



Freedom Inside

A National Newsletter For Prisoners
Based on the CwG Material
Issue # 25 January 2006

...and Justice For All

Freedom Inside
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I've been thinking for some time about what 'justice' is. What does it mean to be just? What do we do when we treat people justly?

I look at justice systems, in one country or another and find no examples of justice without punishment or vengeance. Are they the same? Is it possible to think of Justice without retaliation for a crime? Can we speak of Justice when what we want is for the guilty to 'learn from their mistakes'?

Many of you are incarcerated at this time. So I know you have very definite ideas about the system that put you in prison. But more than criticizing the system itself, I would like us to question ourselves on a more important (to me, at

least) issue.

What does Justice mean ? What does living in a world where Justice prevails look like? Feel like? What would I do if I were in

*"What does Justice mean ?
What does living in a world
where Justice prevails look
like? Feel like?"*

charge of the world (I just love that idea!!!) and could remake the Justice System to suit my ideals? Where to start? I decided to look the word up in my trusty Webster's and found that justice is defined as 'the principle or ideal of moral rightness: equity'.

So , okay, justice is a principle, it's an ideal. I think we can all agree on that. 'Moral rightness' starts to be a bit more problematic for me. Morals seem to change from society to society, from country to country, from culture to culture, often even

from person to person within the same culture.

The idea of 'morality' is often used to criticize people, to judge them wanting is some important way. Having been raised within a predominantly Catholic society, I myself, have had very peculiar (to me) experiences of morality. Instead of uplifting people and helping them become more loving and happier, morality seemed to be used to punish, to restrict, to control. It felt to me like a very heavy burden filled with guilty feelings.

Now add to that the idea of moral 'rightness' that Webster's talks about and we've got what I see as a double whammie! The morality that seeks to judge and control, paired with the idea that I'm 'right', thus making anyone who disagrees with my value system
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'wrong'.

Good Karma: Advice from The Dalai Lama

This is what the Dalai Lama had to say about 2005. I think it applies beautifully to each year, as true spiritual messages always do. Let's see us making these our 2006 New Year's Resolutions.

Instructions for Life

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
3. Follow the three R's:
- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Responsibility for all your actions
4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.
6. Don't let a little dispute injure a good relationship.
7. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.

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...and Justice For All

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Now, when Webster's goes on and speaks of 'equity', this I can relate to. This reflects more my idea of what Justice is. Notice that I talk of Justice here (with a capital J). I'm not ready to talk about the justice system quite yet.

So let's see what Webster's has to say about 'equity'. It is defined as 'the quality, state, or ideal of being just, fair, and impartial.'

Fairness. What a wonderful thought! Treating people fairly, without discrimination of any kind, treating them according to their actions, regardless of their past, their color, their culture, their religion, their gender, their sexual preferences. Judging them blindly.

But wait a minute. Isn't that exactly what the justice systems of the world are trying to do? Don't they say that Lady Justice is blind?

So what the heck went wrong?

Because when I look at our justice systems, I see not blindness but prejudice. I see not a need to treat people with fairness and equity but a need to punish and control.

What the heck went wrong?

What went wrong, from what I can see, is that we have the justice system that we chose. We have the society that we created.

The justice system along with the corrections institutions' first mandate is to keep society safe. For that reason, when a person is found to be a danger to others, that person will be taking out of society.

I agree with that mandate. I believe that it does nobody any good to allow people to hurt themselves or others. It hurts everyone involved, including and maybe even mostly the perpetrator. So I agree some people should be taken out of society at least for a time.

But then what? When we watch police/ attorney shows on TV, they generally end with the criminal being caught and send to prison for a long time (the longer the better for some crimes). This ending seems to give the message that the problem is then solved.

"What went wrong, from what I can see, is that we have the justice system that we chose. We have the society that we created."

But that isn't the end of anything. Prison can be a place where people change for the better, where they take the time and opportunity to make new choices for themselves. But mostly, prison is a place where criminals learn to be colder, crueler, more violent, more judgmental. All things that will make re-entry into society very difficult if not impossible. That is, if one of our goals as a society is to live in harmony with one another.

Those of you who are incarcerated know that. You are living it.

