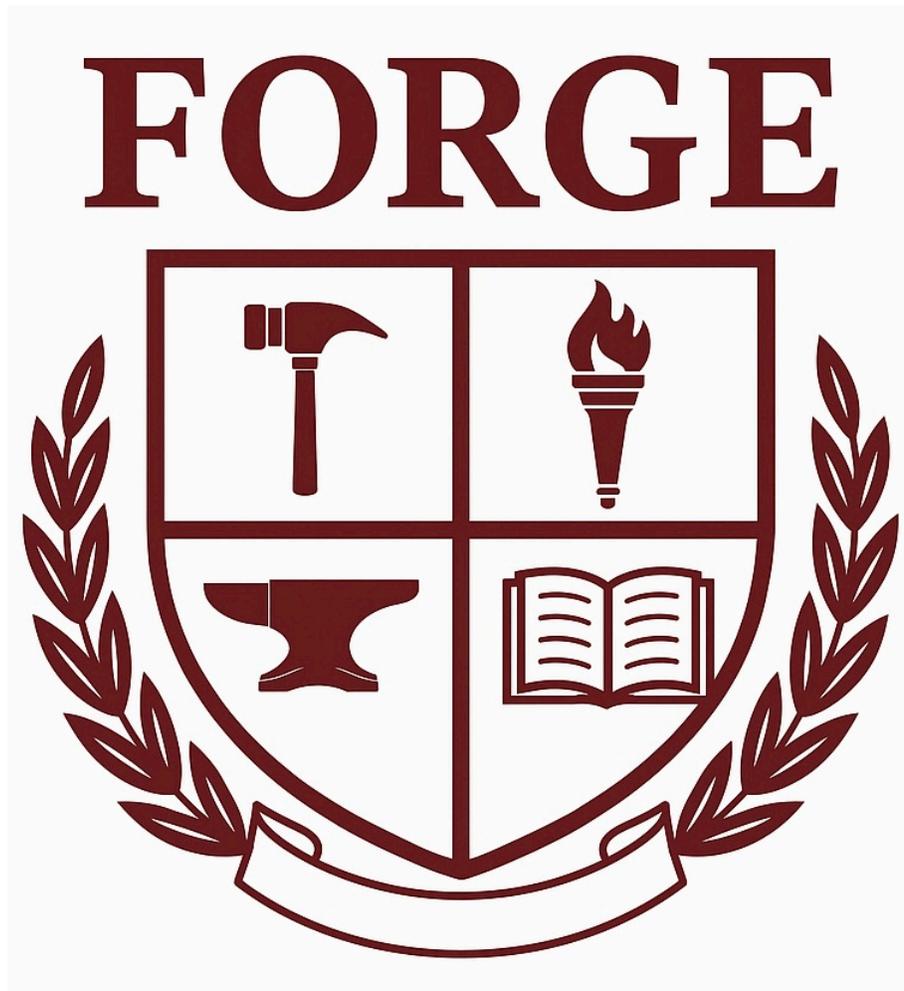


# FORGE Handbook

*Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth & Empowerment*



FORGE's mission is to build mentors who lead by example, create conflict-free dorms, and live out the principle of *Service Over Self* — helping others grow, strengthening our communities, and turning time served into time that serves others.

*Leadership begins when we stop living only for ourselves and start building others.*

**Elevator Speech (You need to memorize this.)**

**FORGE — Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth & Empowerment**

**We're building a new prison experience — where men lead by example, support one another, and prepare to make a positive impact — both inside these walls and beyond them.**

**Our goal is simple: to turn time served into time that serves others.**

**Our Purpose:**

**To build mentors who create a culture of peace, responsibility, and service — modeling the change we want to see in every community.**

## Leadership Through Service

In FORGE, leadership begins with service. A true leader practices *Service Over Self* — putting the needs of others and the community before personal convenience, comfort, or recognition.

Leadership in FORGE is not about power or position; it's about responsibility. It's the choice to act in ways that make the dorm safer, the men stronger, and the community better.

### Principles of Leadership Through Service

#### 1. Be the Example

People follow what they see more than what they hear. Keep your space clean, your word honest, and your actions consistent. Every time you choose respect over reaction, you teach others how to lead.

#### 2. Serve First

Ask yourself daily, "*Who can I help today?*" Help someone study, settle a conflict, or lift their mindset. A small act of service creates a ripple that strengthens the entire dorm.

