



Ron Glodoski

author • speaker • entrepreneur

ABOUT THE PRESENTER

Ron Glodoski speaks from the heart of real life experience. A former featured expert on The Sally Jesse Raphael Show, he offers a fresh new perspective on how to effectively connect with kids. His personal triumph over abuse issues, a traumatic brain injury and learning disabilities provides practical solutions to the challenges confronting our youth today.

The authenticity of Ron's message is embodied in his own life. He survived an abusive childhood by escaping to life on the streets. The choice to change his life led Ron on a path of personal growth and transformation. He attended college and began successfully applying his skills to a series of legitimate businesses – including The Spinoza Company, which markets a talking teddy bear that plays cassette tapes about self-worth and acceptance. Ron expanded this home-based company to a multi-million dollar business that provided meaningful employment for 33 people. His life is undeniable proof that even the kids society labels at-risk can become healthy, productive members of their community.

Today Ron is dedicated to helping others transform their lives. His book, *How To Be A Successful Criminal – The Real Deal on Crime, Drugs, & Easy Money* has received national acclaim from parents, judges, police officers, educators, administrators, counselors, psychologists, and social workers.

Ron's powerful programs provide an inside look at the hearts and minds of kids today. These programs – endorsed by educators, mental health and criminal justice professionals – gently confront and challenge educators and parents to examine personal attitudes, judgments, and learned behaviors that may be blocking their effectiveness. While others are asking what can be done to help our youth, Ron is providing answers and changing lives.

BENEFITS TO HIRING RON GLODOSKI:

CONNECTING WITH KIDS - Ron Glodoski provides a fresh perspective on how kids think, and insight into the decision making process of the at-risk child. Ron discusses from both first-hand and professional experience, abuse issues, learning styles, and self-defeating learned behaviors (i.e.: diversity and racial issues).

LITERACY – As a child, Ron Glodoski was a typical underachiever. He graduated from high school with a fourth grade reading level and a one point grade point average. Hear Ron share how, at age 33, he was able to overcome his literacy problems and attain a college grade point average of 3.4. Ron's book is being used in upper elementary level through high school classrooms. Underachievers are improving reading scores, often by grade levels at a time.

SAFE SCHOOLS – Safety is a huge challenge today. Ron Glodoski addresses multiple issues involved in student behaviors, which contribute to the quality of the school environment. He provides valuable information how thoughts create reality: gangs; impact of verbal abuse by peers, parents, or staff; conflict resolution; peer mediation; harassment; bullying, teasing and basic respect; and tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse, and abuse prevention.



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THE REAL DEAL ON CRIME, DRUGS, & EASY MONEY

keynote presentation

The Real Deal On Crime, Drugs, & Easy Money is a keynote presentation designed for educators, administrators, juvenile justice professionals, and mental health professionals. This is a powerful program that helps kids avoid destructive decisions such as drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, and criminal involvement.

Presented by Ron Glodoski, this program strips away the romanticized images and reveals the real deal about life on the streets. Ron's not your average author and motivational speaker. You will laugh, you may cry, but your life will never be the same.

This program provides a profound, inspiring and clear message about the human spirit, and what one human being can accomplish.

TOPICS

- Literacy issues
- Learned behaviors - prejudices, attitudes
- Peer pressures - 50's vs. now
- Choices and decision making
- Alcohol & drug abuse prevention
- Learning styles – why teaching some students may seem hard
- Bullying, fighting, and teasing
- How to bond with kids
- Gangs – if kids knew the real deal they wouldn't join
- Impact of positive and negative labels
- Effect of verbal abuse by parents, peers, and staff
- Health realization - thoughts create reality

YOU'LL GAIN

- Positive behavior intervention strategies
- Alternative choices to give kids who make destructive decisions
- Practical classroom tools
- Team building skills
- Methods for connecting with at-risk kids
- Renewed sense of purpose
- Understand obstacles to students' learning and achievement
- Program effectiveness measurement tool
- Character development
- Insight into the hearts and minds of kids

"It gives me a great deal of pleasure to finally recommend something that I believe to have a powerful impact on our youth, and that will serve as a contribution in making a difference in the lives of many...Do it for yourself and for your children...if not your own, for your community and the sanity of the world."

Nancy Randall Dana
St. Paul, Minnesota
Superintendent



Ron Glodoski

author • speaker • entrepreneur

MOTIVATING UNMOTIVATED STUDENTS

workshop/teacher in-service/administrative or professional development program

Powerful and hard-hitting, *Motivating Unmotivated Students* goes beyond the classroom, and provides the audience a unique opportunity to see the world through the eyes of kids are labeled uninterested, unenthusiastic, and just plain unmotivated.

