



# Freedom Inside

A National Newsletter For Prisoners  
Based on the CwG Material  
Issue # 27 May 2006

## The Drama of Life

Freedom Inside  
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*I remember, growing up Catholic, that we were told to be good so we could go to Heaven. We were told that bad people went to Hell for all eternity while most people will suffer a while in Purgatory, expiating their sins until they were deemed purified enough to go to Heaven.*

*I always had a problem accepting that. Not so much because I didn't believe in sin back then, but because I couldn't imagine being happy in Heaven*

*(I've always seen myself going there, you understand) knowing some of my loved ones were suffering in purgatory or worse.*

*Today, I find myself facing the same questioning a somewhat different context. You see, I now believe we create Heaven and Hell right here on Earth. How then, can I be happy when I know some of my loved ones*

*are unhappy, going through excruciating problems, facing the most difficult of challenges? And more generally, how can I live in peace when I see the world is in such turmoil, that so many people are suffering?*

*"The worse part about any pain doesn't seem to be the pain itself but the memory of the experience."*

*see loved ones in pain or the world in turmoil?*

*The answer of course is 'Yes, it is okay'. I just need to decide how I can do that without being cold and unfeeling. How can I be okay with other people's suffering without losing compassion? How can I be happy while loving people who are unhappy?*

*Is it necessary to suffer because the world is suffering? Do I need to fix what I think is the root of the problem before I can be okay with it? Is it okay to be okay when I*

*I think we all tend to pay a lot more attention to the drama of life than to its joys. We love our dramas. If, as I've once heard Marianne Williamson ask, eight good things and one bad thing happen to you in a day, what are you going to talk about that night? Most of us would talk about the bad thing, wouldn't we?*

*I had a medical test done some time ago and the physician told me he would give me medication to help with the pain. He explained that one thing this drug would do was make me forget the pain. And it worked. I don't remember the pain, I'm not even sure I felt any.*

*I found that a little disturbing and very revealing about myself. The worse part about any pain doesn't seem to be the pain itself but the memory of the experience. Is that as*  
*(continued on page 2)*

*amazing to you as it is to me?*

## Excerpt from Neale's Next Book: Home With God

The purpose of this conversation is to make you fully aware of what you are doing. You brought your Self to this conversation so that you could remind your Self of this: You are creating your reality by the vibration, by the energy that you send out.

NOW YOU CAN SAY THAT YOU'VE HEARD ALL OF THIS BEFORE -- BUT

YOU ARE NOT ACTING LIKE IT. THAT IS WHY YOU KEEP TELLING YOUR SELF THIS OVER AND OVER. NDW: What would it "look like" if I were "acting like it"? If I really understood this and didn't need to have this conversation circle back, again and again, over what I "think" I already know, what would that look like?

First, you would never entertain negative thoughts in your mind again.

Second, if a negative thought did happen to slip in, you would get it out of your mind immediately. You would think of something else, deliberately. You would simply change your mind about that.

*(continued on page 3)*

*How much of the life's drama, its obstacles, difficulties, challenges, and suffering do we relive over and over again because we give so much weight to the memory of our pain? How much easier would our lives be if we could start fresh every day, if we left our past behind every morning? What if we lived each day not as the next day in our life, not even as the first day of the rest of our life, but as the only day of our life? What then?*

*I believe we all wake up new every day. I believe that in order to continue to have the same feelings about people and circumstances as we did the days, weeks, months before, we need to start an internal tape player that goes over the reasons we have the opinions we do about whatever happened to us. This tape states over and over why we are 'right' to think as we do. This tape is the reason we stay angry, resentful, judgmental.*

*What if we could turn the tape off? Do you know that some people who suffered a certain brain injury and who now have lost their short term memory can never stay angry?*

*What would happen if I chose to start fresh every moment of my life? To live as if this were not one day of many in my life but the only one I had to live?*

*I can easily see the advantages of this: letting go of anger, resentment, past hurts done to me and by me. This would be such a relief. Letting go of all the past drama in my life would bring so much lightness to me that I wonder I never did that before?*

