



A Newsletter For Prisoners
Based on the Conversations with God Material

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Issue # 41 September 2008

Reality and Other Such Problems

"You have to face reality!"

Has this ever been said to you?
Did it make you cringe as it did me?

pessimistic have to go together?
It certainly seems that way when I hear some people talk.

What is real and what is not?

witnesses, even those standing next to each other, who report very different descriptions of accidents. These witnesses may have the very best intentions and still not agree with one another.

"Facing reality" is not something I ever want to do. Nor do I wish it on anyone. Here is what I know for sure:

"Facing reality usually means to stay within the lines, to conform to whatever the speaker expects of you, or the world."

each of us has our own view of the world, our own perspective. We see things from where we stand.

So what is the "reality"? Some people will say that regardless of what the witnesses report, something happened out there and that is what reality is.

When I am told to face reality, it usually means someone wants me to give up my deepest dream, my highest ideal..

Here's an example of this.

OK, I'll buy that (if it's cheap!). But my question is, "So what?"

Facing reality usually means to stay within the lines, to conform to whatever the speaker expects of you, or the world.

A fire alarm is sounding from within a building. Four people call 9-1-1 at about the same time. They describe very different situations: there is neither smoke nor fire; smoke is coming from a window on the third floor; flames are shooting from the second floor window; a man is hanging from a fourth floor window.

All any of us has to go on is our own perceptions of the world. We see how we see, hear how we hear, smell how we smell, feel how we feel, taste how we taste. Our five senses are our only contact with the "real" world. If we sense things differently, so what?

For instance, when someone speaks of their belief in the power of non-violence the response often is that it's a nice thought but we must face reality and the need for war.

What's more, I know for sure how limited this contact is. Many animals sense more than I do; many people have more developed senses than I do. I could try to improve my sensory skills but they have certain limits that I have accepted.

Being idealistic is not considered realistic. Barely more "realistic" is being hopeful about the future of the Earth and of Mankind .

Do you wonder what is going on? How could four people describe the same fire in such different ways? The answer to that is easy as, I'm sure some of you realize: the four witnesses are on four different sides of the building.

Is it "real" to believe there is no sound near me just because I can't hear them? How about all

It makes me wonder what reality is; what a dream is.

I'm sure you have heard of eye

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Reality and Other Such Problems

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those sound waves just waiting for me to tune my radio in order to hear the music.

How about everything we can suddenly see in the dark when wearing night goggles?

I'm sure you could add many other such examples of the limits of our perceptions.

So where does that leave me? How do I judge what is out there using my very limited senses?

Well, of course, I do it all the time. Moreover, I do it unquestioningly, unconsciously (or sometimes consciously) accepting my view as reflecting a reality "out there".

What is even more incredible to me is that knowing my limits, knowing that I only see what I see, I only see how I see, I only see who I am, I still keep in mind my experiences of the world and give them weight.

I have experience. I have knowledge. I am wise to the world. I understand people and their motivations.

Bull!

What I know is that all I know is determined by who I am. There is nothing that I have experienced that is not completely shaped by the Self I am.

My so-called experience consists not only of what I lived through but of the little I remember of it.

So here is where I am: all I know comes from past experiences which are determined by who I am.

All I know is who I am. This is all I can know. This determines my perception of everything.

This determines my reality. My reality comes from who I am. Who I am does not come from my experiences.

So how, then, can you and I share the same experience? Personally, I do not believe we can. Although I do believe we can share who we are.

This newsletter is an excellent example of such sharing.

I write whatever is the inspiration of the moment. I feel that I am putting the best of me in these words. They are very meaningful to me.

Your choice to read these lines comes from within you. The meaning that you put into them also comes from you. The message may resonate with you or it may not.

I believe the most beautiful experiences in our lives, the most meaningful ones, happen when two people or more give the same meaning to a particular experience. This is when life becomes "meaningful". But was is meaningful to one person will not necessarily be meaningful to another. This is where the beauty of the diversity of Creation truly shines.

Not everyone makes the same choices. The fact that you choose to read these lines makes my experience as a writer glorious.

This is part of my "reality". The joy of connecting with others, of sharing my best Self and seeing the best Self in others is the reality I choose every day of my life.