#### 3. Protect the Culture

Step in early when you see disrespect, gossip, or potential conflict. Leadership means guarding the peace and setting the tone for everyone around you.

#### 4. Reject Weapons and Violence

Weapons will never be tolerated in a FORGE dorm. They destroy trust, safety, and everything this program stands for. Anyone found with a weapon will be removed from the program immediately. True strength is shown through control — not intimidation.

#### 5. Teach What You Know

Mentors share what they've learned — not to boast, but to build. When you teach, you grow. When you help another man grow, you lead.

*Real leaders don't rise above others — they lift others with them.*

*Service Over Self is the foundation of peace, trust, and transformation.*

*Leadership begins when we stop living only for ourselves and start building others.*

## Attitude & Mindset: The Foundation of Reentry

Reentry doesn't start with a gate — it starts in the mind. A man's attitude shapes every outcome: his choices, his peace, and his future. In FORGE, we teach that how you think determines how you live.

### The Power of Attitude

- **Attitude is everything.**

It's the difference between reacting and responding, between giving up and growing. A positive attitude can turn a bad day into a lesson, and a setback into a step forward.

- **"Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude."** — Zig Ziglar

You don't have to control everything around you — only your response to it.

- **Choose gratitude over bitterness.**

Gratitude builds strength. When you focus on what you can control and appreciate, you create peace that no one can take away.

- **Stay solution-minded.**

Don't ask, "Why me?" — ask, "What can I learn from this?" Leaders and mentors don't look for excuses — they look for opportunities.

### Building a Winning Mindset

#### 1. Focus on Growth

Growth is a daily decision. Read, reflect, and learn something new each day. Progress doesn't happen all at once — it happens one small victory at a time.

#### 2. Take Ownership

Freedom begins with responsibility. Own your actions, your words, and your energy. No one can change your life for you — but others will follow your example when you lead yourself.

#### 3. Live on Purpose

Every day in FORGE has a purpose: to learn, to serve, to grow. Use your time to make yourself and your dorm stronger. When your life has purpose, every minute counts.

#### 4. Think Forward

Picture the man you want to be — disciplined, calm, respected. Ask daily, "Am I acting like that man today?"

What you rehearse in here becomes who you are out there.

*A positive attitude turns obstacles into lessons and pain into progress.  
Change your attitude — change your life.  
Reentry starts long before release; it begins when you start thinking free.*

*Leadership begins when we stop living only for ourselves and start building others.*

## Conflict Resolution

**Goal:** Lower heat quickly, solve the real problem, and leave everyone's dignity intact.

### Steps to Resolve Conflict

#### 1. Pause & Posture

Shoulders down, hands visible, voice calm. Take two full 4-in/4-out breaths before responding.

#### 2. Name the Heat

Say what you see: "I can tell you're frustrated. I want to understand."

#### 3. Facts > Stories

Each person shares what happened — no insults, no past cases, no blame. Keep it to 60 seconds each.

#### 4. Needs & Options

Identify the real need (respect, safety, fairness, property). Brainstorm 2–3 workable options that meet those needs.

#### 5. Agreement & Check-Back

Confirm who will do what, and by when. "We'll check in tomorrow to make sure this stuck."

### Red Lines

- No threats.
- No weapons talk.
- No gang language or authorization claims.

### Weapons will not be tolerated.

Anyone found with a weapon will be immediately removed from the FORGE program.

### Quick Scripts

- "I'm here to help you win, not to win against you."
- "Let's cool for ten. I'll find you at the tables."
- "I'll listen to you fully; please give the same back."

*The goal isn't to win the argument — it's to protect the peace.*

*Leadership begins when we stop living only for ourselves and start building others.*

## Dorm Standards & Rules

The dorm is our shared environment — a space built on respect, safety, and accountability. Every person's actions affect everyone else. When we protect this space, we protect each other.

### Respect

- Speak to others with calmness and dignity.
- No shouting, slurs, gossip, or threats.
- Remember: your attitude sets the tone for the dorm.

### Clean & Quiet

- Keep your area and shared spaces clean and organized.
- Honor quiet hours. Be respectful of those who are studying, sleeping, or reflecting.
- Keep TVs, music, and conversations at a reasonable volume, especially after 10 p.m.

### Property

- Ask before touching or borrowing anything that isn't yours.
- Respect both personal property and shared resources.
- Taking or damaging someone else's property breaks trust and will not be tolerated.