*Except, of course, for the fear. What if I start fresh every day? Wouldn't that make me vulnerable? Don't I need to use my past experiences to guide me? If I start anew every morning, wouldn't the people around me start to (or continue to) take advantage of me? Wouldn't I be a fool to let go of all my defenses, to treat my past dramas as if they never happened? Wouldn't that leave me as the perfect target for all bad guys out there?*

*I found the answer to that question depends on what a person believes the world is made of. If, as some think, people are basically bad and that they need to be controlled in order to keep them from hurting themselves and others, then, of course, we need to protect ourselves. In this scenario, our dramas are very useful indeed in keeping us safe and we must continue the internal monologue that lists all the lessons we have learned in life so that we do not repeat the mistakes that have led to past hurts.*

*If, on the other hand, you believe as I do that people are basically good, then there is no need to protect ourselves against the world.*

*But then wait a minute, just wait a blooming minute! Am I supposed to start every morning as an innocent babe in the woods, forgetting everything I know, everybody I know? What of all my commitments? What of all the safeguards I know to take to keep me safe? Am I to leave all this behind as if nothing was important anymore? Am I to live as if my loved ones were strangers to me?*

*The answer to those questions is the same for me. Yes, that's exactly what I choose. To me, this way of living, this way of life is the very definition of Freedom. This is living without limitation, this is living from the very best of me.*

*This is how life can be without drama, without suffering that lasts long after the pain has stopped. Without judgment, good or bad, without prejudice, without feeling overwhelmed by what must be done to change people and situations.*

*I believe one of the fears that keeps us from choosing this way of life is the fear that life would bring us more that we can deal with.*

*I believe this fear to be completely unjustified. I believe when life is dealt with one moment at a time, there is nothing that feels even remotely difficult and heavy to bear.*

*Nothing is too heavy to bear when we pour all the love we have into it. Nothing is too heavy to bear when we carry it but for a single moment.*

*But wait another blooming minute here! A couple of weeks ago, I was in a hospital in Guadalajara, Mexico, that serves the poorest of the poor in that city. I saw wards full of beds, as far as the eye could see. Each bed with a suffering human being. How can I then come back home, sit on my cozy chair, in front of my computer and blithely write that there is no such thing as suffering. It's ridiculous, isn't it? At least it contradicts what my eyes saw, what we all see every day of our lives, doesn't it?*

*Which brings me back to my original question: How can I be happy when people I love are suffering? How can I be at peace when the world is at war?*

*Living in the moment is how I can do that. Loving whoever is in front of me. Loving whatever shows up in my life. Pouring all that I am, all that I have in each individual moment. That is how I find happiness in all the moments of my life, regardless of what it looks like from the outside.*

*And whenever I find myself unhappy, disturbed, angry, disappointed, I know that I am not living in the moment and I come back to myself as soon as I can.*

*Because I know there is no drama in any moment of life. The drama comes when past and future unite to burden the present.*

*Live is easy in the now. Love is easy in the now. Loving the person in front of you, whether friend or foe, whether family or stranger. Loving them equally and deeply.*

*That's what Freedom is all about. That's real Freedom Inside.*

*With much love,  
Janine*

(continued from page 1)

Third, you would begin to not only understand Who You Really Are, but to honor and demonstrate that. That is, you would move from what you Know to what you Experience as the measure of your own evolution. Fourth, you would love yourself fully, just as you are. Fifth, you would love everyone else fully, just as they are. Sixth, you would love life fully, just as it is. Seventh, you would forgive everyone everything. Eighth, you would never deliberately hurt another human being again -- emotionally or physically. Least of all would you ever do this in the name of God. Ninth, you would never mourn the death of another again, not even for a moment. You might mourn your loss, but not their death. Tenth, you would never fear or mourn your own death, not even for a moment. Eleventh, you would be aware that everything is vibration. Everything. And so you would pay much

more attention to the vibration of everything that you eat, of everything that you wear, of everything that you watch, read, or listen to, and most important, of everything that you think, say, and do. Twelfth, you would do whatever it takes to adjust the vibration of your own energy and the life energy that you are creating around you if you find that it is not in resonance with the highest knowing you have about Who You Are, and the greatest experience of this that you can possibly imagine. Life is God, made physical. What is important to understand is that there is no single way in which life makes God physical. Some waves are small, barely a ripple, while other waves are huge, thunderous in their sweep. Yet, whether minuscule or monstrous, there is always a wave. There is no time when there is not a wave on the ocean. And while every wave is different, not a single one is divided from the ocean itself.

