to their post-release success as women exiting prison come face to face with others who are engaging in illegal behavior. It becomes even more challenging when the people engaging in illegal behavior are close family and friends (Brown, 2006; Griffin & Armstrong, 2003; Leverentz, 2006). Interestingly, some women were already thinking about the unhealthy people they may encounter once released from prison and associated their ability to remove themselves from unhealthy people in prison to their ability to remove themselves from unhealthy people once released. Jada stated that she had "bigger and better things" than associating with negative people:

I'm trying to work on myself to go home and be a better me and not to be on – I feel like if I surround myself around negative people and drama and the things, then I'm not going to learn from this experience and I'm going to go home and just commit the same things or maybe even do something worse. So what's the point of that? It's the same people, places, and things. So if you change them, you'll be better off. So if I can remove myself in here from the negative people, then I can do that at home.

Lastly, women were conscious of keeping a distance from negative people in order to improve themselves and did not want to be brought down by negativity. When asked why they did not currently have any negative relationships, Dana and Heather stated:

Dana: I try to distance myself from them [negative people] so I kind of try to keep a distance. There's so many other things going on in our lives in here that bring us down and I'm trying to get the best out of this experience and I want it, I know it's prison but I want it to be as positive as possible so that I can get the most out of it to help me once I get out. I want to get something from the experience and if I am ever around negative people griping and complaining and bringing whatever, that's not going to help me. That's how I feel.

Heather: Oh boy! I usually, when I feel a lot of negativity from somebody, I usually keep my distance ... Because I don't want to get sucked into it. I don't

want no part of it. I have things that I think about too and I always try and stay on the up-beat, I always try and have a smile, but I do have my moments. I would be easily drawn to the negativity and I don't want that. That would just make my days go really slow.

Women appear to be looking out for themselves by making conscious relationship choices that will have a positive impact on their behavior as well as turn their prison experience into something meaningful.

Stay to Myself

The remaining nine (20.93%) women who reported no current negative relationship expressed that the reason behind it was that they “stay to themselves” and don't associate with others. For instance, Jessica reported, “I just don't associate with nobody. I just go to work, go to school and that's it. Meetings, church. Don't get involved with other people.” Similarly, Molly said, “I stay to myself. I'm really by myself a lot.” When asked the same question, Sandra explained that a woman in prison has two choices when it comes to being in a negative relationship: “[B]e around [them] or you can just stay to yourself.” She went on to explain that she stays to herself by spending a lot of time in her room. The prison that women were interviewed in bunks two women to a cell. Any other incarcerated female besides the two who are assigned to the cell will receive a misconduct violation if found in the room. Though complete privacy is hard to come by, at the least, women are able to escape large groups of women by retreating to their cell. Some women who had previously been in another prison which bunked 50 plus women in one room voiced their preference for the two-woman cells.

Other women such as Vicki and Nadine both expressed that they do not have any undesirable relationships because they do not associate with anybody. Yet, Gretchen noted multiple reasons, all of which revolved around staying to herself: “I don't look for trouble. I don't cause trouble. I don't have girlfriends. Like I said, I stick to myself. I don't talk to a lot of

people.” Whether women simply stay to themselves or have a more detailed explanation of why they do not have negative relationships, it is easily seen that these are strategies women use to stay away from relationships that might cause them conflict or have caused them conflict in the past. Most women did explain that they had a negative relationship in the past and because of the outcome have tried to develop ways to keep from putting themselves in the same situation. Additionally, women who stay to themselves also appear to be making a conscious choice, but unlike the women who fell within the *personal choice* category, these women do not talk about making a choice.

Discussion

This chapter detailed the positive and negative relationships women maintain in prison as well as descriptions of what makes a relationship positive or negative. Past research on IWs relationships has been mixed. Owen (1998) found familial roles, or pseudo-families to be common amongst women in a California prison in the 90s. However, twelve years later, Greer (2000) concluded that the nature of IWs relationships may be changing. Like the current study, Greer (2000) also reported little talk of women filling familial roles for other women in prison. Though this study did not set out to explore pseudo-families in prison, it appears that they are diminishing, as no mention was made of such relationships.

Furthermore, studies on women’s relationships in prison have mainly focused on the type of relationships women keep which include friendships, acquaintances, family and girlfriends (Greer, 2000; Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Kruttschnitt et al., 2000; Owen, 1998; Severance, 2005). This chapter extends previous studies as it generates factors associated with positive and negative relationships regardless of how the relationship is classified. Additionally, Greer’s (2000) results suggest that women’s prison are becoming more like men’s prisons where

mistrust, manipulation, and loneliness defines the culture. Although some women in the current study describe their relationships in a negative light, a greater number of women report positive relationships that are defined as supportive, trusting, honest, and compatible. Thus, findings from the current study would challenge Greer's (2000) findings and encourage additional research on women's relationships and/or feelings about other women in prison and the prison experience.

Lastly, women did not typically report having positive relationships with COs during the interview portion of the study, but they did report positive interactions with COs on the survey. Although an interesting finding, perhaps it is not surprising. First, from the prisons perspective, officials who develop a relationship with a woman who is incarcerated, be it a friendship or something more, are in clear violation of prison policy (Blackburn, Fowler, Mullings, & Marquart, 2011). Even if women were interested in developing a relationship with a CO, their opportunity to do so might be limited. Second, from the standpoint of the women, they may view COs as an authority figure who ultimately deprives them of control, making it difficult to "trust" them in the same way they do other women in prison. Nevertheless, though no relationships were developed, women still found COs to be helpful.

CHAPTER 7: DOING TIME

Women reported having both positive and negative relationships with other people in prison. Additionally, although relationships with other women in prison and COs existed, relationships with other IW were reported at a much higher rate. Understanding the relationships that women maintain in prison is important, as research has found that developing prison relationships is one strategy used to do time (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005). Thus, the fifth research question for this study is: how are women's relationships in prison connected to the way women do time? To understand how women do time and how doing time is connected to the relationships women maintain in prison, survey and open-ended interview questions were asked. On the survey distributed to women at the conclusion of each interview and drawing from the work of Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2005), women were asked *who* they spent their time with when they were not locked in their cell and if they cared to associate with the other women in prison. Additionally, both survey and interview questions asked women *how* they spent their free time.

Who Women Do Time With

One limitation of the current research was that during interviews, women were not asked who they spend their free time with, only how they spend their free time. Thus, direct qualitative comparisons cannot be made to the quantitative question that asked women who they spend their free time with. However, when asked how they spend their free time over half (n=32, 53.33%) of the women discussed spending time with other women in the prison. When women stated that they spent time with other women they were then asked to elaborate. Most women seemed to spend their free time with one other woman: “[I] hang out with my bunkie, drink coffee with her, go pick her up from school,” or a couple other women: “Maybe play cards with Jen and a couple

of the other [women].” The remaining 28 (46.66%) women discussed the activities that they engaged in during their free time without mention of others. This is not to say that when they were engaging in activities they did so alone, however, they did not specifically speak of other people.

In contrast, and a more valid measure of who women spend their time with was on the survey. Women were asked a single question: “Currently, when you are not locked in do you spend your free time with...” For this question they were provided four answer choices: “mostly with one group of inmates,” “with many different inmates but no one group,” “with one or two inmates,” or “mostly alone.” Over half of the women (n=32, 53.3%) reported spending their free time “with one or two” other women in prison, 15% (n=9) reported “mostly with one group of women,” another 15% (n=9) reported “with many different inmates but no one group” and 16.7% (n=10) reported “mostly alone.” Thus, the vast majority (n=50, 83.3%) reported spending their free time with more than one other IW when they were not locked in their cell. This is contradictory to Kruttschnitt and Gartner’s (2005) study on women in California prisons in the 1990s, which found a much higher percent of women (39.3%) who preferred to spend their free time alone. However, the difference in the structure of the prison can impact how women do time as was discovered by Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2005) when they compared two different California women’s prisons in the same year. They found that the way imprisonment was practiced differed between the two prisons, which were structured and run differently. Thus, it may not be that the way women choose to do time in the current study is changing, but an artifact on how the prison is structured. Additionally, the way in which COs supervise those who are incarcerated can vary across prisons and within a prison. Some of the officers in the current study had previously worked in a men’s correctional facility. The COs supervision style may

have had an impact on how women were doing time. Thus, findings cannot be generalized to other prisons.

Additionally, women in Kruttschnitt and Gartner's (2005) study who did their prison time alone were classified as *Isolates*. This style of doing time was coupled with women's perceptions of having no control over the prison environment and perceived as negative and singular.

Women chose to stay to themselves because they did not want to get involved with other women and their emotions. Interestingly, in the current study women speak of alone time in a different context. In fact, they detailed the importance of alone time, especially those nearing release. Rita declared:

I'm pretty much in my room because that's my alone time. That's my time to get my thoughts together, my plans for when I go home. Because I'm really close to going home, I get out next year. So it's like really time to get myself together mentally because so much has changed over these eight years I've been incarcerated.

Asked what has changed:

Myself, and on the outs mainly. Things are really hard out there. That's all I hear about when I call home, how hard it is. And that's something that I wasn't used to before I got locked up. Things were like smooth, my mom had her nursing job, my dad worked for the city. So things were like you know it wasn't hard for us. But my mom was in a coma, she almost died. Just her medical condition is bad. Money is hard for her you know. My little brother and sister are teenagers; they're in junior high school. Just at home generally a lot has changed, like the crime rates, people.