Ron Glodoski offers a fresh, new perspective on how to effectively connect with unmotivated students and encourage and inspire them to take charge of their learning and their lives. He identifies the issues confronting and hindering students from doing their best, and provides practical solutions.

- Find out why kids are turning to alcohol and drugs. Learn the shocking truth about myths of drug and alcohol abuse. Discover why “Just Say No” is not working and does not have the intended impact. Learn to recognize the levels of abuse, and strategies to help.
- How do we address unhealthy learned behavior issues that contribute to students’ choices? Learn about negative attitudes and self-perceptions that prevent us from being what we can be. Ron helps us identify personal attitudes and issues that may keep our youth stuck in patterns of self-sabotage, violence, substance abuse, and destructive decision-making.
- Learn ten concrete steps you can practice in your classroom to effectively reach students. Students act out learned, often self-defeating patterns of emotion, behavior, and thought. They may not stop to reflect about how they can choose to feel, act, and think differently. Unless motivated, they normally do not take the time to evaluate, probe, or consider their behavior. They simply accept their experience without question. Ron introduces you to methods that work.
- When differences in learning styles are not recognized and accepted, students are labeled. Labeling can bring students down and diminish their capacities. Labels communicate limitations and set expectations. Learn how to appreciate and understand learning differences using the five dials of positive behavior intervention strategies.



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author • speaker • entrepreneur

WANT MEASURABLE RESULTS? 39 REASONS TO SCHEDULE THIS PROGRAM

Ron Glodoski offers books, workbooks, keynotes, workshops, professional development, school assemblies and parent training programs that “tap” into human potential. All programs comply with:

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

- Classwide interventions
- How to manage consequences
- Solutions for positive behavior interventions that address at risk students
- How to do things “differently”
- Preserve a positive classroom climate

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION – EDUCATION GOALS AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- Focus on academic achievement
- Set high expectations for students and schools
- Address the needs of all students
- Promote collaboration within school and the community
- Use Positive behavior intervention strategies
- Establish a climate of respect
- Provide an active learning environment
- Meet the needs of professional staff
- Establish family partnerships

CHARACTER COUNTS – THE SIX PILLARS OF CHARACTER

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship
- Trustworthiness

SEARCH INSTITUTE’S – 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FOR HEALTHY YOUTH

- Caring school environment
- Parent involvement in schooling
- Safety
- Establish a climate of respect
- School boundaries
- Adult role models
- Positive peer influence
- High expectation

NATIONAL OFFICE OF SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS – PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVENESS

- Effective, comprehensive prevention ATOD effort
- ATOD prevention as basic integrated permanent part of education program
- Promote non-use of ATOD
- Address the needs and causes of ATOD abuse
- Change day to day norms of experience for young people
- Responsive to the complex needs and circumstances in young people’s lives
- Help youth learn what to embrace rather than simply reject
- Address the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors of adults
- Partnerships between schools and community
- Research and practice
- Evaluation
- Initiatives match the unique cultural and social characteristics of school & community



Ron Glodoski

author • speaker • entrepreneur

Praise for How to be a Successful Criminal – The Real Deal on Crime, Drugs, & Easy Money



“I’m always on the lookout for books like this that can make a difference in kids lives. (How To Be a Successful Criminal) not only gives spirit and attitude and philosophy...but also practical...steps to follow to create a life-sustaining career within the law.”

*Sister Helen Prejean, csj
Author of Dead Man Walking*

“...This book demonstrates the practicality of the right choice in believable and unforgettable terms. The message is poignant and the delivery is passionate. Who among us can not learn from it?”

*Judge Penelope D. Coffman
Denver, Colorado*

“As a street cop of 15 years, I was pleasantly surprised after reading Ron’s book. It’s a must-read for anyone who has lost hope of being part of the American dream – this book speaks from the heart of the language of the street. I highly recommend it.”

*Officer Michael Johnson
St. Paul Police Department*

“As one of the former leaders of the Black “P.” Stone Nation representing Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and St. Paul,...I found out the hard way,...there is no free lunch. If I had read this book before I took to the streets, I would not have spent 19 years of my life in prison.”

