

Before the Opening Doors 3 day program I was my father's "angry" son, bitter at my mother for being in prison for what seemed my whole life. Arriving to prison was the perfect place for me because it was fueled by people angrier and more bitter than I.

My personal transformation came when I was taught "I-statements." That is when we all grabbed a picture and said how it made us feel. That was the first round, the second round we told why we felt that way. For a long time I thought men weren't suppose to cry. Through I-statement exercises in the 3 day program I understand now that my feelings are important. Not only that, but letting people know how we feel is just as important as well. My personal motto was to punch now and suffer the consequences later; that was how I was taught to "deal" with my feelings and if I didn't live by that code I was soft! I would find out through I-statements that telling people how we feel hurts worse than a punch any day. I-statements helped me think outside of the box. I know now that men don't hide their feelings. The program also taught me how to transform power, instead of just getting angry. When I'm ready to fight now I look for something good or of God in people and I never go wrong. Looking for bad only causes bad situations and bad reactions. All in all, the Opening Doors 3 day program taught me how to resolve my conflicts with positive reactions.

When I begin to let people know how I feel without placing blame, then I will begin to heal my past. I said at the beginning I was my father's "angry" son and bitter at my mother. No more; I used I-statements with both my parents and we're on better terms. I state who I am now, I-statements saved me from many angry days. I first thank God for the changing of my life and then thank Opening Doors for showing me my thinking. I never gave myself credit for being a thinker, but look at me now, I'm a college graduate.