Rita realized that the world outside of prison is no longer the same as when she first entered. Knowing this, she is using her free time to prepare for the changes and challenges she will be faced with once released. To do this, she needs time to herself.

For other women, privacy was important for peace of mind, but not easily attained in prison:

I like to be alone a lot... Just because sometimes, like when my bunkie is not around, it's just peaceful. You never get peace and quiet around here, ever. There's always women, there's – I mean you're in prison. So when your Bunkie ain't in the room you want to be in there just because it gives you time to think and not be around everybody and just relax.

And Molly concurred, "I'm actually around people all the time [in prison] so when I can get time by myself I like it." Asked to further explain why she liked to spend time alone, she stated, "Because we don't get privacy at all, really. Although it's a lot better here since we are in cells [with one other woman]. Unlike [other prisons] you're in open dorms." How women do time may, in part, be a function of the prison style as Molly noted, "cells" vs. "open dorms." Open dorm style living is an open living area with 50 to 100 bunk beds, which forces women to constantly be around other women in the prison. The style may have been a factor contributing to how women spend their time in Kruttschnitt and Gartner's (2005) research as women were in rooms with eight other women and at times in rooms with 18 other females. Additionally, the California prison in which Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2005) conducted their study held three times as many women as the prison in which the current study was conducted. If women are constantly around other women, they may choose to stay to themselves as much as possible so as not to be involved in negative or unhealthy situations.

Other women in this study noted changing the way they do time the longer they were confined. Specifically, some women reported initially spending free time with other women and then making the shift to spending time alone the longer they were in prison. Tye stated that the way she has done time has "changed because I wanted to finish getting to know myself before I left." Asked why, she replied, "So I could have my plan written out. I just don't want to leave with no type of plan. I want to keep talking to myself so I can tell myself that I got this. Everything's going to be alright." Although results of the survey found that most women spend

their free time with other women, which counters Kruttschnitt and Gartner's (2005) study, in-depth interviews revealed the significance of having alone time in prison; allowing women to prepare for their eventual release.

An additional survey question found that 38.3% of women 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the statement "currently, I don't care to associate with the kinds of women who are in this institution" (compared to 33.3% who strongly disagreed' or 'disagreed' with the statement, and 28.3% who neither 'agreed' nor 'disagreed'), which is over twice as high as women who reported spending free time alone (16.7%) on the survey. The question which asks women about spending time with other women in the institution may be interpreted as spending time with the general prison "population" verses the question that asks women who they spend their free time with; a choice women consciously make. It would be unfair to draw conclusions across these two questions as they likely measure two different attitudes.

The idea of women doing their time with other women or doing it alone is much more complex than responding 'yes' or 'no.' The responses from the survey and interviews suggest that most women stayed away from large groups of women during their free time. This was also evident in chapter six, as women reported maintaining only a few positive relationships and walking away from relationships that they thought to be negative. Nevertheless, at the very least, women spent some of their free time interacting with at least one other woman confined to the prison.

How Women Do Time During their Free Time

Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2005) used five questions to measure how women do time in the context of their relationships. Two of their questions measured attitudes and actions toward other prisoners (i.e., I don't care to associate with the kinds of women who are in the institution

and When you are not locked in, how do you spend your free time), two questions measured attitudes and actions toward correctional staff and one question measured attitude toward the prison. This study uses the two questions that measure attitudes and actions toward other prisoners with the addition of five new questions to extend Kruttschnitt and Gartner's (2005) research to further understand how women do time during their free time. Women were asked to answer five survey questions on a 5-point *Likert* type scale. The five questions were specific in that they asked women if they currently spent their free time in the yard; in the housing unit; reading, writing, listening to music or watching television; with friends; and sleeping. For items two and three (Table 5) three-quarter (n=46, 76.6%) of the women 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they spent much of their time reading, writing, listening to music or watching television, as well as in their housing unit. Additionally, more than two-thirds (n=43, 71.7%; item one) of respondents 'strongly disagreed' or 'disagreed' that they spent most of their free time in the yard and sleeping (n=40, 66.7%; item five).

Table 5. Response distribution for items measuring how IW currently spend most of their free time (n=60)

Item	Percent (n)
1. Yard	
Strongly agree/agree	11.6% (7)
Disagree/strongly disagree	71.7% (43)
Neither agree/disagree	16.7% (10)
2. Housing unit	
Strongly agree/agree	76.7% (46)
Disagree/strongly disagree	16.6% (10)
Neither agree/disagree	6.7% (4)
3. Reading, writing, music, television	
Strongly agree/agree	76.7% (46)
Disagree/strongly disagree	13.3% (8)
Neither agree/disagree	10.0% (6)
4. Friends	
Strongly agree/agree	43.3% (26)
Disagree/strongly disagree	25.0% (15)
Neither agree/disagree	31.7% (19)
5. Sleeping	
Strongly agree/agree	11.7% (7)
Disagree/strongly disagree	66.7% (40)
Neither agree/disagree	21.7% (13)

Earlier women were asked *who* they spent their free time with. Eighty-three percent reported spending their free time with at least one or two other IW when they were not locked in their cell. Yet here, only 43.3% of women ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that they spent most of their free time with friends (item four). This speaks to the complexity of women’s relationships in prison and how they do time. Although most women spend their free time with a few women it doesn’t necessarily mean they are “friends.” Of the five items in table 5, “friends” (item four) has the highest percent of women to answer that they neither agree nor disagree. Thus, the question may be poorly phrased with the word “friend.” During the in-depth interviews, women often provided the distinction between “friends” and “associates.” For example Karen explained:

An associate is just someone that you’re around every day and you encounter. Maybe you go to lunch with them, you’re in groups with them, you’re in school with them, but are they your real friend? So some are just associates and some are just friends. Friends are people you can trust with what you tell them. You know

they got your best interest, a friend. The associate, you never know what they're up to or what kind of game they're running, you know.

And Nicloe added, "[Associates are] people I just kind of talked to, maybe hang around with sometimes. Talk to about some things in life but not like my best friend you know what I mean like there are people I associate with but don't consider true friends." This is consistent with past research focusing on the differences between friends and associates (Greer, 2000; Severance, 2005).

For item three the activities of reading, writing, listening to music, and watching television, usually take place in the housing unit. Therefore, it is reasonable that the percent distribution for this item is identical to item two which asked women about spending free time in their housing unit (76.7%). Consequently, it became apparent after the first two interviews that women may be spending much of their free time in the housing unit and less time in the yard because it was February and the weather was cold. Thus, the addition of four survey questions.²⁶

Of the 60 women, 58 were asked the additional four survey questions. There is a clear percent difference between how women were "currently" spending their free time and how they spend their free time in "warmer weather" (see table 6 for a comparison). In warmer weather women were much more likely to report being out in yard than currently, 63.8% vs. 11.6% respectively and twice as likely to report being out in the prison yard than in the housing unit, 63.8% vs. 29.3% respectively. In the current study, time spent in the housing unit differed from what Owen and Bloom (1995) found when they asked women how they spent their free time; over 60% of women in their study reported spending the majority of their free time in their four

²⁶ The four survey questions included the same activities of spending free time in the yard; in the housing unit; reading, writing, listening to music or watching television; and sleeping. However, the four additional questions began with the words "In warmer weather..." rather than "Currently."

or eight person room and reasoned they did so for privacy. It can be presumed that women in the current study used the housing unit for a place to be during bad or cold weather, as the time of year seemed to have an impact on how women spent their free time.

Table 6. Response distribution for items measuring how IW currently spend most of their free time compared to in warmer weather

Item	n=60	n=58
	Percent (n)	Percent (n)
	Currently	Warmer Weather
1. Yard		
Strongly agree/agree	11.6% (7)	63.8% (37)
Disagree/strongly disagree	71.7% (43)	25.9% (15)
Neither agree/disagree	16.7% (10)	10.3% (6)
2. Housing unit		
Strongly agree/agree	76.7% (46)	29.3% (17)
Disagree/strongly disagree	16.6% (10)	53.4% (31)
Neither agree/disagree	6.7% (4)	17.2% (10)
3. Reading, writing, music, television		
Strongly agree/agree	76.6% (46)	41.4% (24)
Disagree/strongly disagree	13.3% (8)	48.3% (28)
Neither agree/disagree	10.0% (6)	10.3% (6)
4. Sleeping		
Strongly agree/agree	11.7% (7)	6.9% (4)
Disagree/strongly disagree	66.7% (40)	81.0% (47)
Neither agree/disagree	21.7% (13)	12.1% (7)

An open-ended question during the in-depth interviews also asked women *how* they spent their free time in prison. All activities women reported were tallied up and thirteen categories were created (Table 7).²⁷ Some women stated being involved in one activity during their free time while other women stated that they were involved in three or four activities when they had time to themselves.

²⁷ Categories are not mutually exclusive.

Table 7. Response distribution for open-ended question: Currently, how do you spend your free time in prison?

