Corey Andrew Powell ([00:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2.92)):

Hello everyone. I am Corey Andrew Powell, and I am joined today by Rob Scheer. Rob is the father of five children, all of whom he and his husband, Reese adopted from foster care. So their children came to their forever home. As it's called carrying what few possessions they had in a black trash bag. And Rob, who is also a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy and founder of Comfort Cases decided that that was unacceptable and created another system in which these kids could transport their belongings with more dignity. And it's such an honor for me to welcome you here today. So Rob, welcome to Motivational Mondays.

Rob Scheer ([00:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=38.82)):

Oh Corey. Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited and there's nothing that I enjoy more than a good conversation where we can educate our community about how it is our social responsibility to take care of children who enter the foster care system.

Corey Andrew Powell ([00:55](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=55.28)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative> absolutely. And when Christine, my associate producer brought you up as a potential guest and she told me your platform. I was so instantly interested in bringing you on because in my recent years, maybe the past couple years, I've had conversations with children who are now adults, actually, who were children in the foster care system. And so much of what I heard was disturbing quite honestly. And I wondered if in many cases, well, in cases there were situations where some kids were actually put into a worse situation than when they were removed from their own home. And so that is clearly counterproductive. So anyway, there was so much interesting, um, you know, different facets about this story. But to begin with your background is you were obviously you were in the foster

Rob Scheer ([01:43](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=103.33)):

System. Yeah, I did. I was actually the youngest of 10 children and my mother had been married six times. We lived in and out of every shelter in Maryland, Virginia and DC. I don't ever remember a picture hung on the wall. I don't remember a Christmas tree and I sure do not remember her ever saying, I love you, but I always remember the monster that she would allow into our home, which was my father, you know, coming from such an abusive household where I'm 55 years old. And every day I am reminded of the abuse by the scars on my legs, from the cigarettes that my father would put out on us children. And that's just the way my life was. And that's what I thought family was supposed to be. And then I turned 12 and when I turned 12, my parents passed away and it was one of the greatest gifts that it could ever been given to me, Corey, because for me, I had already known about foster care.

Rob Scheer ([02:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=158.36)):

I had siblings that had already gone into the system because of, you know, the fact of truancy or, you know, my, my bio, my family couldn't feed them. And you know, and so I knew that foster care, what I thought as a young boy that it was a savior. Well little did I know that as I walked up that house with my trash bag, that I would walk into a home that, you know, I thought loved me. I remember that I decided at the age of 12 that I wasn't gonna be a statistic that I wasn't gonna let the trash bag define me. And I went to school every single day. And in the fall of 1984, I turned 18 years old. I couldn't believe it. I had actually made it. I had actually made something of myself, you know, by that point, my brothers and sisters had already fallen to the wayside.

Rob Scheer ([03:28](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=208.2)):

There was already teenage pregnancy. There was drug addiction. There was incarceration, there was suicide. So I had seen the gambit with my, my siblings, but for me, I was finally gonna graduate high school, little did I know Corey that when I walked home from school in that fall day and walked into the front door of the place that I thought was my home there it sat. Something that I had not seen in years that I had not even thought about. My trash bag. And it was full of my belongings. You know, I remember looking at my foster parents who I actually called mom and dad. And I said, what is this? And they said, it's your stuff? And I said, why? And they said, because you can't live here any longer. I said, what do you mean? And they said, you're 18 years old and we're no longer gonna get a check from the state. So since we're not gonna get a check, you can't live here. And I literally became homeless.

Corey Andrew Powell ([04:24](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=264.02)):

Wow. So that component right there, we have to elaborate on because I don't think people do know about that part of the foster care system. I think the term is called aged out, right? When you get, when you're, when you age out of the system, so to speak and you turn 18, I've never heard that it could be that abrupt, that abrupt. When you turn 18, the actual family that you may have been with for a few years, they just turn it off because there's a check associated with taking care of these children. There's so it's a financial opportunity for a lot of families.

