



Speaker Profile
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DIVINE LIPSCOMB

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CORRECTIVE GENTLEMEN

"I am a native New Yorker. Born, bred, fed," says Divine Lipscomb. Recalling his childhood in Brooklyn, he sees a kid "buried in trauma," struggling with addiction, and who was a "prime candidate" for gang membership. By age 16, he had two felony arrests for armed robbery and was sentenced to four years in state prison -- 15 months of which he spent in solitary confinement. Not surprisingly, reentry into society was difficult: "You come home the same age you were when you went in. So, mentally I was 16 when I came home -- in a grown man's body."

After his release, despite setbacks and relapses, he found success as an entrepreneur. The self-sufficiency and freedom he felt inspired his vision for Corrective Gentlemen, Divine's non-profit organization. Its mission is to provide support and mentoring for returned citizens, a term Divine prefers to "former inmate." He also returned to school. At Penn State, Divine is a rehabilitation and human services major and works as the special projects coordinator for PSU's Restorative Justice Initiative. In addition, he volunteers at the local drop-in shelter to support returning citizens and is active in organizations that allow his experience to lend a voice to the unheard. In 2020, his academic achievements and advocacy were honored: Divine was awarded PSU's 2020 "Outstanding Adult Learners Award" and the Rock Ethics Institute's 2020 "Stand Up Award".



Today, Divine wears many hats: student, husband, father, advocate, entrepreneur, public speaker, board member, volunteer, teacher, executive director, and returned citizen. He has his eye on law school and hopes to one day sit in public office.

Topics of Discussion

Restorative Justice
Pre-arrest diversion
Issues addressing recidivism