Activity	Percent (n)
Radio, television	51.7% (31)
Read, write	46.7% (28)
Gym	35.0% (21)
Cards/games	23.3% (14)
Phone	16.7% (10)
Yard/walk-jog	13.3% (8)
Crafts	13.3% (8)
Cooking	11.7% (7)
Church	10.0% (6)
Sleeping	8.3% (5)
Schoolwork	8.3% (5)
Meetings	3.3% (2)
Library	1.7% (1)
Dog	1.7% (1)

The most common activities women reported engaging in during their free time included listening to the radio and/or watching television (n=31, 51.7%) and reading and/or writing (n=28, 46.7%). Laura stated that she watches television and writes “a lot of letters.” Asked why she does those things, she explained:

Just to keep my mind off of negative things. I watch funny stuff so I sit in front of the T.V. and laugh... I write poems all the time and song lyrics and like funny little short stories and I help people write their papers for school and things like that. I love to write. My letters are really long, like ten pages front and back.

Writing included using the J-Pay²⁸ machine to send emails home. Jenny noted that women were only allowed to use the J-Pay machine “20 minutes at a time, two times a day so you have to read the email and you have to write it at the same time. So you’re trying to type fast.”

These types of activities were also used to distract women from thinking about their position in prison as Amy declared when asked why she reads and watches T.V.:

Kind of helps take you out of here [prison]. If you can get into a TV show or a movie and have tunnel vision. Reading, I loved to read my whole life, so it kind

²⁸ Used to receive money from people outside of prison and to send/receive emails.

of does the same thing. I can put myself in the book and it takes me out from where I am.

Women often talked about books as a way to put themselves in “another world.” With books women can retreat to a different place, a place they create in their mind.

One third (n=21, 35%) of the women reported going to the gym. However, going to the gym had three meanings: (1) working out, (2) participating in sporting events such as volleyball or basketball, and (3) being a spectator during sporting events. Felicia stated, “I go the gym from 9:30am to 10:30am and do the workout.” Whereas Rita explained, “I go to the gym, I work out. I will play corn hole... shoot basketball.” And Maria who does not work out reported, “I go to the gym, I don’t work out. I go to the gym and watch activities. Corn hole. I go and watch the volleyball games and kickball, dodge ball team.” Though Maria may not work out and participate in sporting events like most, watching activities may be a strategy she uses for breaking up the monotony of prison life.

Almost one-quarter (n=14, 23.3%) of women stated that they played cards during their free time. For example, Latasha noted, “I love playing cards. That’s one of my favorite things to do. The other units, they got pool tables, so I can’t play pool. Cards – I love cards.” Maria who also reported that she used her free time to play cards explained that “It just passes by the free time. Some people pass their time sleeping, I can’t, I have to be doing something.” Because women are not permitted to have anyone else in their room besides their cellmate, they often played cards at a table in the dayroom of the unit they were assigned to. Consequently, some women chose not to play cards with others because that is where the gossiping can begin, which then lead to trouble: “I’m not with that gossiping, that sitting around and playing cards. Then people start fighting.” Similarly, Owen (1998) found that the dayroom was an area of public life where women congregated and where women get to know other women’s business.

Not surprising, some women (n=10, 16.7%) spent most of their time on the phone calling family and friends as Courtney expressed, “I use the phone a lot talking to my mom, my boyfriend, my sisters.” However, calling home can be a time-consuming task as Meghan detailed:

[I] try to get on the phone, that’s it. Trying to get on the phone. It takes like two hours to try to get on the phone and then you’ve got to go to CFS [Central Food Services] and then you come back and then you’re trying to get on the phone again. Then it’s time for pill call and then you’ve got to go to that and it’s like, dammit, you didn’t even get on the phone.

Meghan found getting on the phone challenging not only because there are so few phones in a unit, but because she was on lockdown and only allotted three hours a day out of her cell.

When women spoke about the yard (n=8, 13.3%), they described using it for two things: (1) to hang out with other confined women; or (2) to use the walk-jog, which is similar to a track. During Linda’s free time she used the yard to “hang out with my girlfriend.” Jean, on the other hand, used the yard to walk. Asked why, she stated, “I like to walk, as much as I can, because I have my back problems and problems with my leg and foot but it’s calming. It’s kind of to me a stress relief thing. It makes me feel better.” Unlike women in Owen’s (1998) study where for some the yard was a “place of trouble” (p. 110), women in this study did not discuss the yard as a negative place. However, at the time of the interviews, women began talking about a change in security that was taking place in the prison. The prison was transitioning to controlled movement. Meaning, women would only be allowed to walk the prison grounds with permission or during certain times. This could have contributed to the lack of negativity that was going on in the yard.

In addition to the various activities already described, some women also used their free time to engage in crafts (n=8, 13.3%) such as scrapbooking and knitting as Dana noted, “I love to knit and yeah arts and crafts,” while other women used their free time to cook (n=7, 11.7%) in their housing unit. When asked why she spends her time cooking, Eden replied, “I like to cook and I like to cook as long as there is somebody there that likes to eat it. That’s the social thing with me.” Cooking is seen as a privilege and mark of status; women with money on their books can afford to buy ingredients from commissary to make their own meals, but women who do not, must eat the food prepared by the prison (Owen, 1998).

Moreover, a handful of women mentioned going to church (n=6, 10%), sleeping (n=5, 8.3%) and doing schoolwork (n=5, 8.3%) during their free time. Women expressed going to church during their free time because it had a positive impact on their life as Lori explained, “I work at church, the church is very motivational and it helps me understand the Bible and it helps me to get through life easier.” For the five females who reported sleeping during their free time, three of them were on lockdown 21 hours a day, Amanda surmised, “There is nothing else to do” other than sleep and Martina explained:

I’m usually sleeping because we’re locked in our rooms so much and it’s just a little tiny cell. So you’re stuck up on your bed, so you end up falling asleep, but –I mean that’s really – if I had a TV I’d watch TV. There’s no doubt about it. But I don’t have one yet. They’re \$225.

Some women were excited to spend their free time doing schoolwork such as Tina who proclaimed, “I do a lot of my schoolwork, I love schoolwork. I love to do it. I don’t know why, but I’m just – when they say we got assignment, I’m like, “Woo-hoo!” Kyly uttered similar sentiments: “When you say free time, I do love school. That’s free time to me.” In chapter five, women expressed their frustration with securing a spot in prison classes. The frustration may

have been a result of the need and desire for learning and/or to fill idle time through prison classes.

Lastly, two women (3.3%) expressed using their free time for meetings such as AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] and NA [Narcotics Anonymous], one woman (1.7%) used her free time to visit the library, and one used all of her time to take care of a dog (1.7%) that had been assigned to her through the prison dog program.

Women rarely spoke of other women when asked how they spent their free time. Subsequently, some of the activities that they reported being involved in during their free time (e.g., reading and writing, using the phone, knitting, sleeping, and schoolwork) are typically engaged in alone. While each housing unit had one television in the day room, some women had televisions in their cells. Other than their cellmate, women were prohibited from having anyone else in the room. Thus, if watching television in their cell, they were most likely watching it alone or with their cellmate. Some of the activities that women spent doing during their free time may have precluded them from engaging with others in prison. Additionally, for the most part, women kept themselves busy during their free time and spent it engaging in activities that are beneficial to their body, mind, and spirit.

Changing Nature of Doing Time

Lastly, women were asked if the way they did time changed from when they first arrived at prison for their current sentence until presently. Thirty-nine (65%) IW expressed that the way they spent their time in prison changed from then to now, while the other 21 (35%) women stated that it stayed the same. Asked how it has changed for the 39 women, six themes emerged: *interaction, sleep, reading and writing, programs and schooling, yard and exercise, and pills.*

Explanations from four of the 39 participants did not fit in one of the six categories but are presented in an *other* category.

Interaction

The most common theme that emerged was *interaction*. Sixteen (41.03%) women explained that when they first arrived in prison they either: 1) stayed to themselves, or 2) hung around with too many different people. As time passed, the opposite of what they were originally doing took place. Although keeping to oneself was more common during the beginning of a woman's sentence, the type of interaction or lack of interaction varied from when women first entered prison to how they were currently doing their time. For instance Sandra noted, "When I first came here, I used to just stay in my room and just talk to my bunkie but now I'm starting to get out and do different stuff." And Felicia recalled how shy she was when she first entered prison:

I used to sit on my bed and not do anything and stayed confined to my room in the TV only because I was like so shy, I guess I didn't want to be around everybody so – but now, like after I started going to the gym and seeing how much better I felt, you know at the end of the day and then I can just lay my head down and be okay.

Some respondents noted how frightened they were when they first got to prison: "I stayed in the room. I went to my job and then I'd come back and I'd stay in the room. I'd sit on my bed and just watch everybody. I was scared. I was really scared. Asked when it changed, Heather replied:

Do you know – it was like one day I woke up and I'm looking around and a light bulb went off. Like get your butt up and start doing something because this isn't going to change for a while. It was like a year into my sentence. Then I started applying for groups, I changed my job, I became a porter at mental health and I started going outside and walking and I got into the Greyhound [dog] program which took me outside so that helped me get used to being outside with all these people.

Some women started their prison term afraid and shy, but eventually aborted their room confinement to interact with others. It is likely that women adapted to prison and their surroundings. One way women could have adapted to prison is by developing strategies for doing time (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Owen, 1998; Ward & Kassebaum, 1964). Women in this study certainly mentioned the MMs they received from other IW about advice on strategies for doing time (see chapter 4). It is also likely that they began interacting with people once their stereotypical views were broken down as one woman mentioned: “I mean you watch them shows and you never know what’s gonna happen. You feel like you’re gonna get beat with a lock in a sock or something like that. Raped. It’s not like that.”

