

I can almost see the light at the end of the tunnel with my son, Cameron.

On Nov. 16, he can mail his letters to apply for judicial release. On that day, he will have marked 1,825 days in prison.

Most times it seems like a lifetime and others, not so much. To him, I'm sure the former applies. There were times when none of us were sure we'd make it. Long once-a-month trips to London marked my calendar, some for naught as we were turned away for one newly-instituted rule or another. We came to know the corrections officers and they us. At one time, this is not something I would have imagined I could say.

As I have related to you many times before, we were never alone in the waiting room prior to visits and certainly not in the visiting area. There are approximately 51,000 prison inmates in Ohio. To get a perspective, that's nearly eight times the population of Delphos. That doesn't include those in jail, either.

I can almost breath a sigh of relief to have my son out of a situation that is a mine field. He has had his head on a swivel for five long years.

A conversation with him this week revealed how much apprehension he has about the coming events. He has been told what to do and when to do it every day. He shared with me that he wonders if when he is out he will automatically stand at 4 p.m. for head count. He said he can tell what time of day it is without looking at a clock because his life has been so regimented. Cameron needed a little regiment. He would agree.

It's almost time for Cameron to rejoin society, hopefully equipped with better decision-making skills and a lot more forethought before making them.

I do wonder how this will miraculously come about when he really hasn't had to make many decisions for those 1,825 days. But then I realize he had made a lot of decisions.

He decided to use his time making himself a better person. He has taken class after class to figure out where he went wrong and how to avoid those pitfalls again.

He has taken advantage of education opportunities and countless therapy sessions.

He has looked inside to see who he was, who he is and who he wants to be.

It almost makes me relax a little. Almost.

I have a feeling we still have a long way to go. It will be an even longer time — once he is out — before I stop cringing when I hear the phone ring. I will never forget that night he called from jail and told me what had happened. That is almost the worst phone call a parent can get. You know what the other one is.

I got a reminder of that after writing a column about Cameron perhaps including a little boo-hooing and such. It came from a mother who will never get another phone call from her son. He was killed in a motorcycle accident. Thank you again, kind lady, for reminding me that all is not lost and there are worse things than having a child in prison.

We are almost to a new stepping stone, Cameron, my mother and I. Almost.

You know, my father had a saying; a Rogerism if you will: Almost only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades.