

Richard E. Ivey, III

What do you see as your major strengths or talents?

I can listen as well as I can speak. From running my own business, I've honed my abilities to multitask, and to act quickly and decisively in times of need. I have a prevailing sense of humor that leaves a smile on my face and allows me to comfort those around me. I have strong moral and ethical viewpoints and will not violate them. I am well versed in most forms of body modification and body ritual. I am straight forward with people and easily get the same back out of them. I also have a really nice beard.

What do you feel are your major weaknesses?

My age. I've heard all the stories, but I wasn't there to see most of them happen. I'm also working on my habit of procrastinating.

What previous experience do you have that relates to being a minister in the CoBM?

I was raised as a Jehovah's Witness and did door to door evangelical work throughout my entire childhood. I have a strong background in public speaking and public relations. More importantly, I know what it's like to have a suspension not go as planned, and to be told I'm not worthy of a job because of the modifications I felt were necessary for my mind, body, and soul.

In your own words, what do you know about the CoBM and being a minister in it?

I know that the Church of Body Modification was previously viewed quite differently than it is today. I know that currently the members are a strong group of individuals who want to share their experiences with like minded people. I know that such a strong group of people need ministers who feel just as strongly as they do, and who can relate to their everyday struggles and desires.

Why do you want to be a minister in the CoBM?

I feel that it's time to give back to the community that means so much to me. I want to share with others in the benefits that come from spiritual modification and help them along their journeys, just as I was helped along mine.

What do you think you can contribute as a minister?

As a minister, I'll be able to help members of the Church with things I have dealt with, like finding a suspension group in their locale, or weighing the pros and cons of a wanted modification.

What have you contributed thus far as a member?

As a member, I have spread the word about the Church in all ways possible. I have referred several people to the Church and some are members now. I have answered questions about the Church to friends, family, and complete strangers.

Where would you like to see the CoBM 5 years from now?

I would like to see the CoBM with a large membership base, attending body modification industry events, and with a regular publication for members and non-members alike to learn from. Ideally, workplace discrimination against body modification will be firmly protected by law. Body ritual will be as understood as suspension is within the modified community.

Aside from the CoBM, what are your personal goals for the next 5 years?

I would like to own my own home and become partially self sustaining (i.e. hunting and growing my own food). I would like to be married and either have or be expecting a child. I'd like my reptile breeding hobby to remain self sustaining as it grows. I'd also like to learn to play the banjo.

What would you do if you overheard someone speaking negatively about the CoBM?

If the person speaking negatively was a member, I'd speak with them to see what could be done to improve their opinion of the Church. If the person was not a member, I'd make sure they have all the information they need about the Church, and do my best to see to it that they walk away with a better view of the Church than they came with.

The CoBM has evolved greatly since inception. As a minister, you will be expected to be knowledgeable about the various evolutionary steps the CoBM has taken. If someone asked you about the current status and goals of the Church, how would you compare and contrast the Church's current state against previous years and under previous management?

The former heads of the Church were very busy with other projects and never got the Church off the ground. There was no federal recognition and the Church leaders weren't very thorough. Now the Church has federal recognition, a clear direction, and is being run by a group of dedicated and sincere people.

List all of your modifications, past and present. Then choose one of those mods and describe what spiritual significance it has for you.

Present: 2.5" lobes, 00g conches, 1/2" outer conches, 5/8" septum, 5/8" labret, 14g bridge, 14g nape. 8g horns, split tongue, subdermal in arm to enhance tattoo. Heavy tattooing (most incomplete) on my legs, back, chest, arms, throat, and head. One brand on my wrist and a cutting on my hand that was covered with a tattoo.

Past: 4g tongue piercing, various small gauge scrotal and cartilage piercings. 0g apadravya that was reversed with an electrocautery scalpel.

I chose the design for my head tattoo very carefully- a left facing swastika (representing love and mercy) in the face of a sunflower, reminding me to always face the sun- that is, whatever challenges might lie ahead of me, as they will benefit me, just like the flowers need the same sun that evaporates their precious water.

What do you think the differences are between a person who modifies their body with piercings, tattoos, etc. and a person who never explores body modification?

Those who do not explore body modification will never know the feeling of touching the earth again after a suspension, or facing their fear of pain or commitment by getting a meaningful tattoo or piercing. It does not, however, mean they are worth less or more than anyone else. They still have the same major goals and challenges in life, they simply choose a different path than I have.

Can a person with only a navel or ear piercing claim to be as spiritually modified as someone with brandings and a split tongue?

Spiritual modification is a path that some people choose to travel down. We all start at different places on that path, and we all go varying distances down it. We are all still walking in the same direction though, and as long as a person is happy with the end result and it's tie to their spirituality, then they have been successful in that endeavor.

Describe what spiritually modified means to you.

By modifying my body, I bring it into line with my mind and soul. These modifications are not my identity, but merely part of it, and they add to who I am, not detract from it. By engaging in

rites of body ritual, I challenge myself to overcome the temporary obstacles my mind and body face for the benefit of my soul.

Have you ever been convicted of a crime, other than a minor traffic violation?
Never.