Yet, other women who began their sentence engaging with others eventually minimized their interactions with people in the prison. Asked to explain how she has changed the way she spends her free time, Jean explained:

Before I was always around somebody but I guess I didn’t realize it, but other people the other day brought it to my attention while I was at work. We were sitting for count, [and] once in a while I might go and sit at a table with other people but usually I’ll pick a table that no one is at and go and sit at that one even to eat. When we get our trays to eat during work hours I’ll find myself always going to sit by myself or sometimes like if there’s a couple girls over there that’s not loud and real dramatic then I might go and sit at a table with them... But someone asked me why do you always sit by yourself? I don’t know, I just never took – maybe it’s I never take time – took the time out for me and now I realize that I need time just to myself maybe to learn who I really am or what I really want. I don’t know; try and be friends with me, if that makes sense.

A few IW stopped interacting with others because they realized the trouble it brought. Debra lamented about the trouble she used to get in because she associated with so many people, resulting in her changing the way she does her time:

I used to be hanging out with people, getting into stuff when I first got to prison, getting in arguments, out running around in the yard. I just, I came here alone and I’m leaving alone. I’m trying to keep with me, and do me until I can just go.

Women's interactions with other women in prison seemed to change for the better, whether spending more or less time with them. It is not clear how long it took women to make the change in how they were doing their time. However, at the time of the interview two of the 16 women had served less than six months of their current sentence, eight women had served less than two years and the remaining six women had served more than two years.

Sleep

Five (12.82%) women expressed that upon entering prison all they did was sleep because there was nothing else to do. For some, the change was by choice, but for others it was controlled by the prison. For example, Christy made the choice to change, she remembered, "When I first got here I slept. I think because I was so depressed. I think because I was away from my family." Then she made a change because she "just got bored." She went on to discuss the process that took place as she changed the way she spent her free time:

When I first got here I felt like my family like they are going to forget about me and stuff and then when I talk to them, well I developed a relationship with them and I know they are not going to forget who I am and so... I was blaming other people and I shouldn't have. I realized that this was an eye opening experience for me. I realized I did what I did. I'm here because of what I did. Nobody put a gun to my head and said you got to go do this. I just realized that I needed to stop blaming others because I'm not going to get nowhere in life if I keep blaming other people for my problems.

Other women like Celina felt that the way she was doing her time changed because of the change in her security level. She began her prison sentence on lockdown 21 hours a day. Once her security level was dropped, she too changed how she spent her free time:

When I first entered prison, my free time was in my room because I was [on lockdown]. I was locked down. I had a bunkie and everybody used to say that she was mean. I could've watched her TV, but I didn't want to touch none of her stuff and I didn't have that stuff at that moment. I had just got here and you have to do some time before you can get that stuff, so I was just in my own little state where if I don't got it, I don't need it. If my mom and them couldn't get it to me, I don't

need it. So her stuff, I wasn't going to touch it. I would just sleep. Now I be with one girl in there, play cards, braid hair, call my daughter and my mom.

The drop in security level allowed Celina to leave her room, use the phone, and interact with other people. Jada echoed similar feelings as Celina and explained that there is nothing else to do but sleep when you are on lockdown:

I was on [lockdown], so I couldn't do a lot. I couldn't do a lot there. My bunkie was like, "All you do is sleep. All you do is sleep." What else am I supposed to do? If you want to keep yourself away from all the negative things that's going on in the cottage, then you're in your room. You get tired of watching TV for so long, you'll fall asleep. Or reading a book, you'll fall asleep. Now that I'm allowed to do a little bit more, I utilize it by working out or I might make myself go out and play some cards and then I end up going back to my room.

Some women spent time sleeping when they first entered prison because they were depressed or just had nothing else to do. Here, the lack of activities is due in part to the assigned security level, which had a significant impact on how women do their time; their options are limited when they are in a small cell for 21 hours a day, many without a television or radio.

Reading and Writing

Respondents also commented on the change in amount of time they spent reading and writing when they first entered prison compared to how they were currently spending their free time. Four (10.26%) women spent most of their free time reading and/or writing when they first entered prison because they either did not have a television or they were in lockdown and thus had nothing else to do. Rebecca noted when she first entered prison, "I didn't have a TV but I read constantly. My free time was spent reading." Others did less reading when their security level was dropped. Jenny noted:

When I first got here I didn't have the J-Pay. I'm allowed to have arts and crafts sent in to me, I didn't have all the arts and crafts stuff that I have now. Cause I have a wide variety of arts and crafts stuff now and I didn't get my T.V. in my cell until like five months after I was in there so I was in there without that. I

should add to that list reading because when I was in lockdown that's all I did was read.

Asked if she reads as much as she did before, Jenny laughed and acknowledged, "No. No, I have so many distractions now that it's hard." Vanessa who expressed a similar change in how she spent her free time stated, "[I] popped out [with the general population]. When I was in maximum security, I was like [locked] down 24/7." As a result, she admits, "I wrote."

Security level and monetary resources seemed to impact the way women did their time. For some IW, television and emails could not occupy their time upon entering prison because they did not yet have the money to pay for such items, while other IW could not leave their cell because of their security level and options for occupying their time were minimal.

Programs and Schooling

Some women (n=4, 10.26%) recounted their unwillingness to attend meetings, programs, and classes during their free time when they first entered prison, but have since then filled their time with those types of activities. Tina explained, "When I first got here [to prison], I was quiet, and what I mean by quiet is, I was really stewing in my own crap." She had not received her final sentence yet and was being held on a parole violation and "finally after two months of being here [in prison] they gave me two years. That's when I started saying, I'm going to start putting my foot forward in trying to do things. I got in a group right away and I got in anger management." Unfortunately, the opposite happened with Shawanda. When she first entered prison she was spending her time in classes, but got into a fight with another woman in her class and was sent to solitary confinement. She bemoaned, "[T]hey ended up kick[ing] me out of college, I couldn't sign back up." And now that she is able to sign back up for classes she is having difficulty getting into one:

And now it's all about who you know. You can't get in a group unless you're paying somebody for a certificate. You can't get in a group unless you know somebody that's in a group. So yeah, it's very limited now.

A couple of women started off their sentence bored with little activity filling their prison time, but shortly realized that programming and classes could fill the idle time that prison brings. Nevertheless, there was one case in which the opposite took place. Shawanda began her sentence taking classes, but soon found herself in a situation that removed her from the classes she was in and left her unhappy with additional time on her hands.

Yard and Exercise

As discussed, some women began their sentence in lockdown with nothing but sleep, reading and writing to occupy their time, but once their security level was dropped, their free time was filled with other activities. Conversely, a few women (n=3, 7.69%) began in the general population, having the ability to exercise and take advantage of the prison yard, but after some time were moved to a higher security level eliminating such privileges. Faith detailed how the activities she took part in during her free time changed from when she first entered prison to current time and noted that the change was due to amendments in security level provisions: "When I first got to prison we were allowed to do a lot more. They didn't do this [lockdown] shit. I worked out, went to the gym, ran the track, talked to people." Asked if she had always been in the same security level, she responded, "I have, [but] now we're locked down. We weren't locked down before. We were allowed to roam. We were allowed to do things." Faith continued:

Yeah this [lockdown] shit just came into play. I think it's worse. I mean I understand their concept but when you lock a dog in a cage, when that cage comes open that dog runs and runs free and it's going to for a while and you have to fight with it to get it back into the cage.

That's just like any girl in here. You keep locking them down they have all this negative energy and they end up fighting. We've got more fights than ever now and it's more violent fights. Girls are getting their heads split open. Whatever, because of this channeled anger it's going at each other. They channel their anger on someone else instead of being able to go work out to take the stress out, get out and walk the yard, get some fresh air.

Similarly, Amanda was also on lockdown at the time of the interview, but when she first arrived to prison she was part of the general population. Asked how her free time has changed, she explained, "Yes, [now] I'm stuck in a room all day. When I first got to prison I was in the yard, chilling with people." It is not clear whether Amanda's security level changed or if the provisions attached to the security level changed as Faith described.

Pills

A few (n=3, 7.69%) women specifically stated that when they first entered prison they spent their free time taking pills. However, how women obtained the pills varied. For Linda, it was clear that the pills were obtained illegally and used to cope with the strains of prison:

I used to have way too much time on my hands. I didn't have anything to do. So I don't, I don't remember how I used to spend my days. I think it's because I took other people's meds. Like when I first got here I would buy pills off of people and take them so that I didn't have to deal with what was going on.

Asked what she meant by "deal with what was going on," she responded: "I didn't want to deal with being in prison. I just got sentenced to 10 years. I was not a happy girl." Similarly, Molly also used the pills to make doing time easier, however, her pills were given to her by the medical unit in the prison. She explained that she "didn't really do anything" during her free time when she first got to prison except that she "doped to cope." She voiced that she was on medication to cope with her prison situation, but the medication often "hindered" her because it made her sleep a lot. Once she stopped taking the pills, she was able to engage in activities. Currently, Molly spends her free time "writing letters, watching movies, reading, [and] scrapbooking." As for

Tammy, it was unclear whether she received the pills from the facility or had gained them illegally. Either way, she perceived taking pills as a negative behavior because it kept her from engaging in beneficial activities, such as school. She, too, changed how she was doing time: “I do positive things [now] verses negative things when I first came to prison. [I was] spending my time doing negative things.” Asked what the negative things were, she replied:

Doing pills. I was on psych meds really bad so I just really spend time just not doing anything with my time. Not going to school. Since I been here I got my GED and stuff and now I’m thinking about furthering my education but I can’t until I’m five years from my out-date.