*Sonny Gangster Jackson
A former leader of the Black “P.” Stone Nation*

“I truly believe that at an early age had I been exposed to or influenced by the messages in Ron Glodoski’s “How To Be a Successful Criminal”, I would have spent 1/3 of the 12-1/2 years of prison attending college (4 years) and zero years in prison – and would currently be independently wealthy as operating outside the system, inside the law....”

*Ron Wagner, Former President
African American Brotherhood and Cultural Group*

“It gives me a great deal of pleasure to finally recommend something that I believe to have a powerful impact on our youth, and that will serve as a contribution in making a difference in the lives of many...Please read this book. Do it for yourself, and for your children...if not your own, for your community and the sanity of the world.”

*Nancy Randall Dana, EXPO Elementary School
St. Paul, Minnesota*



November 15, 2006

Dear Mr. Glodoski:

On behalf of the Montana Conference of Education Leadership and its sponsoring organizations, we'd like to thank you for the wonderful keynote and breakout sessions that you provided for our 2006 annual conference in October.

You truly give of yourself and we appreciated that. It was the first time in my personal experience that we asked the keynote speaker to also provide breakout sessions. Ron was such a hit that I am sure we will look at doing it again.

My favorite evaluation stated what I heard from many attendees, "Ron's presentation ran the emotional gamut - offended, humbled, and moved me to tears." What more can you say.

Thank you for helping make our conference a fun and thought provoking success. Please feel free to share our testimonials with others as they consider you for future conferences.

Best of luck in your future endeavors Ron.

Respectfully,

Lisa Gowen, Director of Member Services
Montana School Boards Association
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Rosella Wamser, Ph.D.
Superintendent



Georgia Costello
Assistant Superintendent

Regional Office of Education
St. Clair County

Ron Glodoski
An Endorsement

Ron Glodoski addressed over 350 educators at the 2002 Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth Conference in Peoria, IL. The evaluations had a reoccurring answer to the question—*How could the session be improved?* The answers in various wording said—*Make the session longer, there was not enough time to hear all the information Ron has to share.*

During the hour long presentation the audience members laughed, cried and reflected on Ron's amazing experiences. His approach to teaching at-risk youth is practical but at the same time inspiring. The members walked away with a renewed commitment to help each and every child on a daily basis. After listening to Ron, I don't think an adult could speak to child in a belittling manner ever again.

I would recommend Ron to any audience of educators, social workers, parents and/or students. He will truly make a difference in how one views the words they use toward others.

Rosella J. Wamser, Ph.D.
Superintendent
St. Clair County Regional Office of Education
Belleville, IL
618-397-8930 #145
April 1, 2002

Cooperative Educational Service Agency 10

Terry J. Olson, Administrator

725 West Park Avenue, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin 54729



<http://www.cesa10.k12.wi.us>

Phone: (715) 723-0341 -- FAX: (715) 720-2070

March 28, 2002

Re: Ron Glodoski Presentation

The elementary, middle, and high school principals in our CESA region (comprised of 30 school districts) have the opportunity to meet as a network on a monthly basis and facilitated by our agency. This month, we were very fortunate to have a joint meeting of all principals for a special program conducted by Ron Glodosky.

It is well known that Ron's work with students is compelling and impacting because of his own background, story, and manner of communicating. The program Ron conducted for principals was designed to be a staff development opportunity for school administrators. It, too, was equally as compelling and impacting. Often in education, we rely upon other educational colleagues for our own professional development; the approach for this program was a diversion, and one that proved to be real, authentic, meaningful, and valuable. Ron was able to share the struggles of young people today and the factors which contribute to their inability to learn --- socially, emotionally, parentally, and behaviorally.

Evaluation comments from administrators indicated clearly that this was a worthwhile and meaningful day for them, particularly as they work with staff, students, and the local community.

Dr. Linda C. Dunahee
Assistant Director of Instructional Services

Abbotsford
Altoona
Augusta
Blomster

Cadott
Chippewa Falls
Colby
Cornell

Eleva-Strum
Fall Creek
Flambeau
Gilman

Granton
Greenwood
Ladysmith-Hawkins
Lake Holcombe

Medford
Mondovi
Neillsville
New Auburn

Owen-Withee
Spencer
Stanley-Boyd
Thomson



Melrose-Mindoro Area Schools

Ron Perry, Superintendent
Del DeBerg, High School Principal
Tracy Dalton, K-8 Principal

N181 State Rd. 108 • Melrose, WI 54642

High School – (608) 488-2201 or (608) 857-3417

Fax – (608) 488-2805

Melrose Elementary – (608) 488-2311

Mindoro Elementary – (608) 857-3410

Ron Glodoski
Turn Around Publishing
P.O. Box 15403
Colorado Springs, CO 80935

Dear Mr. Glodoski:

At the Wisconsin Education Association Council's convention, I had the opportunity to hear a portion of Ron Glodoski's message. His bio was enough to get me into the room, but as I heard him and what he had to say, I became increasingly impressed. As educators we seem to have many of the techniques and subtle methods of helping the student, but not many ways to get them to listen. Ron's message and presentation are startling, honest and real. I would believe that in a room full of kids there would be instant attention and complete concentration on the subject at hand. I saw what he did to a room full of educators and it was spellbinding.