### Weapons & Safety

- **Weapons are not tolerated in FORGE dorms.**
- Any person caught with a weapon of any kind will be removed from the program.
- Violence and intimidation have no place here. True strength is shown through restraint, respect, and leadership.

## **Mediation First**

- When conflict arises, bring it to a mentor before it becomes harm.
- We solve problems with communication — not confrontation.
- If a disagreement starts to escalate, take a step back, breathe, and ask for help.

## **Class & Program Requirements**

- Attend every class or meeting you are scheduled for.
- Be on time. (No sign-ins after five minutes.)
- Stay engaged — every class is an opportunity to grow.
- Leave the classroom clean and ready for the next group.

*Peace is built by discipline.*

*Respect is built by consistency.*

*Safety is built by trust.*

## FORGE Code of Conduct

The **FORGE Code of Conduct** defines the standard of behavior expected from every participant and mentor. It's built on respect, responsibility, and growth. Each action in the dorm either strengthens or weakens the community — every choice matters.

### 1. Integrity & Accountability

- Always do the right thing, even when no one is watching.
- Keep your word — reliability builds trust.
- Admit mistakes quickly, make them right, and move forward.
- Never deceive, manipulate, or take advantage of others.
- Integrity means doing what's right, not what's easy.

*Accountability is the foundation of leadership.*

### 2. Leadership & Service

- Lead through service, not control.
- Offer help before being asked. Cooperation strengthens the community.
- Recognize the value in every person, regardless of background or status.
- Be the example others can follow — your attitude sets the tone.
- Share knowledge freely and lift others up.

*Leadership is service in motion.*

### 3. Learning & Growth

- Approach challenges as opportunities, not obstacles.
- Accept feedback with humility; use it to improve.
- Replace complaints with solutions — negativity stops progress.
- Stay engaged in personal growth, education, and self-discipline.
- Encourage others to pursue learning and celebrate their progress.

*Growth begins the moment we stop making excuses.*

*Leadership begins when we stop living only for ourselves and start building others.*

#### 4. Peace & Safety

- Violence, threats, bullying, and intimidation have no place in FORGE.
- De-escalate tension through communication, not confrontation.
- **Weapons will not be tolerated.** Anyone caught with a weapon will be removed from the program.
- No gang language, symbols, or signals inside the dorm.
- Protect each other's safety and peace of mind — everyone deserves to feel secure.

*Peace is the strength to stay calm when others can't.*

#### 5. Community & Conduct

- Participate in dorm activities, meetings, and chores — community takes effort.
- Speak to staff and peers with professionalism and respect.
- Protect the dorm's reputation by maintaining order and cleanliness.
- Never exploit others in any form.
- Use every privilege and resource responsibly.

*Strong communities are built by men who show up and serve.*

#### 6. Mindset & Mission

- Every day is an opportunity to practice freedom, discipline, and change.
- Live today like the man you want to be tomorrow.
- Forgive quickly — grudges poison growth.
- Keep living the principles of FORGE: **Opportunity, Growth, Empowerment.**
- Remember that your transformation will inspire others long after you're gone.

*Your mission is bigger than yourself — live it daily.*

*Leadership begins when we stop living only for ourselves and start building others.*

## Participant Commitment & Signature

By joining FORGE, I accept both the privilege and the responsibility of being part of a brotherhood built on discipline, peace, and service. I understand that my actions, words, and attitude directly shape the safety, growth, and success of this dorm.

I commit to:

- Lead by example in every circumstance.
- Respect every person as I wish to be respected.
- Keep this dorm safe — free from weapons, violence, and fear.
- Practice *Service Over Self* by helping others grow.
- Live by the principles of **Opportunity, Growth, and Empowerment.**

I understand that being part of FORGE is more than a program — it's a way of life. My commitment is to live with integrity, serve with humility, and mentor with purpose.

*I will turn time served into time that serves others.*

## Acknowledgment

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor / Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The FORGE Way

*FORGE is more than a name — it's a process.* Just as metal is refined by fire, character is shaped by struggle, and purpose is strengthened by service. Every act of patience, every moment of restraint, and every choice to help someone else builds who you are becoming.

Leadership is not granted — it's forged. And in that process, we discover that service isn't sacrifice — it's freedom.

*Leadership begins when we stop living only for ourselves and start building others.*