Difference does not mean division. Those words are not interchangeable. You are different from God, but you are not divided from God. The fact that you are not divided from God is why you can never die. The wave lands on the beach, but it does not cease to be. It merely changes form, receding back into the ocean. The ocean does not get "smaller" every time a wave hits the sand. Indeed, the incoming wave demonstrates, and therefore reveals, the ocean's majesty. Then, by receding into the ocean, it restores the ocean's glory. The presence of the wave is evidence of the existence of the ocean. Your presence is evidence of the existence of God. Isn't that a WONderful statement? It is one of hundreds of such statements in this final dialogue of the Conversations with God series. I am so happy (and humbled) to have been able to bring all of us this final conversation. I am leaving now for the Sedona retreat site where

I will be regathering my energies for the next several days. Please read HOME WITH GOD very carefully. If you have already read it, read it again. I believe that it contains life-changing messages for us all. And pass the news of these messages on to others if it serves you to do so. Also, re-read Part of the Change, the wonderful booklet available for free on this website (see Home Page). And finally, if you have not caught up with the latest chapters in THE HOLY EXPERIENCE, the new book that I have been writing over the past several months and that is available to you for FREE on our Home Page, please do so. People have been asking for years now, What about those people who can't afford to buy your books? How can they get access to this information? THE HOLY EXPERIENCE is my answer to that question. I hope you enjoy it, and receive wonderful benefit from the reflections you will find there.

*Our deepest fear  
In not that we are inadequate.  
Our deepest fear  
is that we are powerful beyond measure.  
It is our light,  
not our darkness,  
that most frightens us.  
We ask ourselves,  
who am I to be brilliant,  
gorgeous, talented, fabulous?*

*Actually, who are you not to be?  
You are a child of God.  
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.  
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking  
so that other people  
won't feel insecure around you.*

*We were born to make manifest  
the glory of God that is within us.  
It's not just in some of us;  
it's in everyone.  
And as we let our own light shine,  
we unconsciously give other people  
permission to do the same.  
As we are liberated from our own fear,  
our presence automatically liberates others.*

*By: Marianne Williamson  
From: Life Prayers From Around the World  
365 Prayers, Blessings, and Affirmations to Celebrate the Human Journey  
Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon*

## What is Justice?

Justice usually refers to someone getting their 'just' dessert" for having committed an offense against someone's person or property. Justice also refers to someone being exonerated from false allegations or compensated for denied liberties. In most instances, the foundation for a form of healing is administered. Thus, in my mind, justice is healing because an offender reaps what is sown.

People who have been victimized by an offender as well as their families and friends usually experience a degree of relief when the offender is punished. In other words, those who are violated and those who sympathize with them get to recapture, subjectively, a continuing part of themselves once the offender who hurt them is hurt also. (...) In short, prior to the arrest and sentencing the victims were experiencing unique elements of unhealthiness; however, after 'justice' has been served, the healing began.

Sometimes a person is incorrectly charged with having committed a crime or is being sued for someone else's negligence. That person seeks justice in an effort to clear his or her name. (...) During this period when a person's integrity is called into question he or she loses face in the eyes of the authorities and within his or her public interactions. Once justice is served or the accused person's name is cleared recovery from within and within the community can proceed.

[Some]victims may not be able to recover from the damage done to

them but compensatory damages awarded by judicial system could allow these victims opportunities to heal in a different way.

(...) Justice will obviously mean different things to different people based on their level of conscious awareness. Thus, for some it will be retaliation for an offense; for others clearing a name; (...) [and more].