Sincerely yours,

Larry Busching

Melrose-Mindoro Area Schools



STATE OF IOWA

THOMAS J. VILSÁCK, GOVERNOR
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TED STILWILL, DIRECTOR

Mr. Ron Glodoski
Turn Around Publishing
P.O. Box 15403
Colorado Springs, Co. 80935

Dear Ron:

This is just a short note expressing our great appreciation of your discussions with our state administrators and your presentation during the closing general session of the 2002 Effective Strategies Institute on Alternative Education held in Des Moines. We have had a great response to your messages and many folks across Iowa will be following through to have you present at other conferences and within schools working with students. Alternative educators really tune into your "authenticity". You are very real and that opens up many avenues for open communications. Your experiences are valuable and your presence in helping guide our youth is highly regarded.

May the force be with you, Ron. Thanks for turning around and helping our youth do the same.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Morley", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Dr. Ray Morley
Bureau of Instructional

Services

Iowa Dept. of Education



WHAT OUR COLUMNISTS ARE SAYING

Jacquelyn Mitchard: Former bad guy spreads right advice to kids / *Lifestyle*

SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 2000

TheRestOfUs



JACQUELYN MITCHARD

**Spreading
 right kind of
 word to kids**

The slight man in the gray ponytail faces a crowd of kids, a Midwestern gumbo of black, white, Hispanic, Asian, city and suburban. “How many of you,” Ron Glodoski asks, “have felt like you’re going to snap?”

Hands go up. First five, then 20, then more. “How many of you think that the next time someone calls you ugly or stupid you’re going to beat that person down?”

More hands, faltering at first, then bolder. It’s no mean feat to transfix 14-year-olds. A middle-school assembly resembles a public library only in that there are people in it. But the customary shuffling feet, impromptu wrestling matches and high-pitched squeals are still. Kids respond to Glodoski as if each one were alone with

“There” was the gangster life, from age 12 until 30. “Back” is a successful career as an author, mental-health entrepreneur and child advocate. Unlike other tough guys gone good, however, Glodoski takes the view that lost kids can’t be scared straight. They’ve heard it all, seen it on TV, and nothing can scare a broken-hearted immortal. He thinks they must be gentled.

To his mind, the old adage could not be more wrong. Sticks and stones can break your bones, but names can kill. Scratch a kid who believes in nothing and you’ll find a kid who’s been

To Ron Glodoski’s	verbally abused.
mind, the old adage	As the April 20 anniversary of the Columbine High School massacre approaches, Glodoski will be asked, on talk shows and his relentless speaking circuit, if time has rendered the tragedy more understandable.
could not be more	
wrong. Sticks and	
stones can break	But he understood it all along.
your bones, but	
names can kill.	

“What I’m surprised about,” he says, “is that it doesn’t happen every day.”

A longtime child advocate whose work has been praised by counselors, former gang leaders and such notables as Sister Helen Prejean, author of “Dead Man Walking,” Glodoski was already an accomplished hoodlum at 12. In seventh grade, he smoked pot before breakfast, took acid on the bus and stole cars on the weekend. As a young man, he sold up to 5,000 pounds of marijuana and five kilos of cocaine a week. He was shot, robbed, beaten, and he gave as bad as he got. Of Glodoski’s two dozen boyhood pals, only three are alive outside prison. He knows that some of the kid drug-runners he sent to freight drugs from Florida to Chicago or Milwaukee are in the ocean, shot in the head or buried in pieces in farmers’ fields. On the day he was released from his first imprisonment, he visited his parole officer, then stole a car.

At 33, Glodoski escaped his criminal cronies by fleeing to northern Minnesota.

Please see **MITCHARD** page 2

**Mitchard/Right
 words help**

From page 1

He hung around with what he considers “the geeks” (working people) until he became one, founding a company that creates interactive teddy bears that repeat messages of hope to terminally ill or institutionalized children and adults.