*I have to "face reality"?
You betcha!
Love,
Janine*

High School Band

By Counselor Nickle, Mental Health

At my high school, the band director was one of those extremely annoying people who repeats the same tidbits of advice over and over until his listeners are ready to vomit. This practice was the source of endless entertainment for his students, who used his class to play a variety of games including Director Bingo and Guess the Lecture, as well as holding impersonation contests in the practice rooms. At the time, I laughed as loudly at his sermons as anyone else did and I was especially good at Guess the Lecture, which involved predicting which specific saying he would use and when. Unfortunately, as I have grown, several of his sayings have stayed with me. (Don't you hate it when that happens? I have a running list of lectures going off in my head and neither anti-psychotics nor chocolate help. But I'm off topic.)

One of the sayings that stuck was "take ownership of your part." When the bass line was weak or the flutes faked their way through difficult passages, this would be the proverb he would quote. Basically, he meant that in order for a band to play well, each individual player has to know their part and play it like they know it. He would follow up either with a lecture about personal responsibility, or he would use the guilt trip.

If one person does not play his part, he lets the entire band down. It does not do any good for every clarinet to play their section flawlessly and with confidence if the fifth clarinets sound sloppy. Because the clarinets are sloppy, the woodwinds sound weak. Because the woodwinds are weak, the brass sounds overpowering. So the entire band is out of balance and the music cannot be any better than bearable. All because of one person. (In our band, it was usually more than one. This is probably why this was one of his favorite sayings. But I'm off topic again.)

A band has often been my metaphor for life. We all play different parts to make our lives run smoothly.

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The Only Question That Matters
 Chapter 16 in *Questions and Answers on Conversations with God*
 by Neale Donald Walsch

*I was thumbing through my books and lo and behold, this chapter jumped at me.
 I just love it when that happens. So I'm sharing. Enjoy!*
 Janine

In the end, in a book filled with questions, there is only one question that really matters. Everything else hinges on our answer to this question, and nothing else makes any sense until the answer is given.

The most interesting thing about this question is that a new answer has to be created in every moment. We can never be through answering the question—and, in truth, we should never wish to be through, because if we are, the game of life is over.

The second-most interesting thing about the question is that we are already answering it. We have never stopped answering it from the moment it was asked—which was the moment of our birth—and we will be answering it even forevermore.

The question?
 Who am I?

This is the question that God is asking. It is the question that life asks. It is the question that you must consciously ask yourself, and to which you must consciously provide the answer, if you are to jump off, at last, what

you imagine to be a karmic wheel that keeps you caught up in experiences which you neither choose, nor prefer.

Now the first sentence in that last paragraph may seem unbelievable to you. How can God have any questions about anything at all? Isn't God the source of everything? All wisdom, all knowledge, all understanding, and especially, all of the answers?

Well, yes and no.

God is the source of all of the answers to every question there is, ever was, and ever will be—and God knows, those answers will be known by God when God knows them.

Clear?

Yeah, right. Well, okay, let's go at it this way. God is in the act of deciding who and what God is. Life is a process by which God is "becoming". You are a part of that process. In fact, you are the process itself, playing itself out. Even as you decide who and what you are, and who you choose to be, so is God making the same decision—for God is the sum total of what everything is. And God will

be the sum total of what everything becomes.

Now, to make matters even more complicated, I should tell you that all of this has already been decided. That is, everything that ever was, is now, and every will be, is, right now. It already exists, has always existed, and always will exist, and it never, ever cannot be. (That is why it is impossible for you to "die".)

As explained in *CWG Book 3*, ultimate reality can be explained using, as an analogy, something familiar to all of us—the CD-ROM. On the disc of computerized games is every outcome that can be imagined. You can sit down and play the game any way you like. You make a move, and the computer responds. The response is certain and it is predictable. Every time you make that move, under those exact same circumstances, the computer will respond in exactly the same way. Yet there are an infinite number of possible moves, and, therefore, possible outcomes—all of which already exist on the disc, ready to be played out.

This is a very rough analogy, but it works, in

that it helps us to understand how it could be possible for every outcome in the universe to already exist, and yet remain to be chosen and experienced. If you think that modern computer technology is incredible, wait until you see the technology of the universe.

What remains to be understood is the mechanism by which the "game" is played. Who do we choose, and produce, our outcomes? And all of that is explained in great detail the *Conversations with God* trilogy. If that material is read carefully, you will know and understand how you are answering, right now, in every single moment, whether you are doing it consciously or unconsciously, the only question in life that really matters.

Who am I?

Sometimes it helps, to get you into the swing of this, to ask the question after, rather than before, a particular experience or event. Take a look at three things you did, said, or thought today. Ask yourself, Is this who I really am? Is this who I

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The Only Question That Matters

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choose to be?

As you get better at this, you will start to close the gap between the time you think, say, or do something and the time you ask the question. Soon, you will feel yourself asking the question even in the midst of what you are thinking,

saying, or doing. Finally, you will find yourself stopping in the split-second before you think, say, or do something, and asking the question ahead of time. Then you will answer the question by whatever behavior you exhibit.

At this point, you will

have achieved mastery. Every other question in this book will then become irrelevant, because you will have known yourself, if only briefly, as the creator of your own experience. Once that happens, there can be no more questions. There will only be an-

swers, flowing from you every moment. And you will be a master, indeed. Not just in thought, not just in word, but in deed. And what you do will change the world.

High School Band

By Counselor Nickle, Mental Health

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Sometimes, the band we're in is a full orchestra with large sections working with each other, like security, medical, counseling, metal health, maintenance, and every inmate detail. Sometimes, the band is a jazz ensemble, where each part is different and each individual solely responsible for getting it right, like a dorm getting ready for inspection in the morning. Sometimes the band is just two guitarists and a singer and we're just trying to make

a pleasant sound, like when we're hanging out with friends or talking to our family. Sometimes you're just an unsupported soloist and you are the only one who knows how beautiful your music really is. But no matter which band we're in, we have to play our part for it to work.

You're in a band and the music you're trying to make is your life. If you want it to be any better than bearable, you have to play your part. It's no good to get scared

or angry because your part looks more difficult than someone else's does. It's no good to sit back and watch your part go by because someone else will pick it up. It's no good to give all of your difficult passages to someone else and say, "Play it". The music is thrown out of balance unless you do your part. It's your life. Take ownership of it.

"If a man is called to be a street-sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the host of heaven and earth will pause to say 'Here lived a great street-sweeper who did his job well.'"

Martin Luther King, Jr.

-This article appeared on Pill Call, May 2008

A Magazine based on A Course in Miracles

Jon Mundy, one of the original people who frequented Helen Schucman, the scribe of *A Course in Miracles*, is sending [The Miracles Magazine](#) to prisoners.

If you are interested in receiving this magazine, please let us know at *Freedom Inside* and we will forward your information to Joseph Wolfe who is responsible for the distribution.

A year's subscription is \$20.00. If you cannot afford this, there are a few donated subscriptions available.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Freedom Inside now contains 12 pages. We're growing and I just love it.

A while back I bought an internet course called The Thomas Messages that I found wonderfully uplifting. I am now choosing to share this course with you in these new pages. There are 16 messages in all, I will include one in each issue until all 16 messages have been shared with you.

If some of you would like to receive the messages more quickly, please go to www.emissaryoflight.com and for a suggested donation of 50 US dollars, you will receive one of these messages every few days.

Here is how James Twyman, the author of the course, describes it.

THE THOMAS MESSAGES:

In 2002, a book was published called "Emissary of Love: the Psychic Children Speak to the World" chronicling my journey into the mountains of Bulgaria to meet a group of children who possess amazing psychic powers. One of those children, a young boy named Thomas, claimed to be able to send messages and insights over great distances, even to the other side of the world. I didn't remember this until I was sitting in a hot tub some months later and "felt him" inside me.

It was the first time I ever had an experience like this, and it was the beginning of a long discourse on the role of the New Children (sometimes called the Indigo Children) and their role in healing the world. These amazing lessons, all from the mind of Thomas, are the result of that dialogue. He claims that there are thousands of children in the world today who have the same gift, the ability to "align" with others who can then help them complete their Great Work.

If you are interested in learning this, or connecting with one of these young masters, then this course is the way. Thomas shares insights that will help you live a fulfilled life, and even teaches how to enter the "Grid" where the children work together.