In most instances, healing and a special type of freedom is apparent. On yet an even deeper level, it's an observation of what's so and what works and these are the type of observations that inspire us to have 'detached involvement' with our physical realities and to pay attention to the soul attributes of ourselves and others. This to me is one of the characteristics of my freedom inside.

HJ

North Carolina

Dear HJ,

*Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts with us. Your words reflect very clearly what so many people think justice is all about. That is why I am so grateful to you for sending this in.*

*I cannot agree with most of what is a widely acknowledged definition a 'justice'.*

*Justice, for me, has nothing to do with how people treat me. Justice is not about fairness to me. It is not about someone else doing something that will help me heal.*

*Justice, for me, is how I am. It is who I am. It is, as you say, one of my soul's characteristics. As is Love. As is Healing.*

*I very much believe in the concept of detach involvement.*

*Healing comes to me from within. It comes when I put all the best that I am into what I say and do (involvement) while expecting nothing to turn out in any particular way (detachment).*

*I do not believe that hurting someone who hurts me would ever bring me justice, much less healing. I already have Justice. I already have all the Healing the world could even want or need.*

*Nothing anyone does could ever 'damage' me to the point that I would need healing. When someone tries to hurt me, my best reaction is to love them more. I am Healing personified. I am Healing in action.*

*Searching for healing in someone being punished for hurting me is a very widespread reaction and much publicized to the point that many people believe it is a necessary thing for healing, for what is called 'closure'.*

*I do not agree.*

*Detached involvement is, as you say, our soul's way. Loving without expectations. Unconditional Loving.*

*That is the way of Freedom. Freedom Inside.*

*Thank you for shining your light on us.*

Janine

## Justice: A Very Sensitive Subject

(...) I really hate talking about this subject because I find it to be a real sensitive issue...especially with all the political drama that's going on right now with terrorism and Katrina.

My definition of justice, to me at least, is doing something good. I feel when one does something good for him/herself, he/she is doing justice. Also, a person is doing other's justice

when that person does something kind.

I always try my best to do good for myself and others although I am not perfect. I make mistakes too. Sometimes, I even lose track of myself when I anticipate seeing only good in others.

Sincerely,

SP, Washington

Dear SP,

*Thank you for writing to me. I find your simple words full of wisdom.*

*How would the world look if more people lived by your simple philosophy? You share the Dalai Lama's teaching, he says his religion is kindness.*

*In loving gratitude,*

Janine



Being easily identifiable as a Jew in one of Michigan's prisons, isn't always the smartest thing to do since it makes the person a perfect target for every bigot with an attitude. I know. I am an incarcerated Jew who wears a kippah (skullcap), beard and tallit katan (a small undershirt with ritual fringes attached) despite the inevitable heckling such attire draws.

Several years ago, at a weekly Torah study group, the prison's chaplain allowed me to lead. A new participant arrived late - one who I immediately knew wasn't Jewish. In our little group he stood out like a piglet among puppies. It wasn't that our group was exclusively Jewish either. We had men from several other faiths. It was his closely cropped hair and numerous tattoos displaying swastikas and other Nazi-like memorabilia that quieted our group and set him apart from us.

After a moment or two of staring at one another, he dropped his gaze to the carpet and asked in a barely audible voice whether or not he could join us for the evening. To say that I was shocked is an understatement, but

I recovered quickly enough so I didn't gawk at him too long before rising and inviting him to take a seat across from me. What followed is something I would never have expected from within a prison's hard, cold walls.

Although it shames me today, I didn't treat Ron very well that first night. I could only see the symbols that had doomed six million of my people to their horrible deaths. Whether following my lead or through revulsion of their own, none of the other members tried to engage Ron in conversation, leaving him very alone in an otherwise crowded room. The next week was a repetition of the first.

Prior to the third session, Ron asked for a minute of the group's time.

"By now you're probably wondering why I'm here," Ron said in his quiet voice, fixing his gaze firmly on the tabletop. "I'm here to change. I'm here to learn how to stop hating others . . . to stop hating myself."