So I'm going back to my question. If I were the Empress of the World, what would I do in "JanineWorld"? How would I treat people, especially those who act as less than Who They Really Are?

And I'm back to the question of Justice. What it is but more importantly, how we can put it in practice.

I've decided that JanineWorld would not deal with justice. It would not have a justice system.

Come to think of it, my world now doesn't have one either. There is no place for a justice system in my everyday interactions. I don't like the idea of a justice system where we try to write down rules and regulations for everyone's behavior along with consequences for those who break our rules.

The justice system as we know it is based on the premise that humanity is basically bad. That we need laws in order to live peacefully. That people must fear consequences in order to force them to 'act nice'.

I don't believe any of that. A friend of mine has "accused" me (-:-) of wearing rose-colored glasses. And I do but I do so consciously, choosing to see the best in people instead of the worst. And I haven't been disappointed yet.

I know many people think that we rarely if ever show our darkest side to anyone. I agree. But I also believe that we rarely if ever show our best side either. That side is so very vulnerable. Imagine if you showed your very, very best and you were rejected or laughed at. That would really hurt. On the other hand, if you show your worst, you expect to be rejected. Doesn't hurt half as much, does it?

I've met and worked with many prisoners. (I used to facilitate Cognitive Intervention classes). I've heard people casually mention different crimes they committed. Some not so bad, some pretty awful. But I've never met a person I didn't come to love the more I got to know them.

People are wonderful! And basically all the same.

We all have the same needs. We need to live, to survive, we need to love and be loved, we need to feel important, to contribute to the world around us, and we need change every once in a while.

I believe those are the four basic needs. I also believe that if one or more of them is left unfulfilled we will react.

We are then reacting to the 'injustice' of it. To the 'unfairness' of seeing some people have what they need while we don't, while our loved one's suffer.

So it may be difficult to describe

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Good Karma: Advice from The Dalai Lama

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| <p>8. Spend some time alone everyday.</p> <p>9. Open arms to change, but don't let go of your values.</p> <p>10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.</p> <p>11. Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and</p> | <p>think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time.</p> <p>12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life.</p> <p>13. In disagreements with your loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don't bring</p> | <p>up the past.</p> <p>14. Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.</p> <p>15. Be gentle with the earth.</p> <p>16. Once a year, go some place you've never been before.</p> <p>17. Remember that the</p> | <p>best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.</p> <p>18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.</p> <p>19. Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.</p> |
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Words of Wisdom

As I was sitting outside this morning sipping my coffee and watching the sun climb over the horizon, I looked down and saw a curved stick on the ground that reminded me of a boomerang. Suddenly I was caught up in memories of me as a kid playing for hours on end in my grandfather's backyard with a small wooden boomerang he had given to me as a gift.

Remember when you were a kid, how fascinated you were with boomerangs? (At least I was!) You take this flat, curved piece of wood and throw it and then watch in amazement as it curves around in the air and comes right back to you.

As "miraculous" as that seemed when we were kids, I've found that most of our life is like that. Whatever we "throw" out there, comes back to us.

We live in a "boomerang" world. Let me explain:

If you smile at someone, in almost every case, they will smile back.

Try it now with someone nearby and see if it works.

If you're kind toward someone, they will usually be kind in return.

Of course, this also works in the other direction.

If you complain to someone, they will

"share" their complaints with you. (In fact, you may quickly find yourself in a subtle competition to see who is more miserable.)

If you get angry at someone, they will usually get angry with you. And so on.

The fact is, whatever you decide to "throw" out into the world will usually circle around and land right back at your feet. (Much like the boomerangs we played with as kids.)

Here's what struck me this morning .

I have a CHOICE about what I decide to "throw" out into my world. I have a CHOICE about what I WANT to land at my feet?

**If you want more JOY ...
Throw it out there.**

**If you want more HAPPINESS...
Throw some happiness out there to someone else and watch it "miraculously" come back to you.**

It even works with money. Need money? Give some away. (Spiritual leaders from the beginning of time have been telling us this, but most of us are afraid to believe it.)

It works in just about every area of our life. When we give something away.

When we "throw" it out there. It comes back to us.