It is difficult to ascertain the number of women illegally using drugs in prison because it is always changing and influenced by various factors (Wheatley, 2007). However, research has found that women who have experienced stressful life events, such as physical or sexual assault turn to alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism (Littleton, Horsley, John, & Nelson, 2007). Most women in prison have experienced some form of abuse, which may be one reason for self-medicating.

Other

Lastly, an additional four (10.26%) women reported making a change in how they spent their free time when they first entered prison to how they were presently doing time. However, their responses did not fit within any of the six categories. For example, Iris was presently spending her available time engaging in religious activities, but when she first entered prison she stated that she “wasn’t as close to God” and in fact she spent most of her time being “angry.” Tonya spoke of the positive change she made in how she does her time: “When I first came to prison, I used to be in trouble a lot because I didn’t care. I was young, I had 10 years, I didn’t care, but as I got older I’ve kind of like calmed down.” Although Tonya contributes her better behavior to age, earlier research found that unlike short-term inmates, long-term inmates

expressed taking time to think about their next move in an attempt to avoid conflict (Flanagan, 1981). Thus, Tonya may have come to realize an easier way of doing time to finish out her sentence.

Lastly, as discussed at the beginning of the chapter, some women spent their free time on the phone calling family and friends. Porsha used to be one of those people. When she first entered prison she used her free time to call home:

In the beginning of my time I used to be on the phone all the time. And that's not the thing to do in here... because you can't live in here and out there. Cause you'll like really mess yourself up. You have no control; I have no control of the outside things. Like for instance my son was – I left him with my husband and then his dad came and took him from my husband and I was like “no, take him back to my husband.” I have no control, it happened and I can't do anything about it and I have to accept that. In the beginning it was hard to accept the fact that I lost all control over everything.

Now Porsha watches television, plays cards, and goes to church. She stated, “Now I've accepted the fact that I don't have control and things is going to happen and I have to be okay with that and learn how to deal with [it].” As women enter prison they must come face to face with their losses, especially the loss of family and friends, which impacts women's adjustment to prison (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2005; Ward & Kassebaum, 1964). However, as Sykes (1958) noted, individuals are faced with learning the norms and values of prison life. Porsha seemed to have done that and adapted to a situation she cannot change.

Many women described the changes that they made in how they spent their free time when they first entered prison to how they were currently spending their free time. For some women, it was as if they took a step back, specifically those who went from being in the general population to being on lockdown. It is a little unclear whether the rules of the prison changed or if women's security level changed. However, most participants appeared to be satisfied with how

they were presently doing their prison time and made conscious changes that were benefiting them in prison and hopefully once released.

Discussion

This chapter demonstrated how women do time during their free time, which little research has explored, and if women's relationships are connected to how they do time.

Although the data cannot identify a direct connection between relationships and doing time, it may be that the one or two people women are spending their time with are the same one or two women that they discussed having positive and negative relationships with in chapter 6.

Additionally, there was little to no talk of chaos or drama, which may also be an indication that women spent most of their free time with a select few they had positive relationships with.

Though not directly asked, women did express the significance of having alone time, which is important yet difficult to find in prison. Having privacy and time to oneself may be a helpful and positive way for women to prepare for their release and could be more beneficial for women in prison than we actually know. This finding is somewhat different from Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2005) who found a much higher percent of women who preferred to spend their time alone and whose approach was labeled as negative and singular. However, this difference may be an artifact of the prison structure and/or correctional staffing in each of the prisons. Given that women in Kruttschnitt and Gartner's (2005) study were sometimes bunked with 18 other women may be reason alone for why they preferred to spend time by themselves. The prison population in Kruttschnitt and Gartner's (2005) study was over three times as large as the prison population in the current study. This too could be reason for why women preferred to spend time alone, over women in the current study. Additionally, the management of prisons is not universal; the rules and regulations that are enforced across prisons may vary. Similarly, the enforcement of rules

within a prison may also differ by individual staff. Thus, interpreting the contrast between how women spend their time in the current study and Kruttschnitt and Gartner's study should be done with care, as findings cannot be generalized to other prisons.

Additionally, the chapter detailed the changing nature of how women spent their prison time. For some women, their security level had an impact on how they did their time and why it changed. Women under close security were locked down 21 hours a day with few activities to choose from. A few women expressed their disdain with the impact being locked down had on them. There was some talk of the consequences being locked down had on women and is similar to what research shows; being locked down or under solitary confinement can have serious health and cognitive consequences while in prison, but perhaps more importantly once released (for a review see Smith, 2006).

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, the study sought to understand the verbal MMs women in prison receive and the behaviors they associate with the messages. Second, the study also sought to understand the positive and negative relationships women maintain in prison and the connection relationships have to how women do prison time. This chapter summarizes the major findings and limitations of the research. The chapter will also discuss practical implications as well as avenues for future research.

Summary of Findings

MMs have been explored in various contexts including, but not limited to, religious faith (Keeley, 2004), navigating college life (Nazione et al., 2011), nurses' support messages (Ford & Ellis, 1998) and women on probation and parole (Cornacchione et al., in press). Yet, until now, the MMs that women receive in prison from the people they spend the most time with, other IW and COs, and who have control over them (i.e., correctional staff) have not been researched.

Women in this study reported receiving and remembering verbal MMs from people in prison. In fact, some women reported receiving multiple messages. Although most MMs were received from other women in prison, some of the MMs came from COs. Most of the MMs received were classified within one of the five categories: *advice*, *compliment*, *encouragement*, *negative statement*, and *religion*. *Advice* was the most common MM women reported receiving and remembering. This is consistent with Cornacchione and colleagues (in press) work, which also found that messages of behavioral advice were most frequently received from probation and parole officers and recalled by probationers and parolees. Additionally, MMs have been defined as brief verbal commands that prescribe rules of conduct (Knapp et al., 1981), which is consistent with messages of *advice* and *religion* that women in this study reported receiving.

Women recalled messages that advised them on how to “do time” and “behave” in prison. Likewise, messages of *religion* also provided women with advice, but from a spiritual perspective.

The majority of the messages women reported receiving were positive in nature, which is consistent with research (Knapp et al., 1981; Stohl, 1986). Respondents often connected the messages to reentry into the community sometimes stating that the behaviors maintained in prison will be the behaviors maintained once released. However, women also did receive negative MMs that attacked their personal character or reinforced past experiences from both COs and other women in prison. These messages tapped into women’s personal emotions and left a few women feeling discouraged. This finding is similar to Thompson and Zaitchik’s (2012) study who found that college students who reported receiving negative messages about weight gain felt they were a disappointment. Although it is not clear the total effects negative MMs can have on women in prison, what is clear is that most IW have a history of being poorly treated both verbally and physically. Thus, the additional negative messages they received could be detrimental to their identity, self-esteem, and success in prison (e.g., adjusting and program participation/completion). Additionally, if encouraging comments from family and friends can impact post-release success (Visher & Travis, 2003), then negative messages received in prison could negatively impact reentry success.

Differences in the type of message received stood out in the *advice*, *compliment*, and *encouragement* categories. Messages received from other women in prison spoke to the prison experience and how to navigate it, while messages from COs centered on how to “behave” in prison. *Encouragement* was the only category for which messages were received solely from other IW. These messages provided women with motivation to move forward and hope for the

future. Lack of encouraging messages from COs was not all that surprising as their jobs are to enforce the prison rules and maintain the safety of those within the correctional facility. Yet, Cornacchione and colleagues (in press) found that women reported receiving messages of motivation from their probation and parole officers, which in turn, helped them to avoid behaviors they would later regret. Receiving messages of encouragement or motivation from COs could also be beneficial to women behind bars and will be discussed further in the implications.

The analysis then turned to an exploration of the behaviors that women associated with the messages they reported. Consistent with MM theory (Knapp et al., 1981; Stohl, 1986), women used the MMs they received as strategies for dealing with new and different situations, which extended to helping other women who were experiencing difficulty with various aspects of prison life. Women also used the MMs to evaluate and alter their own behavior based on the message that had become memorable to them. This too is consistent with prior research on the impact MMs have on self-assessing behavior (Ellis & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ellis, 2001; Smith et al., 2001).

The MMs elicited three types of behavioral reactions. Proud behavior was the most common type of behavioral reaction women associated with the message(s) they received. Specifically, women were proud when they used the message to *accomplish* a goal or task, showed *perseverance* through difficult situations, demonstrated *behavioral control* under challenging conditions, and provided *social support* to other women in prison. They used the messages they received to engage in behaviors they were proud of, much of which would help them once they are released. For example, some women attained their GED while other women

successfully completed drug treatment programs, which would prove to be beneficial following their prison release.

Contrary to proud behavior was actions women were not proud of. The most common conduct women recalled not being proud of and which they associated with the MM received was *involvement in an altercation*. While women often expressed their remorse for unruly behavior, a few used the message as a crutch to explain why they behaved poorly. Recall Ashley who received the message “We are just bent, we are not broken” from another female in prison. Ashley used the message to justify keeping another woman’s money, which she was supposed to have put on her “books.” It was a bit surprising that only two women who reported disdain *from involvement in an altercation* also reported proud behavior when refraining from a fight (*behavioral control*). Meaning, women were not associating the same message with being in an altercation and also refraining from confrontation. This speaks to the power MMs may have on maintaining behavioral consistency, but should further be researched.