Rob Scheer ([04:53](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=293.779)):

A total financial opportunity. You know, the fact is, is that this industry, as we call foster care is no more than an industry that makes money on the backs of children. Okay? Let's, let's make sure that we understand the foster care system is not broken. Corey, the foster care system is shattered. It is absolutely shattered. And you know, as you said, in the beginning, children are taken from homes and understanding that 64% of children who enter the foster care system enter because of the word neglect, okay? The word neglect, understand that that word is defined differently in every state and every county. But I want to tell you the definition and neglect, it's called poverty. It's called poverty. The fact is, is that as a community, our forefathers built it for one reason to take care of each other. When if someone falls, we need to be there to lift them up.

Rob Scheer ([05:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=345.79)):

We do not yank their children away from them because they're not able to provide food on the table because we don't pay a living wage. We take their children. I understand that children come into the system from abuse. I was one of those kids. Two of my five children came into the system because of severe abuse that I get. But what I don't understand is when a child turns 18, 19, some states it's 20, and we have put them in a system because of a choice someone else made. Then all of a sudden we turn our backs on them. We come in as these saviors when we put them in the system, but then when it's time to leave the system, we say not a word. And that's what happened to me. You know, every day I would go to school every day I would, um, hide my trash bag behind the, the bushes.

Rob Scheer ([06:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=395.5)):

I would walk in the school. I hope kids wouldn't make fun of me and remind me of the holes in my shoes. Cause I knew they were there. Cause I felt the water coming through them. I hope that kids wouldn't remind me of my stench because I can tell you, I don't remember the last time I had showered in some months or the fact that I had not brushed my teeth in my long scraggly hair. And I used to wait till all the kids left the cafeteria and I would dig through the trash and gather as much food as I could, because I didn't know if I would eat that night. And then I remember in the, in the spring of 1985, I had finally made it. I made it, I was a kid that was getting ready to graduate and you've gotta understand. Only 54% of kids in foster care actually graduate from high school.

Rob Scheer ([07:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=438.38)):

And I was making it, you know, I would sit in Mrs. Brown-Zingers class and I watched the guidance counselor come in and she would take children out of the classroom to talk about their future. I would sit there and then I could hear in my head screaming at them. Look at me, look at me because the fact is is that if you looked at me, you have to acknowledge, you failed me. You failed me, but no one ever looked at me. And then June, 1985, they lined us all up, put caps and gowns on us. People in the auditorium were cheering and capping and screaming. And then all of a sudden they called my name. Exactly silence, no one clapped.

Corey Andrew Powell ([08:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=480.86)):

Wow,

Rob Scheer ([08:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=481.7)):

No one cheered, no one cared. The trash bag had done exactly what my community wanted it to do. It made me feel disposable, invisible that I didn't matter. You know, my baby girl, she's 18 tomorrow. And she graduated from high school last week. And I remember standing in that auditorium and standing up with my husband and my kids and my in-laws and I get chills right now because I could not have screamed loud enough. I'm proud of you.

Corey Andrew Powell ([08:36](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=516.58)):

That's so important.

Rob Scheer ([08:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=518.29)):

Just if someone would've said I'm proud of you, but they didn't.

Corey Andrew Powell ([08:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=524.63)):

Wow. Okay. So that's so much there so much emotive response there, you know, it's, it's sad and it hopeless and it feels like society, as we mentioned is to blame because they're not paying attention or working to create a better system. And in many ways you've also tapped into the irony that, you know, quote unquote, the system not being broken. Well, maybe the system is actually working the way someone designed it to work, which was like a, almost like a for-profit industry. And so, yeah, there's some major reforms that have to happen. And it's so crazy that there's nothing to support a foster. Well, not, I don't wanna say nothing, but I'm sure that resources are limited to prepare and support an 18 year old person who's aging out of the foster care system. I mean, what kind of programs are there?

Rob Scheer ([09:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=579.24)):

You have to nail on the head. Let me tell you something. First of all, we have to realize and make an, we have to understand as a community and by the way, your community is not your zip code, Corey, your community is our human race. And we must understand that the 438,000 children who sit in the United States foster care system are in the system because of a choice. Someone else made a choice, someone else made. So all of a sudden we stick them in this shattered system. Some of them go to homes that are worse in the homes that we took them from. Mm-hmm <affirmative> okay. Then they are moved around from house to house, to house, to house, from school, to school, to school, to school, trauma, trauma, trauma, trauma. And then all of a sudden they turn 16, 17, and then we want to come to them and say, Hey, let's talk about what we're gonna do when you turn 18, by the way, I'm so pissed off at you.