It is important for you to decide why you are taking this course. Is it because you want to perform miracles? Do you want to feel more powerful than you have ever allowed yourself to be in the past? If these ideas approach the reasons you are reading this right now, then it would be best for you to stop. Find something else to occupy your time. You will not achieve these things if they are the goal you seek. However, if you are reading this because you have decided that you are on this planet to be an "Instrument of Peace," and to heal the world by healing your own mind, then please continue. If you open your heart and mind to these simple lessons and dedicate yourself to this mission, then you will achieve it. Guaranteed!

And here is the paradox: If you do seek these higher ideals, to love and to realize that you are already whole and enlightened, then the miracles will surely follow, and you will realize yourself to be more powerful than you have ever allowed yourself to be in the past. They are not the goals, but they are the products of a higher goal. You are here to learn how to apply the force we call LOVE. It is as easy as learning a certain technology that has been known by the mystics of many spiritual traditions for thousands of years. Now it is your turn to learn it, then apply it to your life.

Message Eight

PRAYER

Be with us today, all of us who are walking this path.

We will continue to open our hearts so that we may perceive the love that you placed safe within our hearts.

We will have courage for a little while longer, knowing that we are being led perfectly into the Light.

There is nowhere left for us to go now.

We will answer your call every moment of our lives.

Let our YES fill the Universe as we remember why you called us at this time.

We have arrived at the half way point in our course. In this lesson we will have the chance to look back and acknowledge everything we have achieved, and everything we have lost. In the end you will realize that the love you are discovering has always been with you, and the fear you lay aside was never really yours. You had adopted a way of seeing the world that made unreality seem very real. But the truth in you has never been changed by this illusion, and the Children have come to demonstrate this. Their gift is that they have come into the world with the veil only half drawn, allowing them to see two worlds, one which is real and the other which is not. And now they reach out to us, the ones who have chosen to listen to their message, and they offer us the same vision of Grace.

Until now you have been removing the blocks to this awareness, stripping away the horrific symbols of your fear. This may have left you a bit bewildered at times, and that shouldn't worry you at all. In fact, if you didn't feel this at all then you haven't taken the teaching as deep as you could. It is meant to confront every idea you have ever had about yourself, the world and God. If you allow yourself to feel that confrontation without judgment or fear, then you will be able to break through into the next phase. But you have to feel it, not just think about it. The moment you realize that your comfort is not the primary goal (that will, of course, come a little later) then you will lay aside your defenses and let the Children do their real work. Then the clouds will part, and you will see the sun at last.

Did you hear what I just said? Your comfort is not the primary goal. That statement alone should rock your world. Why would you embark on a journey that tries to make you feel uncomfortable? It doesn't make any sense at all.

Here is what I mean. As long as you believe on any level that you are separate from God, your brother or your sister, or anything else in the world (and I don't mean intellectually, but wholly), then you do not understand what real comfort is. To the ego, comfort is a place to hide where nothing will intrude upon its warped beliefs. It doesn't want to be challenged because it knows how fragile its foundation is. The part of you that is looking for a spiritual path that will soothe your senses is the same part of you that doesn't want to look at the real truth. It prefers the illusion, and it strives to make the illusion seem real. That, after all, is what makes it feel most comfortable.

Oh no, that is not at all what this message is about; certainly not what the Children are trying to get us to see. They have seen and know what will comfort the soul, not the ego. If you could see this as well then you would gladly lay aside all the symbols and make believe worlds you have created. You would not want to wait another moment before accepting the truth, for you would know what you are giving up by choosing the ego's goal. You would not see death as comfort, but as an impossibility, and you would not be fooled by anything ever again.

How can death be seen as a comfort? That is a question you need to ask yourself, for it is what you seek every time you choose the ego's goal of separation. There is not one thing the ego chooses for itself that does not end in despair and death. Nothing! Even the most lovely, and loving, things in the world ultimately end in pain. Are you willing to look at that? If you are, then you are very, very close to the end, and the beginning. If it is too hard to look at, then you may need to travel the ego's path a little longer, only to end up in the exact same place you are in right now. It is your choice. What the ego calls comfort is really its longing for death, because the ego is nothing more than the projection of your own self hatred. The ego is your attempt to hide from who you really are, and create a false self that is not worthy of love.