The last behavioral reaction, avoided regretful behavior, was associated with actions relevant to rule breaking (*avoided initiating conflict*) and irresponsibility (*avoided being irresponsible*); two behaviors which are important in prison, but arguably, even more important once women are released. Avoiding law breaking behavior once released from prison will undoubtedly contribute to women’s reentry success. Additionally, most women who leave prison will do so on parole (Carson & Sabol, 2012; Petersilia, 2003), requiring various stipulations (e.g., meeting with parole officer, finding and maintaining a job and housing) that women ultimately have to be responsible for and follow through with. Failure to show up to parole appointments and work can be a violation of parole and possibly result in reincarceration. National recidivism rates find that approximately 60 percent of women on parole will be rearrested within three years

of release and nearly 30 percent will be sent back to prison (Deschenes et al., 2007). Messages that women associated with *avoided being irresponsible* only came from other IW. This is a little surprising given that COs would expect women to be responsible and follow the rules. One possible reason may be that most of the behaviors females reported being responsible for were personal behaviors, such as going to church, speaking at AA meetings, and exercising. Officers may be more concerned about behaviors that impact the safety of others (e.g., fighting) rather than personal endeavors. This too has implications that will be discussed shortly.

Overall, some women violated the personal standards they had set for themselves. This is seen in the acts women were not proud of, such as getting involved in an altercation and failing to help someone in need. Yet, for the situations women were proud of or avoided because it would ensue regret, participants changed their behavior to adhere to the MM and/or their personal standards. For some women, the behaviors they avoided likely helped put them in prison (e.g., drugs, physical confrontation). Moreover, they often associated the message they received and the behavioral reaction to possible consequences that would arise (if participated in regretful behavior) or did arise (when engaging in behavior they were not proud of).

The study then veered away from the verbal interactions IW had with other people in prison and turned to the relational attachments that women maintained in the institution. Studies on women's prison relationships have largely centered on pseudo-families (Girshick, 1999; Heffernan, 1972; Owen, 1998; Pollock, 1997, 2002; Ward & Kassebaum, 1966) and little on women's perceptions of what makes a prison relationship positive or negative. For the most part, women could easily recall who they had favorable and unfavorable relationships with and were able to explain why they perceived their relationships to be that way. Interestingly, women reported having three times as many current positive relationship than current negative

relationships. That is not to say that women did not have negative relationships in the past. In fact, some of the women had learned from their past negative relationships and developed ways to avoid entering adverse relationships. Most positive relationships were with other IW, which may be one reason why women perceived other women in prison to be more helpful than COs on the survey. An additional reason for the lack of positive relationships with COs may be related to their function in the prison. It is not the job of the CO to befriend women in the prison, but rather, provide security and supervision to them (Liebling et al., 2011).

Factors defining a positive relationship were often the opposite of factors defining a negative relationship. For example, positive relationships were characterized as participating in positive behavior (e.g., attending drug programming) and being honest, whereas, negative relationships consisted of partaking in negative conduct (e.g., doing drugs, not taking advantage of programming) and engaging in backstabbing behavior. Additionally, nearly half of the women spoke of their beneficial relationships as being reciprocal. As for women who did not have a current healthy relationship, their reasons ranged from the “drama” that relationships include to having the “worst luck with people.” For women who did not have any negative relationships two themes emerged: *personal choice* and *stay to myself*. Women were quite intentional about staying away from unhealthy relationships with other imprisoned women and had strategies in place to do so.

When women spoke of positive relationships they spoke of friends or acquaintances/associates. While research has found differences between friends and associates (Greer, 2000; Severance, 2005), this study found that although different, positive relationships can be had with both. Though trust seems to be a key factor women have with friends, it is not required for a positive relationship. Yet, when women spoke of negative relationships it was

sometimes with a girlfriend she was romantically involved with causing additional “drama” or chaos in her life. Maintaining negative relationships speaks to women’s need for relationships. Research has shown that women often feel comfortable and safe after developing same-sex relationships in prison (Greer, 2000). However, women in prison often times have a history of physical and sexual abuse from their male partner (Chesney-Lind, 1997, 2002). Some women in this study also experienced verbal and physical abuse from another woman they were in a prison relationship with. This has implications for reentry and will be discussed shortly. These details speak to the complexity of women’s relationships in prison.

Lastly, because women’s relationships in prison are such a large part of their everyday prison life, the study asked how women’s relationships in prison are connected to the way they do time. Although a direct connection could not be made, most women reported spending their free time with at least one or two other IW when they were not locked in their cell. Yet, interviews revealed that alone time was also important to some. Women were happy when they were able to spend time by themselves because privacy in prison was difficult to find. Additionally, those nearing the end of their sentence valued any alone time they were able to have in order to prepare themselves for their release. These findings differ somewhat from Kruttschnitt and Gartner (2005) who found a much larger proportion of women who preferred to spend their time alone and whose approach to doing time was characterized as negative and singular. The prison design may have something to do with whether women choose to spend their free time alone or with other women. In Kruttschnitt and Gartner’s (2005) study, at times, women were bunked with 17 other women, making it difficult to find alone time, perhaps increasing the desire for it. However, in the current study, women had the ability to retreat to their two-woman cell for some privacy. Having the ability to retreat to their cell or for women

under close security, requiring them to be in their cell, may have increased the desire to be around a few other women.

Interestingly, although on the survey most noted that they spent their free time with a few other imprisoned females, respondents rarely spoke of other women during the interview when they were asked how they spent their free time. Instead, they detailed the activities that they engaged in. At the time of the interviews (February and March), many women reported reading, writing, listening to music and watching television as well as spending time in their housing unit. Yet, as the weather changed and got warmer (summer months), how women spent their time also changed; less time was spent in the housing unit and more time in the yard. When they spoke of the yard they did so in a positive way; a place to relax and talk with other women outside their housing unit. This contradicts Owen's (1998) finding that the yard is perceived as a negative place where trouble and bad behavior occurred.

At the time of data collection there appeared to be a change in the prisons policy. The institution seemed to be beginning the process of restricting movement. Meaning, women were only allowed in the yard during certain times of the day and were only allowed to walk the prison grounds or move from building to building if they had a scheduled class or appointment. It appeared that security around the prison was being tightened. Thus, the small amount of free time women reported spending in the yard at the time of data collection may, in part, have been due to the cold weather, but may also have been due to the controlled movement being put in place. This would also explain the lack of negative talk associated with the yard; if women were being restricted from the yard, there would be less talk of the yard and the negativity associated with it. The amendments in security level provisions could also be an explanation for the disdain a couple of women had with their change in how they were doing time. For most women, how

they did their prison time when they first entered prison to how they were currently doing it changed for the better. For example, some women were unwilling to enroll in schooling and programming when they first arrived at prison, but signed up after realizing it was the best way for them to do their time. Yet, for a couple women, they went from spending time in the general population to being on lockdown 21 hours a day without their security level changing. All in all, participants appeared pleased with how they were currently doing time in prison, especially those women who made positive changes over the course of their prison stay.

Limitations

Like all studies, this study is not without limitations. The primary limitation is the single prison from which the sample was pulled. Though random sampling was used and generalizations can be made to the prison in which data were collected, findings cannot be generalized beyond the correctional facility where data collection took place. In some states, there is only one female facility and findings can be generalized to women incarcerated in the state, however, this was not the case. Three female facilities occupied the state where data collection took place. Moreover, the study was restricted to women. Thus, the MMs that men receive in prison is unknown.

A second limitation was the lack of probing when women were asked how they spend their free time. Probes asking women if they spend their free time with any of the women they have positive and negative relationship with would have strengthened the results of the study. A clearer picture could have been made for how women's relationships are directly connected to doing time.

Additionally, limiting the sample to 60 and the analysis to MMs received from IW and COs decreased the number of MMs in each theme. It appeared that data saturation was achieved,

but some categories were smaller than expected, making comparisons within a category difficult. For example, some categories of MMs, such as *advice*, produced sub-themes (i.e., behavioral, strategies for doing time, recovery, past behavior) for which comparisons were made. However, because of the few number of *religious* messages, subthemes did not emerge. A larger sample may have produced additional *religious* MMs allowing for the development and comparison of subthemes. Also, additional types of messages may exist for women who reported receiving MMs from other individuals in the prison (e.g., program and treatment staff); however, this was not explored in the current study.

Lastly, MMs was the unit of analysis. Although an analysis was conducted examining the differences in types of messages received from IW and COs, an analysis on the type of person receiving different messages is unknown. For example, do women with more misconduct violations receive a certain type of message? Additionally, characteristics about the sender of the message is unknown. In thinking about the demographics of the COs and other women in the prison, it would be interesting to know if the sender of the message is similar in age and race. Despite the limitations, this study makes important contributions to the MM literature and the literature on women in prison.

Practical Implications

This study took an interdisciplinary approach and is the first of its kind to uniquely apply communication theory within criminological research to identify the types of verbal messages IW receive from those they interact with in prison. Findings from this study suggest various directions for programming within women's correctional facilities.