Do you have a poem that reflects the message in Freedom Inside? If so, send it in, it just may be chosen for a future

POETRY CORNER

**To give beyond reason.
To care beyond hope.
To love without limit.**

**To reach, stretch, and dream in spite of your fears.
These are the hallmarks of divinity—traits of the immortal—
your badge of honor, and your ticket home.**

-from theuniverse@tut.com

Angel Walk

A drunk man in an Oldsmobile

They said had run the light
That caused the six-car pileup
On 109 that night.

When broken bodies lay about
"And blood was everywhere,"
"The sirens screamed out eulogies,"
For death was in the air.

"A mother, trapped inside her car,"
Was heard above the noise;
Her plaintive plea near split the air:
"Oh, God, please spare my boys!"

She fought to loose her pinned hands;
"She struggled to get free,"
But mangled metal held her fast
In grim captivity.

Her frightened eyes then focused
"On where the back seat once had been"
But all she saw was broken glass and
Two children's seats crushed in.

Her twins were nowhere to be seen;
"She did not hear them cry, And then
she prayed they'd been thrown free,
"Oh, God, don't let them die! "

"Then firemen came and cut her loose, "
"But when they searched the back, "!
"They found therein no little boys, "
But the seat belts were intact.

They thought the woman had gone mad
"And was traveling alone, "
"But when they turned to question her
They discovered she was gone.

Policemen saw her running wild
And screaming above the noise
"In beseeching supplication, "
Please help me find my boys!

They're four years old and wear blue
shirts;

"Their jeans are blue to match.""

"One cop spoke up, ""They're in my
car,

And they don't have a scratch.

They said their daddy put them there
"And gave them each a cone, "
Then told them both to wait for Mom
To come and take them home.
"I've searched the area high and low, "
But I can't find their dad.
"He must have fled the scene, "
"I guess, and that is very bad."" "

"The mother hugged the twins and said,
"While wiping at a tear, "
"He could not flee the scene, you see,
"For he's been dead a year."" "

"The cop just looked confused and asked,
"Now, how can that be true? "
"The boys said, ""Mommy, Daddy came "
"And left a kiss for you."" "

He told us not to worry
"And that you would be all right, "
And then he put us in this car with
"The pretty, flashing light. "

"We wanted him to stay with us, "
"Because we miss him so, "
"But Mommy, he just hugged us tight "
And said he had to go.

He said someday we'd understand
"And told us not to fuss, "
"And he said to tell you, Mommy, "
"He's watching over us."" "

The mother knew without a doubt
"That what they spoke was true, "
"For she recalled their dad's last words,
" I will watch over you."

The firemen's notes could not explain
"The twisted, mangled car, "
And how the three of them escaped
Without a single scar.

"But on the cop's report was scribed, "
"In print so very fine, "

An angel walked the beat tonight
on Highway 109.

Sometimes

Just up the road from my home
is a field,
with two horses in it. From a distance,
each looks like every other horse.
But if one stops the car,
or is walking by,
one will notice something
quite amazing.

Looking into the eyes of one horse
will disclose that he is blind.
His owner has chosen
not to have him put down,
but has made a good home for him.
This alone is amazing.

Listening, one will hear
the sound of a bell.
Looking around
for the source of the sound,
one will see that it comes
from the smaller horse in the field.

Attached to her bridle is a small bell.
It lets her blind friend
know where she is,
so he can follow her.

As one stands and watches
these two friends,
one sees how she is always
checking on him,
and that he will listen for her bell
and then slowly walk to where she is
trusting that she will not
lead him astray.

Like the owners of these two horses,
God does not throw us away
just because we are not perfect
or because we have
problems or challenges.

He watches over us
and even brings others
into our lives to help us
when we are in need.

Sometimes we are the blind horse
being guided by God and those
whom he places in our lives.

Other times we are the guide horse,
helping others see God.

...and Justice For All

(continued from page 2)

what a world would look like if there was "Justice For All" but we know what injustice looks like. We know about unfairness.

So let me go back to JanineWorld. I would choose not to have a justice system but to do everything possible to fill the basic needs of all people.

The system in JanineWorld, the establishment, would have the mandate to provide each individual with all they need to:

- 1. Survive*
- 2. Love and be loved*
- 3. Contribute*
- 4. Change*

Those ideals would be where we would all base our every thought and actions. It would be how we would treat everyone and how everyone would choose to be treated.