Ron then spent the next half hour pouring out his heart to us about how he'd grown up in a dysfunctional, racist fam-

ily in California, gotten busted for hate-related burglaries and ended up in some of California's toughest prisons, where he became a fervent member of the Aryan Brotherhood. After earning a delayed parole, Ron came to Michigan to escape his past, only to wind up falling back into his old patterns of behavior - a decision that led to his present incarceration. When Ron finished, he looked up. There were tears flowing down his cheeks. It was at that point that our group was forever changed.

We spent the first portion of each session over the next few months working with Ron, challenging his beliefs and exploring his reasons for wanting to change. It was a difficult task and one that I frequently thought he'd abandon. Ron continued to take great emotional and physical risks to come to terms with the things he'd done.

I knew Ron wasn't the same man I'd first met when he started walking the yard with me - an act that publicly shouted Ron's renunciation of hate to those who once counted him among their bigoted elite. To his credit, Ron silently with-

stood his ex-friends' taunts and continued seeking new ways to improve himself.

Eventually, when our entire group was satisfied that Ron wasn't pulling some type of elaborate con game, we pooled our money and paid to have Ron's tattoos covered up by one of the prison's best illegal artists. We also put him in touch with several outreach organizations and convinced him to help others who were blindly stumbling down his old path.

Ron had come to our group seeking positive change. He found it. He also became a person I am proud to call a friend. Ron, however, also changed me. He renewed my waning belief in mankind's ability to overcome its senseless hatred - to find its goodness buried beneath layers of encrusted filth. From this one individual, and from within an openly hostile environment, dozens have learned acceptance of that which is different. I will go to my grave knowing few greater accomplishments.

By: Douglas Burgess  
[www.faithfulhope.com/read/ingroom](http://www.faithfulhope.com/read/ingroom)

*When you can say "thank you" in advance, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, and really, really mean it. And you've steered yourself clear of the cursed hows, especially from insisting upon certain behavior from specific people. Your mastery over the illusions of time and space will become legendary.*

*Just like you.*

*The Universe*

*From: [theuniverse@tut.com](mailto:theuniverse@tut.com)*

# The Poetry Corner

## The Right Choice

Some men live,  
Some men die,  
Others only exist...  
But we have the right to choose;  
To be good,  
Or to be bad...  
To do right,  
Or to do wrong...  
To love  
Or to hate...  
And in the end,  
To live or to die.  
I chose to live...  
To live good...  
To do right...  
To live with love...  
And then to die,  
With peace and dignity,  
For I made the right choice!

R.F.  
Texas

## Freedom

I look through prison bars  
And can see I am without,  
I can focus on the noise,  
Hear every scream and shout,  
I can view my life this far  
Being filled with sin,  
Or I can find true meaning  
By searching within.

Inside there is a place  
Of acceptance and love,  
Where my essence; my soul  
Links to the divinity above.  
The prison bars remain  
And I'm not exempt from the pain,  
But there is the flame of truth  
Burning inside;  
A place where true freedom  
Does reside.

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## A Voice From Inside

Prison has changed my life immensely.  
There are so many aspects in me that it has changed;  
physically, spiritually, mental outlook and inner strength.  
The life I lived before coming to prison  
was a semi-fast paced lifestyle,  
prison made me look at the way I was living  
and how I really wanted to live.  
I have learned patience, daily meditation  
as well as looking at my life  
in many different ways.  
I have focused on the points in my life  
I have tried for years to avoid;  
past struggles, failure of relationships,  
fear of letting people close to me mentally.  
Prison has not changed me,  
but it gave me the ability and time  
to step back from where I was in life  
to see what it was I am after in this life;  
what I want and what I want to give.  
My personal view is that some prisoners  
could teach the world immeasurable amounts of love,  
some could teach courage and confidence.  
Everyone can learn something from someone.

JS  
FL

### About a Book

The poems, *Freedom* and *A Voice From Inside* were taken from a beautiful little book titled:

#### The Spirituality of Incarceration

The Spirituality of Incarceration is written with a vision to create a new perspective and insight into the prison system. The aim being to provide those incarcerated with positive tools and practical guidance to consciously walk along their spiritual paths and to find peace within themselves through awareness of the bigger, universal picture surrounding our human existence. Through the personal perspectives and experiences of both those in prison and those on the outside who have friends in prison, the book provides an awareness and understanding of the introspection and ensuing positive transformations prison can bring to a person. Also acknowledging that the present prison system is detrimental to all concerned, The Spirituality of Incarceration serves as a means of offering a more unified and balanced way forward for mankind as a whole, as we enter times of huge spiritual growth and awareness.