Rob Scheer ([10:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=627.83)):

By that point, I don't even want you to talk to me. You know, I don't want you to speak to me. I want away from you. I want to get as far away as I can, because every time that a social worker walks into a door, it triggers a child in the system because we must prepare these children from the day they walk in of where are they going to be when they turn 18. And let me tell you where they should be. We as a society need to do two things in the system. Number one, financially, place these children in a better position than when they arrived in the system. And if you can give a foster parent a stipend every single month, and by the way, I live in a state where they pay the highest amount, almost a thousand dollars a kid a month with no questions asked why can't we take some of that money and put it in an interest bearing savings account, save that money up for that child.

Rob Scheer ([11:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=682.13)):

So they have a net, you know, my son arrived at the age of 18 in 2019. He'd been in foster care. Most of his life in and out, in and out, my husband and I never thought we'd have a fifth child, but when he arrived, he arrived literally with a trash bag and with no future. You know, the fact that I look at my son now, who is by the way, just finished his sophomore year of college and getting ready to study abroad for a year. You know, I look at the fact that where would my son be if my husband and I had not stepped up, we would've, he would've been like the 30,000 children that we see in the United States that age out every single year and 70% listen to that number. Corey, 70% of 30,000 children every year become homeless. Just like I was let that sink in.

Corey Andrew Powell ([12:14](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=734.04)):

Yeah, that is staggering. And I think what's important about this story is when you're observant and also a person who's experienced something specific, you can be the catalyst for change. And so the, the moment for that, let's talk about the trash bag what's associated with that trash bag is we said a lack of dignity. You're, you're, you're transporting your stuff in like where we a bag that we dispose of our trash in. And so you're already creating like the system of lack of confidence, feeling insecure, all those things that associate with that. And then of course, by the time they're 18, we've created a damaged human being at that point. And so, and now no one knows what to do with them, but what's great about what you're doing. It's part of your story. I believe you were like 12 years old when you first entered the system. Yes. And you had that trash bag. And then the story goes that years later, as an adoptive parent, the child that came to stay with you also arrived with the trash bag and that's when you were like, okay, let's do something here. Tell me about how that happened.

Rob Scheer ([13:16](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=796.11)):

Yeah. The fact is I graduated from high school. I decided to call my community the bluff and I made something on myself. I joined the United States Navy. I became a very successful businessman and I never looked back 18 years ago. I met the most amazing human in the entire world. And that is my husband and my husband Reese was the one. And by the way, his parents have been married 55 years. He's got his masters. I don't even know the difference between there or there and there he's so well educated, but he was the one 13 years ago, as we were sitting in our brownstone in DC and talking about the fact that it was time for us to be parents, that he was the one who said, why are we not adopting outta foster care? And I said, because I told you, we would never talk about that.

Rob Scheer ([14:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=842.96)):

He said, you know what, Rob, maybe that's the problem that you have is that you've been so worried about how everybody else was gonna judge you. That you've never told anybody your story. He had met some of my siblings already. He knew where I'd come from. He knew the trauma that I had to endured. And he said, maybe if we just change a child's life, just one child, you know, in the system, maybe you will feel like your legacy is there. And you know, he's so smart. And I looked at him and as I tear rolled down my eye, I said, I'm sorry. And he said, for what I said, I failed. I failed my community, my community of children who truly needed to hear a voice. And so we went to DC child and family services told them we wanted to adopt. And of course they said, you want a baby?

Rob Scheer ([14:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=886.77)):

And I said, of course we want a baby <laugh> they said, so does everybody else really? That's like the preferred thing. Yeah, exactly. So they said, you know what, maybe you should try to foster and that could lead to adoption. And I said, okay, let's do it. And lo and behold, literally six months later, Corey, two of the most amazing humans walked up to my front door step. And that was my daughter Amaya at the age of four with her little brother Mackay, who was two. And the saddest part was both of them had a trash bag. And I remember looking at the social worker and said, you are kidding me. And she said, what? I said, it has been over 40 years that I have been out of that system. And you were telling me that children still carry trash bags. And the social worker actually said to me, what else should they carry?