First, most women in this study reported associating and/or using the MMs they received from other IW and COs to engage in positive behaviors of which they were proud. Given that

this is the first study to examine the MMs women in prison receive, additional research should be conducted before the following recommendations are carried out. However, after additional research is conducted and similar findings are achieved, findings can be used as models to develop a training program for correctional staff, which trains them in communication skills. Similar to how researchers learn interviewing skills, correctional staff can be taught the types of communication that are helpful and unhelpful to women's success in prison. This would not only benefit women during their time in prison, but has the potential to have lasting effects for women once they are released, as research has found that encouraging comments from family and friends can have a positive impact on post-release success (Visser & Travis, 2003). Thus, MMs that helped women *persevere* in prison, could potentially help women *persevere* on the outside (e.g., parole completion, job placement, program completion).

Additionally, as the messages help positively change women's behavior, the strain correctional staff experience on the job would most likely decrease. Studies have found that more treatment oriented prison environments, as opposed to more bureaucratic environments, yield more collaborative relationships between prisoner and staff (Grusky, 1959; Pollock, 1986; Wilson, 1968). Increasing the positive MMs women in prison receive would lead to greater collaboration between them and staff, positively impacting prisoner compliance (fewer rule violations). For example, in this study messages of *encouragement* were only received from other IW, but had women thinking about self-improvement and making use of the prison experience (staying out of trouble and engaging in positive activities) so that what they learned and applied in prison could be used upon reentry back in the community. As discussed earlier, Cornacchione and colleagues (in press) found that women reported receiving messages of motivation (or encouragement) from their probation and parole officers, which helped them to

avoid behaviors they would later regret. Correctional staff could be trained to understand encouraging types of messages and how to deliver such messages to those in prison. The more regretful behaviors women avoid in prison and the greater proud behaviors women engage in would not only help the women but would surely help ease the job stress COs experience. Similarly, some of the positive messages women reported receiving complemented them on their behavior. It may be that women who are receiving these types of messages have a low number of misconduct violations compared to others. However, MMs have the ability to positively impact behavior, thus, COs should be trained in providing all women with complimentary and encouraging messages regardless of whether they have been in trouble or not.

Not only would training benefit COs, but findings from this study suggest that women in prison would also benefit from learning communication skills. Most MMs were received from other women in prison and were of a positive nature, leaving women feeling good about themselves. In fact, some women who received messages from other women did not even realize they possessed such positive qualities or the impact they had on others. Though most messages appeared to make women feel good about themselves, some women received negative messages. The negative messages left a few women feeling discouraged, while other women tried to prove the messages wrong through actions that went against the undesirable message they received. A communication class that encourages IW to positively communicate with other women who are in prison could increase self-esteem and favorable behavioral acts, which leave women feeling confident about themselves. The class could address how to positively help and encourage women through verbal communication by training them on the types of memorable messages that are beneficial and when to deliver the messages. For example, the class could train women in developing complimentary messages and messages of advice and when to distribute such

messages to other women. As women learn how to positively communicate with other women, it could ultimately lead to a decrease in prison confrontation and an increase in self-esteem, which is often lacking in total institutions like correctional settings.

Similarly, because some messages left a few women feeling disheartened, prison programming that focuses on strategies and skills to positively impact how women digest messages would be beneficial. For example, recall that Rebecca received the message “Who are you?” and explained that the message will most likely affect her for the rest of her life. Women must learn how to receive messages that are negative without the negative effects. Once released from prison, it is likely that women will receive additional messages that may not always sit well with them, especially since those with felony records are often stigmatized. Learning strategies for digesting messages could prove beneficial to women’s reentry success.

Perhaps one of the most important suggestions is focused on providing women in correctional facilities strategies for navigating relationships. Although the current study did not collect data on women’s relational history, research shows that prior to prison most women have experienced physical and sexual abuse from a male partner (Chesney-Lind, 1997, 2002). Some women in this study reported experiencing verbal and/or physical abuse from another female who they were in a relationship with. The cumulative trauma women experience from men on the outside and women on the inside gives little hope for their relationships once released from prison. Findings suggest that women in this study have realistic definitions of positive and negative relationships. However, what is lacking for some are strategies for spotting and terminating negative relationships as exhibited by those who chose to maintain the unhealthy relationships they had with other women in prison. Thus, it is suggested that prison programming focus on relational strategies. Not only will this benefit women in prison, but more importantly,

once released. In fact, we can look to strategies that women already use (i.e., walking away, distancing oneself, weighing the consequences) as some women in this study had developed ways to stay away from negative relationships in prison.

When women enter prison most leave their relationships, their home, and their easier access to substances. Although they may worry about what is going on outside of prison, they have very little control, if any. Thus, prison becomes a time and place for women to work on themselves, care about themselves, and learn strategies for living on the outside because most women who enter prison will see the outside once again. As additional research is conducted in the area of MMs and relationships, researchers and correctional facilities should consider the development of proper training programs to teach IW and COs positive communication skills, how to digest negative verbal communication and provide women with strategies for navigating and terminating negative relationships.

Future Research

The exploratory study has left many avenues for future research. In addressing the limitation of generalizability, future research should replicate the study in other women's prisons around the country. This will allow for a better understanding on the types of MMs women in prison receive. Being the first of its kind, it is uncertain whether the MMs these individuals receive in prison differ from one prison to another. Similarly, the scope of the study did not allow for the examination of the MMs men receive. We know that females in prison differ from their male counterparts, but do the messages they receive and the behaviors they associate with the messages differ as well? Thus, a comparative study examining the types of MMs that men receive compared to women should be conducted.

The current study cannot tell us why other IW and COs deliver messages to women in prison. The reasons could range from their familiarity with those in prison to the behavior they exert. Another possible explanation that may lead a CO or IW to deliver the message is individual personality. They may be more or less compassionate to some individuals' struggles in prison. Exploring MMs from the senders' perspective could have additional programming implications for correctional facilities. This too should be further researched.

More than half of the participants in this study detailed the change(s) they made from when they first entered prison to their current state. Yet, for the women who reported no change in how they did time, there is no explanation as to why change did not occur. Additional interviews with women on the changes they make or do not make in prison should be explored, as it could have implications for their success upon release. If prisons know what changes positively impact, correctional staff could be trained in helping to facilitate the positive change.

Additionally, longitudinal studies might be helpful to further understand the complexity of women's prison relationships. Interviews with females when they first enter and continue until their release may help to understand the fine details of how they develop relationships in prison and when and why they choose to maintain or let go. Women's relationships outside of prison are such a strong factor in their pathway to crime that understanding the fine details of their prison relationships could have positive implications for the relationship choices women make once they are released.

Finally, longitudinal studies should also be conducted for the examination of the impact MMs have over time. Do the same messages that have an impact on women's behavior in prison impact their behavior once released? Understanding this question has short- and long-term implications for reentry success. Additionally, though individuals in this study did not receive

negative messages at the same rate as they did positive messages, future research should delve deeper into the long term impacts negative messages received in prison have on women.

Concluding Remarks

Thirty percent of women exiting prison will be placed back in prison (Deschenes et al., 2007). Thus, the topic of reentry has become an issue of concern in the field of criminal justice. However, understanding how women can best be helped before they exit prison is beneficial not only for the women leaving prison, but society at large. Providing women in prison with the strategies and tools to lead a crime free life after prison can ultimately decrease the odds of individuals in society being victimized. This study was the first of its kind to explore the verbal messages women who are in prison receive and the behaviors they associate with the messages. The study also examined women's prison relationships in relation to how they do their prison time.

Findings suggest that IW indeed recall MMs from people in the prison environment and use the messages to engage in behaviors that are positive for the woman herself (e.g., drug programs, GED and college classes), the women around her (e.g., abstaining from confrontation, providing social support) and the prison (e.g., following the rules). The behaviors associated with the messages were often connected to self-improvement and reentry. Though messages were also associated with less positive behaviors, women used the messages to self-assess their actions.

MMs impact how individuals self-identify and contribute to the evaluation of their behavior. In the context of women in prison, MMs have the ability to instill pro-social behaviors within IW, which they could possibly carry with them once released. These findings do not encourage the subordination of women, but encourage positive change in antisocial behaviors through the feeding of motivational and behavioral messages.

Findings also suggest that positive relationships in prison are much more prominent than negative relationships. Although there are distinctions between friends and associates, both have positive elements associated with them. Women who maintain negative relationships in prison probably do in part because the need for attachment is strong and severing relational ties can be difficult. For this reason, relational programming has been suggested.

Women in prison have been an understudied population, yet we see that they differ drastically from their male counterparts. Additional research in the area of women in prison is needed to better serve their needs in an effort to improve treatment and programming to ensure their success post-release. Researchers should integrate women's voices to better understand the social world of prison, as they are the ones who can provide the most accurate story of their experiences.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

You are being asked to consider participating in a research study of women in prison, and how women are affected by their prison experience. You have been randomly selected as a possible participant in this study. The study is being conducted by a graduate student at Michigan State University. The study consists of an interview and very short paper and pencil survey. The interview and survey will be confidential and you will not be asked to provide any identifiable information.

Please attend the meeting to learn more about the study and to make an informed decision on whether you would like to participate.

Date:

Time:

Place:

If you do choose to participate, the interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Your time is greatly appreciated!

Kimberly Bender
Michigan State University

Appendix B: Interview Instrument

Qualitative Measure **Women in Prison**

Exploring Incarcerated Women's Memorable Messages and the Effects of Prison Relationships on Doing Time

Part 1: Demographics

1. How old were you when you first entered prison for this sentence?
2. How old are you now?
3. What is your security level?
4. What is your race?
5. How long were you sentenced to prison?
6. For your current charge, how much time have you done?
7. What is the offense that you are currently serving time for?
8. Have you been to prison before this current offense?
9. What housing unit are you in?
10. What is your level of education?