Did he ever look back? He looks back every day.

Sure, he tells kids, the gangster life meant easy money, power, glamour, even respect. As the rapper Ice T wrote of Glodoski’s book, “I can tell you how to get rich in nine months, but the nine-month plan ends in a funeral.”

Glodoski sees thousands of kids each week. Hundreds are flipping off school, deep into drugs, seething with unacknowledged anger. Even more are depressed, lonely, hopeless.

Some have been beaten. Some have been neglected.

But all kids who are miserable have one thing in common. They were tormented and teased.

“It sounds like such a simple thing, but the word,” he shouts at the children, “the word is the most powerful thing.”

Eventually, he says, it sinks in. Glodoski says that if he can convince two of the hundred teens before him today that those words were lies, he says he’ll be the richest man alive.

“How many of you have been told by someone you love and trust – mother, father, foster parent, teacher, brother, sister – you’re worthless and stupid and I wish I’d never had you around?”

Hands go up. More hands. Even a few teachers squirm, glance around and reach upward. TV mayhem, violent song lyrics and gangster chic are nothing compared with the word.

“How many of you think life sucks?” Hands go up. Surprising hands. Fashionably dressed girls, handsome jocks. Kids drop out of school, drop into drugs, descend into despair, because it covers the pain.

“Start a new movement,” he begs his audience, “Zero tolerance for drugs is fine, but how about zero tolerance for verbal cruelty?”

Raise your hands.



Chicago Tribune

Sunday, November 7, 1999

Family

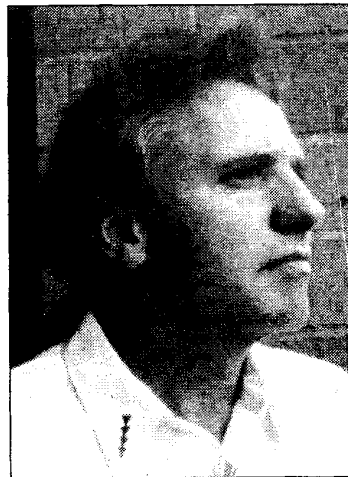
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1999 ■ SECTION 13

The quick Q&A

Reality dose for edgy kids

NAME: Ron Glodoski

BACKGROUND: "How to Be a Successful Criminal: The Real Deal on Crime, Drugs, and Easy Money" by Ron Glodoski and Allen Fahden, with Judy Grant (Turn Around Publishing, \$14.95) is based on Glodoski's experiences as a gang leader and drug dealer in Milwaukee. After 20 years of criminal activity, Glodoski stopped using and dealing drugs and became involved in a series of legitimate businesses, including a teddy bear company. These days he leads workshops on violence prevention and is a motivational speaker in schools, prisons and detention centers. (Call 800-968-6863 for more information.)



Ron Glodoski

Q—Is there such a thing as a successful criminal?

A—I've never met one. I've known thousands of drug dealers in my time, and I never knew one that successfully retired. A lot of them end up dead. A lot of them end up in jail. Some of them lose their wives, their families.

Q—Why do kids think they'll be the ones to beat the odds?

A—They have a vivid imagination. They all think they're going to make it. And the problem is, nobody makes it. On TV, on most programs, in the last five minutes the drug dealer gets blown away. But before then they've got power, money, prestige — everything.

Q—How do you try to reach kids?

A—I do a lot of programs in schools, and most of the kids, by the time they hit junior high and high school, a lot of them are numb. A lot have been beaten down with words and name-calling, verbal abuse. Most of them have lost their hopes and dreams by the time they're 12 years old. And to tell a kid that they can be successful at anything, they just

don't see that.

Q—They expect life to be terrible?

A—Yeah. "There's nothing else I'm going to accomplish. I'm stupid anyway — that's what I've been told my whole life." Between that, and then seeing TV, they think maybe they can make the big bucks, and maybe get into it for six months, a year, and get out. The problem is greed takes over and nobody gets out.

Q—How would you turn that around?

A—I believe every kid in the world is brilliant. We all have strengths and weaknesses. In order to help the kids that are numb, we need to get them to feel that they are worthwhile, that they are precious.

Q—And give them choices?

A—They see something they want and they don't know how else they can get to it besides drug dealing. But you can show a kid he can make a lot more money legitimately than he can illegally. Start your own business. You might not want to go to college, so take an apprenticeship. Be a roofer. Start a company.