Rob Scheer ([15:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=933.88)):

And I said, how about some dignity? You know, little would I know that three months later, two more children would arrive my sweet baby Grayson and his little brother Tristan, who was two in six months. And again, they had trash bags, you know, that weighed so heavy on my heart. But at this point, my husband and I were trying to be parents to four kids, you know, living in the inner city. And so 10 years ago, as I was sitting behind my desk. And by the way, I'm a banker by trade 28 years as a banker, I've been an executive for the last 15 years and I'd companies all over the country. And as I would sit behind my desk, and by the way, by that point, my kids were privileged. They would a private schools, word, designer, clothes, travel the world. I didn't think about the word foster and my husband walked into my office and he said, we've gotta plan the toy drive.

Rob Scheer ([16:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=986.85)):

See Corey, we are known in the DC area for these huge toy drives that the Scheers would do. And we would collect thousands of toys in front of Ben's Chili Bowl. Local radio stations would come local celebrities, politicians. And this one particular year, I said, I don't wanna do it. And he said, what do you mean? And I said, what are we teaching our children? We're teaching our kids that you buy that needy kid a toy, and you patch yourself on the back. And everybody feels good. I said, how are we truly impacting children in the system? And he said to me, what do you want to do? And I literally pulled out a trash bag outta my desk, which I have one here. I never allowed to be far from me because I never wanna forget where I came from. And I laid it on the desk.

Rob Scheer ([17:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1031.63)):

And I said, I wanna eliminate trash bags in DC foster care system. He literally looked at me and said, you're batshit crazy. I said, I know that's why you married me. I said, we can do this. So we gathered members of our church and my senior staff, some local politicians. And I told my story, the story that I just shared with you, people were shocked tears in the room. And then I told them about what a child deserves to have a community that shows them love and shows them love by giving them something of their own, a brand new pair of pajamas, their own lotion, shampoo, conditioner, their bar, soap, their own toothbrush and toothpaste. Every child deserves an activity. They all deserve a book because if you educate a child's mind, you actually educate your future. I wanted every child to get a stuffy.

Rob Scheer ([18:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1084.78)):

And then finally my son Grayson, he was five years old at the time when we packed our first case, he said, daddy, everybody needs a blanky. I said a blanky. I said, Grayson, you know, these kids are not cold. He said, I know daddy, but every time they wrap themselves up in their blanky, they know we love them. See, Corey, that's what we all want. We wanna be loved. We wanna know that we're not disposable. We're not invisible. And with that, we packed a comfort case and another and another. And my friend, I'm here to tell you, 10 years later, we have packed and delivered over 175,000 cases. We have delivered them to all 50 states, DC and Puerto Rico. And by the way, during the height of the pandemic, when we all woke up and didn't know what was going on, children in foster care, they lived through that every day, every day, as a pandemic for them, my husband and I, we were gathering our team and opening up an office in the United Kingdom where over 84,000 children are in foster care there. And by the way, they carry trash bags just like here.

Corey Andrew Powell ([19:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1158.359)):

Hmm. You know, when you talk about the fact that the system hadn't changed, <laugh> in all that time. It's so fascinating because it's so blatant. It's not like something that was innocuous or not really visible. I mean, it's a huge bag. And it's amazing that at some point someone else that just didn't say, Hey, and maybe someone did, but maybe there was, there were no resources to execute, whatever the reason it's great that you did this. Because I mean, I think that does change the lives, right? It, it automatically gives you pride in how you are presenting yourself even in a small way, which makes a difference in these kids' lives. I mean, I think it's just really fascinating.

Rob Scheer ([20:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1204.1)):

The thing that, that I, I never can stop thinking about, you know, every day I, I have to thank my children, you know, my, my beautiful kids, my amazing husband. And I think them for sharing me. So, you know, for me, for so many years, it was about living in the big house and driving the expensive cars and taking all the fancy trips. And, you know, and I realized 10 years ago when we started comfort cases that my priorities were wrong. My priorities were so wrong. My priorities needed to be number one, my family, knowing that I don't have to give them something for them to love me. Number two, my community. See the fact is, as my community did not fail me, they didn't, my community was not educated about me. The issue is, is that we are not educated within our society about foster care. First, we must change our vocabulary. These are not foster children. These are children who are experiencing foster care. Just think about that. It's a child, a child.