Part 2: Memorable Messages

We get a lot of verbal messages every single day. Some of those messages become really memorable and we remember them word for word and use them in deciding what to do in our lives. They help us to decide "I should or I shouldn't do this." Or after you do something the message helps you to decide "I probably shouldn't have done that" or "I am really proud of myself for doing that." That is what I am going to ask you about now. Please refrain from using names. If names are used, they will be deleted from the recording.

- 1) Do you have any verbal message that has become memorable to you that you received from someone in prison?
 1. What is that message word for word?
 2. Without revealing the name of the person, what is their position? Male or female?
 3. When were you told the message?
 4. Why were you told the message?
 5. Have you passed the message on to anyone?
Probe: If yes, without revealing the name of the person, who have you passed the message on to?
Probe: If yes, why have you passed the message on?
 6. Has the message come to mind when you did something that you were proud of?

7. Has message come to mind when you avoided doing something that you would later regret?
 8. Has the message come to mind when you did something that you were not proud of?
 9. Has the message helped you to make any type of change while in prison?
- 2) Did you receive any verbal memorable message from any women who are incarcerated?
1. What is that message word for word?
 2. Without revealing the name of the person, what is your relationship with the person you passed the message on to?
 3. When were you told the message?
 4. Why were you told the message?
 5. Have you passed the message on to anyone?
Probe: If yes, without revealing the name of the person, who have you passed the message on to?
Probe: If yes, why have you passed the message on?
 6. Has the message come to mind when you did something that you were proud of?
 7. Has message come to mind when you avoided doing something that you would later regret?
 8. Has the message come to mind when you did something that you were not proud of?
 9. Has the message helped you to make any type of change while in prison?
- 3) Did you receive any verbal memorable message from any correctional officers?
1. What is that message word for word?
 2. Without revealing the name of the person, what is your relationship with the person you passed the message on to? Male or female?
 3. When were you told the message?
 4. Why were you told the message?
 5. Have you passed the message on to anyone?
Probe: If yes, without revealing the name of the person, who have you passed the message on to?
Probe: If yes, why have you passed the message on?
 6. Has the message come to mind when you did something that you were proud of?
 7. Has message come to mind when you avoided doing something that you would later regret?
 8. Has the message come to mind when you did something that you were not proud of?
 9. Has the message helped you to make any type of change while in prison?

Part 3: Relationships and Doing Time

Next I am going to ask you some questions about your current relationships with people in prison including officers and other women who are incarcerated and how you spend your free time. Please refrain from using names. If names are used, they will be deleted from the recording.

1. Can you tell me about a positive relationship that you have in prison?
 - Probe: Without revealing the name of the person, who is the relationship with? What is their position in prison?
 - Probe: Why is it positive/What makes it positive?
 - Probe: How was the relationship developed?
 - Probe: How has the relationship changed over the course of your sentence?
 - Probe: Do you have other relationships that are similar to the one you just described?
 - Probe: If yes, approximately how many? Are they with the same group (just staff, just other incarcerated women, just guards) of people?
 - Probe: Can you tell me about another positive relationship? (someone different)
 - Probe: **If no positive relationships**, what does a positive relationship consist of? How would you describe a positive relationship in prison?
 - Probe: **If no positive relationships**, why do think relationships are not positive in prison?

2. Can you tell me about a negative relationship that you have in prison?
 - Probe: Without revealing the name of the person, who is the relationship with? What is their position in prison?
 - Probe: Why is it negative/What makes it negative?
 - Probe: How was the relationship developed?
 - Probe: How has the relationship changed over the course of your sentence?
 - Probe: Do you have other relationships that are similar to the one you just described?
 - Probe: If yes, approximately how many? Are they with the same group (just staff, just other incarcerated women, just guards) of people?
 - Probe: Can you tell me about another negative relationship? (someone different)
 - Probe: **If no negative relationships**, what does a negative relationship consist of? How would you describe a negative relationship in prison?
 - Probe: **If no negative relationships**, why do think relationships are not negative in prison?

3. Currently, how do you spend your free time?
 - Probe: Can you explain why?
 - Probe: Has the way that you've spent your free time in prison changed since you first entered?
 - Probe: If served a past term in prison, has the way you spend your free time changed from the first term in prison to the most recent?

Appendix C: Survey

<i>Please check your level of agreement with each of the following statements.</i>		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
DT00	Currently, I don't care to associate with the kinds of women who are in this institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DT01	Currently, I spend most of my free time in the yard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DT02	Currently, I spend most of my free time in my housing unit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DT03	Currently, I spend most of my free time reading, writing, listening to music, or watching T.V.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DT04	Currently, I spend most of my free time with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DT05	Currently, I spend most of my free time sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DT06	In warmer weather, I spend most of my free time in the yard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DT07	In warmer weather, I spend most of my free time in the housing unit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DT08	In warmer weather, I spend most of my free time reading, writing, listening to music, or watching T.V.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DT09	In warmer weather, I spend most of my free time sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Currently, when you are not locked in, do you spend your free time:

Mostly with one group of inmates	With one or two inmates
With many different inmates but no one group	Mostly alone

Please check your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
SW01	I receive good advice from other incarcerated women	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SW02	Other incarcerated women listen to my problems	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SW03	Other incarcerated women increase my self-esteem	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SW04	Other incarcerated women treat me with respect	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SW05	Other incarcerated women keep me out of trouble	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SG01	I receive good advice from the officers	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SG02	The officers listen to my problems	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SG03	The officers increase my self-esteem	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SG04	The officers treat me with respect	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
SG05	The officers keep me out of trouble	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Appendix D: Participants

Table 8. Comprehensive list of participants (n=60)

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Sentence Length (months)	Time Served (months)	Security Level	Offense Category	Prison Prior
Laura	33	White	48	16	Medium	Violent	Yes
Jessica	25	White	24	13	Medium	Property	No
Jenny	25	White	180	42	Medium	Violent	No
Tonya	25	Black	120	96	Medium	Violent	No
Tina	40	Black	33	24	Medium	Violent	Yes
Jada	23	Black	12	4	Medium	Property	No
Sandra	28	Black	228	21	Close	Violent	No
Karen	52	White	37	32	Minimum	Property	Yes
Amy	36	White	36	26	Minimum	Drugs	No
Debra	28	White	36	18	Medium	Property	No
Linda	28	White	72	68	Minimum	Violent	No
Meghan	22	White	300	18	Close	Violent	No
Vanessa	40	White	8	8	Medium	Property	Yes
Tammy	32	Black	276	160	Minimum	Violent	No
Felicia	30	White	24	18	Minimum	Property	No
Ashley	23	White	36	2	Medium	Violent	No
Nicole	32	White	59	17	Minimum	Property	No
Sonja	27	White	59	18	Medium	Property	No
Rosie	29	Hispanic	60	48	Minimum	Drugs	No
Tori	41	White	11	6	Medium	Property	No
Amanda	33	White	36	12	Close	Violent	Yes
Rosalyn	44	Black	24	18	Medium	Violent	No
Christy	19	White	36	12	Medium	Property	No
Kyly	21	Black	60	14	Medium	Violent	No
Jean	45	White	24	5	Medium	Drugs	Yes
Latasha	31	Black	36	18	Close	Violent	No
Lori	44	White	48	24	Minimum	Violent	Yes
Sheree	29	Black	24	6	Close	Violent	Yes
Anna	23	White	36	36	Minimum	Drugs	Yes
Maria	47	Black	10	120	Medium	Violent	No
Samantha	27	White	93	24	Medium	Property	No
Shelly	30	White	24	18	Medium	Drugs	Yes
Shawanda	34	Black	48	24	Medium	Property	Yes
Molly	28	White	120	48	Medium	Violent	No
Porsha	27	Hispanic	60	54	Minimum	Drugs	No
Faith	26	Black	59	36	Close	Violent	Yes
Heather	49	White	120	84	Minimum	Violent	No

Table 8 (cont'd)

Vicki	32	White	60	48	Minimum	Property	No
Eden	43	White	30	27	Minimum	Property	Yes
Dana	28	White	59	30	Minimum	Drugs	Yes
Kelly	27	White	24	12	Medium	Violent	Yes
Terry	41	White	12	6	Close	Property	Yes
Nadine	48	Black	24	12	Medium	Property	Yes
Martina	41	White	300	9	Close	Violent	No
Claire	21	White	36	24	Minimum	Drugs	No
Iris	69	Black	108	72	Medium	Violent	No
Deana	23	White	36	30	Close	Drugs	No
Gretchen	28	White	48	13	Close	Property	No
Chloe	22	Black	48	36	Medium	Violent	No
Celina	24	Black	30	28	Medium	Violent	No
Rebecca	35	White	48	42	Minimum	Property	Yes
Alison	42	White	48	36	Minimum	Violent	No
Lisa	31	White	48	39	Minimum	Violent	No
Janet	29	Black	216	120	Medium	Violent	No
Tye	28	Black	72	66	Minimum	Violent	No
Betty	56	White	204	48	Minimum	Violent	Yes
Andrea	33	White	59	36	Minimum	Violent	No
Rita	25	Black	96	78	Medium	Violent	Yes
Courtney	21	White	24	17	Medium	Violent	No
Kira	39	Black	180	162	Minimum	Violent	Yes

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