Which means, for instance that:

- 1. We would respect each other's persons and property.*
- 2. We would be honest enough with ourselves to only do a job where we were All That We Can Be. And we would choose to do it to the very best of our ability.*
- 3. We would respect ourselves by being honest about ourselves and act only with integrity.*

I could go on and on about what this world of mine would look like. But the idea is clear to me. It would have very few laws but we all would act a lot more lovingly than we do now. Both towards ourselves and towards each other.

Laws, to me, limit us too much. There is no set of laws in any country that I know of that controls us as well as we could ourselves if we chose. There is no law, for instance, against lying to each other, much less lie to ourselves.

But we all know lying does not reflect the Best of Who We Really Are.

There are no laws about doing the minimum amount of work on the job.

But we all know this is also not a good reflection of Who We Really Are.

There are no laws anywhere that I know of against criticizing others, against gossip.

But we all know this too is not Who We Really Are.

I do not believe there is any way I could ever write a list of laws that would cover it all.

But we all know these laws. They are the rules

we would choose for ourselves if our needs were met, if we had no fear of the world out there.

They are Universal Rules. They are Spiritual Laws. They are Divine Rules.

They are NOT based on fear, as our laws today are. They are based on Love. They are a joy to follow.

They bring Happiness. They bring Peace. They bring Fulfillment.

I imagine many of you, while reading what I first had to say about the injustice of the justice system that put you in prison, felt a lot of anger and resentment.

But I don't know if you all realize how much of the justice system is but a reflection of your own views.

As I mentioned before, I have worked with many different groups of prisoners, both male and female. And I do not know of any other group of people in any area of society with more rules and regulations about what is acceptable behavior.

I'm not talking about rules and regulations governing the prisons and limiting what prisoners can do, where they go, who they can talk to.

I'm talking about how prisoners deal with each other. Who can speak with whom. How to look at each other. What words to say and avoid in order to provoke a fight or not. How to demand and show respect. What to expect if you choose not to act with respect towards your fellow prisoners.

And a lot more.

Imagine a world where you don't have to fear or don't need to control others' behavior. Imagine a world where there is enough of everything that you don't have to fight for anything, ever.

Imagine a world where, as in some Buddhist countries, happiness of the people is one of the government's priorities.

Imagine a world like that. That is JanineWorld. And you can create one like it in your life by simply following the Spiritual Rules that fit Who You Really Are.

Imagine that.

In the words of John Lennon, "You may say I'm a dreamer. But I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us. And the world will live as one."

Janine

Peace and Joy In 2006 and Forever

Freedom Inside-Outside

Joe Wolfe has written Letter to a Prisoner which is an autobiographical account of his experiences as a prisoner and what happened to change his life forever. If you are interested in receiving the complete text, please write to Freedom Inside and we will send your name and address to Mr. Wolfe. It's a good read.

Love,
Janine

Letter To A Prisoner

It happened in the Spring of 1974, over thirty years ago, while I was serving a ten year sentence for robbery.

I was only about twenty-five years old then, but already a very seasoned and polished career criminal. My conception of a successful livelihood included flashy cars, wads of cash, wine, women and song, and whatever it took to acquire it. My crime of choice was armed robbery. It afforded all of the grandeur and excitement rushes, quick get-aways and most of the time, good payoffs.

By the time I was just beginning my long prison sentence I had never read or studied any sort of spiritually related literature. I knew little about the Bible and cared even less. Matters of this nature were very far removed from my interests as I had little space or time for anything related to God stuff.

As a small child I did experience several (what I called) strange events that later proved to be important visions that I couldn't define or understand at the time,

but much later came together like pieces of a puzzle.

I was miraculously cured of a bad case of the mumps by an unseen visitor who comforted me in my tiny crib, and was once visited by a beautiful "angel" that radiated love...the memory of which remains with me to this day... and then many years later, during my prison sentence, I was graced with the remarkably profound and unforgettable experience of floating out of my body and feeling the sensation of consciousness expansion. It was the feeling of Being One with Everything.

Letter To A Prisoner is not your typical evangelical testimonial. It's filled with real accounts of several escape attempts, long durations confined in punitive segregation units, and years of hard times.