Corey Andrew Powell ([21:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1269.66)):

Yeah. Even that terminology is very specific and that's very necessary to change thinking around it. Yes,

Rob Scheer ([21:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1275.89)):

It, it truly is. And for my third thing, it's my dash. Most of your listeners and viewers have her. They've read the poem. You know, each and every one of us, white, black gay, straight male, female, rich, poor. Every single person on the face of this earth is going to be given the same exact thing. The year you're born your dash and the year you die. Mm-hmm, <affirmative> walk through your graveyards. You see them everywhere. I want my dash to shine. I want my children to walk by my dash and say, my dad, he just didn't talk about it. He actually did it. So three years ago, when my memoir came out, I left my plushy executive job. And I decided that I was going to spend the rest of my life, traveling the country and the world to educate our community about children in the system, to understand that they do not belong to you. They do not belong to me. They belong to us to us. And if you know the statistics, as we see them today, almost 80% of our prison population, they were actually in foster care or touched by foster care.

Corey Andrew Powell ([22:28](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1348.33)):

Oh, I didn't know that. Wow.

Rob Scheer ([22:30](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1350.21)):

Yes. Foster care is a pipeline to the penitentiary, a pipeline to the penitentiary. We must change that

Corey Andrew Powell ([22:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1357.96)):

Since we're talking about those statistics, I wanna just make sure we, because you're right. Education is where we really will prevail by allowing people to know what these numbers are. We're talking about. So 440,000 children enter, uh, well, there's 440,000 children who are in foster care in the us, but then there's more than 200 2000 thousand. Uh, wait, I'm saying this wrong 220,000 children enter the system every year, every

Rob Scheer ([23:05](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1385.17)):

Year, correct? Every year, every

Corey Andrew Powell ([23:07](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1387.09)):

Year. And then that's 1200 enter the system every day. So that's staggering.

Rob Scheer ([23:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1392.38)):

Prior to the pandemic, we were averaging one child, every two minutes, one child, every two minutes. Just think about that. Just think about the time you and I have been talking, how many kids have entered the system? Okay. So we now, after the pandemic has come to, you know, where we're coming down, the wave of it, we have seen an increase in children coming into the system. And the reason for that is because, you know, children were not in school. So the frontline workers who report seeing Becky with the black eye, you know, are Johnny with the cigarette burns. They weren't seeing the kids. So they weren't able to report the abuse. And so now with all of a sudden, these kids are back in class and they're starting to report the abuse. So we are seeing an increase across our country. But, you know, I wanna go back to the fact that we must understand something each and every one of us have an opportunity with our tax dollars.

Rob Scheer ([24:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1444.89)):

We have an opportunity to vote for people in office and people that we vote for need to first put children. First children need to come first. And the fact that we cut so many types of, you know, ways that we support. I mean, just, just today on the news where we starting June the 30th, because our government decided that we are no longer gonna give free lunches out to children. Do you know what an impact it is to have a child's stomach full when they are learning for the day and take it from this guy? We have a rule in our house. Corey it's called the hamburger helper rule. We don't need hamburger helper, but I, as a kid who has food insecurities, because I was starving as a young boy, you know, who has a daughter who was hoarding food as a little girl, because she, she had been deprived of the one thing we all should have, which is a full belly. I have to have a certain number of boxes of hamburger helper in my, my cabinet, because the thought of seeing a bare cabinet absolutely scares me trauma. Doesn't leave us, my friend trauma. Doesn't leave us.

Corey Andrew Powell ([25:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/75jcke9wQ2L0eewLkSuz-eODtbq2vNtw_oaCrO4of5V1dXFHWyLN1-el50P6qqCAWEje8tn-NUJJe5setEjqUB898r4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1513.97)):

Thank you for listening to motivational Mondays presented by the national society of leadership and success and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcast. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, and I'll see you again here next week.