Inspirational spiritual vision and practical guidance; a book of hope, unity, empowerment and reform. Available via the following online vendors: Amazon, Barnes and Noble and Publish America. By Katja Farnden and Jeffrey Stevens, ISBN: 1-4241-1280-X

## Qualities of Spiritual Maturity

**Spirituality in education could promote the following qualities of spiritual maturity**

- **Love, Compassion and Service.** Love and compassion are often associated with the beginning of a true spiritual life. Love dissolves confusion and fear and elicits kindness, openness and respect. Unless we love and trust ourselves, we cannot love others. Compassion goes beyond a personal form of love to a love of all creation.
- **Honesty and Authenticity.** No longer lying to ourselves and others about what we are doing and what the consequences are. To live as we really are without delusion about the reality of the past, the present, our selfhood and behaviours.
- **Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual Clarity.** Physical clarity has to do with attention to the body's health and real needs. Mental and emotional clarity have to do with awareness, discernment and lucidity. Spiritual clarity has to do with wholeness, simplicity and sensitivity.
- **Responsibility and Discipline.** Becoming accountable for ourselves without feeling excessively responsible for others. Dependable and creative completion of our

**responsibilities and a disciplined approach to personal growth.**

- **Serenity.** A state of equanimity, inner tranquillity and peacefulness in the face of challenge and change.
- **Personal Freedom.** Letting go of attachments and living questions and problems into answers and opportunities without drama, escape, or avoidance.
- **Tolerance and Patience.** The ability to embrace self and 'the other' in spite of perceived weakness or difference. To even move beyond tolerance to acceptance and celebration of difference and diversity. Patience means to take events and experiences as they come without complaint or expectation. It also means all things have a natural time and place to be.
- **Faith, Trust, and Inner Security.** The ability to live without anxiety or doubt. An inner security free of fear and deprivation.
- **Wisdom and Understanding.** Deep insight, possible at any age, expressed through everyday action.
- **Gratitude, Humility and Willingness.** Gratitude is the recognition of the little miracles that occur everyday. Humility is

**the ability to move beyond arrogance and grandiosity toward an honest acceptance of ourselves with all our perceived limitations and faults.**

- **Hope, Happiness, Joy, and Humour.** Hope and happiness are states of well-being and contentment emanating from a deep feeling of inner wealth irrespective of outer events or experiences. Joy and humour spring from a warm heart and a sense of the 'cosmic game'.
- **Connection With the Earth, Nature and Everyday Life.** Even though we may find great inspiration in sacred systems or transcendent experiences, we recognise the sacredness of daily activities, other people, other life forms, inanimate matter, and nature. "It's no good being an angel if you're no earthly use."
- **Living In the Present Moment.** The ability to live in the present rather escaping to the past or the future. The ability to constantly 'let go'.
- **A Sense of Wonder, Mystery, and Reverence.** A direct experience of the cosmos which is unitive, inclusive, and expansive. A sense of being aware of the profound interconnectedness of all creation.
- **A Sense of Purpose and Place in Space and Time.** A sense of the

### *Quotable Quotes*

**Time To Change Direction?**

Employ the power of positive quitting. Most of us view quitting as something negative, but it's not. 'Winners never quit,' we're told, when, in reality, winners quit all the time: choosing to stop doing things that aren't creating the results they desire. When you quit all the things that aren't working for you, when you quit tolerating all the negative things that hold you back, you'll create a positive 'charge' in your life as well as create the space in your life for more positive experiences."

-- Jim Allen

"I like thinking of possibilities. At any time, an entirely new possibility is liable to come along and spin you off in an entirely new direction. The trick, I've learned, is to be awake to the moment."

- Doug Hall



***Freedom Inside***  
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Janine Cantin*

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