But most important is the message conveyed in the hope that it may serve to help even one other prisoner, whether confined by walls and bars or chained to the tenacious positionalities of the ego, whose unquenchable thirsts demand vast raging rivers of more and more of the stuff that keeps one

blinded to Truth, Love and Light.

Joe Wolfe

"The phoenix of spiritual awakening is birthed out of the ashes of human despair. As Mother Theresa said, "The beautiful flower, the lotus, arises from the roots in the slime and mud at the bottom of the pond."

-David R. Hawkins

The secret to happiness in life is not having everything that you want,
rather it is wanting everything that you have.

After all, you created it!

Love and huggggs....

Namaste

JT

Words of Wisdom

(continued from page 3)

But here's the good news. .
(And this is really the
"miraculous" part.)...

We actually get MORE back
than what we throw out
there. Plant a seed and
you don't just get one seed
back. You get HUNDREDS
(maybe even THOUSANDS!)

So today (and for as many
days afterwards as you
want), make a conscious
CHOICE about what you
want to "throw" out into the
world. By doing this, you
will be making a choice
about what is going to come
back and land at your feet.

Remember the boomerang.
Whatever you "throw" out
there WILL come back to
you (many times over).

St-Theresa's Prayer

*May today there be peace within.
May you trust your highest power
that you are exactly where you are
meant to be...*

*May you not forget the infinite
possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you
have received, and pass on the love
that has been given to you....*

*May you be content knowing you
are a child of God....*

*Let this presence settle into your
bones, and allow your soul the
freedom to sing, dance, praise and
love.*

*It is there for each and every one
of you...*

Sayings and Other Good Thoughts

1. I love you not because
of who you are, but
because of who I am when
I am with you..

2. No man or woman is
worth your tears, and the
one who is, won't make
you cry.

3. Just because someone
doesn't love you the way
you want them to, doesn't
mean they don't love you
with all they have.

4. A true friend is
someone who reaches for
your hand and touches
your heart.

5. The worst way to miss
someone is to be sitting
right beside them knowing
you can't have them.

6. Never frown, even when
you are sad, because you
never know who is falling
in love with your smile.

7. To the world you may
be one person, but to one
person you may be the
world.

8. Don't waste your time
on a man/woman, who
isn't willing to waste their
time on you.

9. Maybe God wants us to
meet a few wrong people
before meeting the right
one, so that when we
finally meet the right
person, we will know how
to be grateful.

10. Don't cry because it is
over, smile because it

happened.

11. There's always going
to be people who hurt you
so what you have to do is
keep on trusting and just
be more careful about
who you trust next time
around.

12. Make yourself a better
person and know who you
are before you try and
know someone else and
expect them to know you.

13. Don't try so hard, the
best things come when
you least expect them to.

**REMEMBER: WHATEVER
HAPPENS, HAPPENS FOR
A REASON.**

Stan Tookie Williams' First Letter to Incarcerated Youths

I've been on San Quentin's death
row for more than 21 years. I
hope that this brief message will
provoke thoughts of change
among you.

Across this nation, countless
young men and women, like you,
are vegetating in juvenile halls
and in youth authorities. More and
more prisons are being
constructed to accommodate your
generation when you grow to
adulthood. The question is, can
you become motivated enough to
defy the expectations that many
people have of you?

For those of you who are fortunate
enough to regain your freedom,
prepare an agenda to survive
outside the walls of incarceration.
Learn about computer technology,
politics and the sciences.

On the other hand, if some of you
are facing a lot of time, I suggest
that you strive to educate and

discipline your mind. If you have
access to a library, read every
relevant book that you can get
your hands on. Educate yourselves
about history, world religions,
math, English, spirituality and
your culture.

It's time to flip the script. You or I
can complain 24x7 about the
problems of poverty, drugs,
violence, racism and other
injustices, but unless we choose to
initiate a personal change, we will
remain puppets of unjust
conditions. Unless we change, we
will be incapable of changing the
circumstances around us.

In conclusion, there are two ways
to view your incarceration: either
your present situation will
convince you to straighten up your
life or it will be the beginning of a
wasteful future behind bars. Or
worse - you'll end up on death
row.

Stan Tookie Williams



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