Joanne Trestrajl

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ANNIVERSARY

Enterprising criminal has turned his life around



RUBEN ROSARIO
STAFF COLUMNIST

■ Former drug kingpin pursued new business, shares his story

Ron Glodoski knows what it takes to become a success in business. The 46-year-old former president of the St. Paul-based Spinoza Teddy Bear Co. helped turn a cuddly, talking stuffed animal into a companion for children.

It took 80-hour workweeks, organizational skills, up-to-date market knowledge, salesmanship and a competitive attitude.

Glodoski also knows what it takes to become a success selling illegal drugs. Between 1975 and 1985,

Glodoski reportedly ran a cocaine ring in the Milwaukee area, peddling kilos and using, on occasion, senior citizens in RVs to transport the dope cross-country. Not surprisingly, good business skills were needed in the drug trade. The difference, however, comes in the drawbacks.

The worst thing that can happen in business is that it goes belly-up and people are laid off. In the drug business, when you go belly-up, it's permanent. At least 17 of Glodoski's former criminal associates are dead, he says.

Those who weren't killed overdosed on the product

ROSARIO CONTINUED ON 3E ▶



Ron Glodoski, a onetime drug dealer, started a business selling teddy bears and has written a book about his experiences.

ROSARIO

▼ CONTINUED FROM 1E

they sold for Glodoski.

One associate Glodoski dispatched to Florida to buy \$100,000 worth of drugs was found floating in the Atlantic, a bullet in the brain. That's the usual severance package in the drug underworld. There are no golden parachutes or stock options.

"I don't know of anyone who has been a success as a criminal," says Glodoski, who notes he was busted twice in the New Berlin and Menomonee Falls, Wis., area on drug-related charges, both of which he beat on technicalities. "You may be on top for one or two years, but you either wind up dead or in prison."

It is that message that provides the central theme to his ironically titled book, "How to be a Successful Criminal: The Real Deal on Crime, Drugs, and Easy Money."

The book details Glodoski's life, from being an abused child teased at school for his learning disabilities to his budding criminal career that included juvenile gang membership and \$5,000-a-week drug pushing. He says he joined a gang at 12 because he felt like a loser and couldn't find the love he needed at home.

FYI
For more information about Ron Glodoski's upcoming speaking engagements in the Twin Cities or his book, call (800) 968-6863.

The book, aimed at teen-agers and young adults, is written in a sparse, simple but effective narrative style that speaks directly to readers, not down to them.

"The truth is, I wasn't meaner, tougher or badder than anyone else. I just worked smarter," he writes. "I developed my own rules for success and worked my business by these rules — until I got so strung out on coke that I forgot to follow them."

In the mid-1980s, Glodoski found himself strung out. His first wife divorced him, taking their three young sons. He realized he needed to change and enrolled in a therapy group at the Milwaukee Men's Center.

In the mid-1980s, Glodoski found himself strung out. His first wife divorced him, taking their three young sons. He realized he needed to change and enrolled in a therapy group at the Milwaukee Men's Center.

He took the advice he gives in the book: Make a fresh start. Drop the old crowd. Associate with people who are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

At his second wife's urging, the couple bought the teddy bear concept from its originators and moved to Moose Lake, Minn. They hired a woman to hand sew the teddy bear and moved the company to St. Paul.

The bear, which plays cassette

tapes that help children deal with everything from grief and terminal illness to divorce and violence, became a big hit. It has been used at schools, day care centers, child protection agencies and Head Start programs throughout the world.

Glodoski and his wife, Terri Lynn, left the company about a year ago. Glodoski now devotes his time to speaking at juvenile detention centers and alternative schools in Minnesota, Wisconsin and other states. He also volunteers his time working with street gangs in the Milwaukee area.

The book has been well received by cops, corrections officials, teachers and others who work with at-risk youths. Nell Kaiser, a guidance counselor at Como Park Elementary School in St. Paul, invited Glodoski to speak at the school late last year.

"He gives kids headed down hell's highway hope," Kaiser wrote in a testimonial. "Hope that they can change, hope that they can make money on the right side of the law. . . . We need the Ron Glodoskis who speak from the experience of gang life and lived to tell about it."

Glodoski says his new life as a motivational speaker is a redemption as well as a payback for his crimes.

"A lot of these kids I speak to are very bright, but some have no value system," he says. "I see many kids numbed out by the time they're in school. I don't think we're ever going to stop the drug problem, so we should put some of that drug war money into educating these kids better."

Anyone who can make a buck selling teddy bears and dealing dope has got my attention.

Ruben Rosario can be reached at rosario@pioneerpress.com or (651) 228-5454.