But you can not hide any longer. The Children's message is so clear that you wouldn't have been able to come this close and not be able to reach the end. You have such powerful allies at your side, whether you are aware of them or not. They have been drawn by your willingness to lay aside everything that hasn't served your soul, and they will not

leave until they help you in the truest sense. They will not leave until you open your eyes and realize that you are safe and at home. That is their job, and they will not disappoint us. I remember one of the Children in Bulgaria telling me that the Children of Oz have made a kind of contract with many people on Earth, all those who are ready to bring peace to the world. They said that they would be able to find all of us, wherever we may be in the world. I believe they are keeping their promise, and all of you are proof of that. You are ready to embrace this promise, no matter how scary it may sometimes seem. Don't be afraid of anything, because they are willing to carry you if they have to.

Thomas' Message:

The goal is always right in front of you. Now that you have learned to tell the difference between the guidance being offered by your Child Guide and what you would offer from your own imagination, you are ready to seek and find the answer to every problem you will ever have. Once again, the goal, or Heaven, is always right in front of you. The only thing we are here to do is to help you open your eyes to that Truth. Once you have, then it will be hard to go back to your old way of seeing. You may falter now and then, but the Light will be too bright for you to fall back completely. Then you are only a step away, and Peace will have come at last.

The second half of this course will involve helping you SEE what is really there, instead of seeming to see what isn't. (That is what you've been doing.) And if the goal is always right in front of you, then that is where we will look for it. Every person you meet is the key to your salvation, and you will learn to give them what you say you want. It is the only way for you to have it...you already know that. But now it is time for you to experience it in your soul, not just your mind.

In this lesson you will prepare for the sacred time to come. You were asked to find that place of silence within your heart, and that is where we will return now. If you are to reap the truest benefits of these next eight lessons, then you need to open your heart as wide as you can, and the Ocean of Light will come alive, returning to the surface of your life. Visit that silent place as often as you can in the next few weeks, and ask your Child Guide to be there with you. They already are.

Pick one person to help you open the door a little wider. Their job, though they do not need to know anything about this, will be to remind you of God's love for YOU. They will be the physical embodiment of the most sacred love imaginable, your connection with your Divine Beloved. Through their eyes you will see yourself, then God, and know the Truth.

And you will practice this in the most ordinary ways. Here's what you will do:

Pick someone in your life who you will see regularly who you have deep affection for. The deeper the affection you have with this one the better. (your child, your partner, etc.)

PRETEND that this person is God, the Beloved. But you can't let them know what you are doing. Practice this as often as you can. Every time you are with them, look into their eyes and SEE the Beloved. FEEL the Heart of the Beloved through them, and know that God is there. The more you allow yourself to surrender to this practice the more benefit you will get from it. We suggest you do it for at least a half hour every day. If you can do it more, that will be even better. The important thing is to use the ordinary moments of your life to see the Face of Holiness in this one. They will feel it too, though they may not be conscious of this. But they will know. It is the greatest gift you can give them, or anyone.

This will be our first lesson on "Seeing what is True." We will expand upon this as the lessons progress. And you will ultimately find that the psychic powers the Children have spring from this practice, though they will begin to seem less and less important to you. You are so close. Only another step and you are there. Stay with this, even if you feel you are so far away. Trust us. We are with you.

*Peace,
Thomas*

A Personal Turning Point

(from an exchange of messages between friends)

Please allow me to share an episode in my life, and a response I got from the coaching trainer from CwG with whom I studied life coaching a few years back. This is where I am in my life at the moment, training myself to be in alignment with the universe automatically, and it is working more amazingly than one could ever imagine. I would love to hear your response, if you choose to respond, for I learn from the opinion of all who choose to access without judgment.

Affectionately

Bill

Dear Jim and Paul

Forgive me for bending your ear, but I don't have but you to share what I call very important breakthroughs with. Let me start by sharing a happening that got this new awareness started. One of the profound elements here is that it transpired in about one minute with me running totally on automatic. What a rush!

We have a coat rack at the head of the cellar stairs that has five hooks on it. Yesterday my wife came to me, and said, "You know, you are a lot taller than I, and have a lot longer reach, and yet for the last fourteen years, since I moved in here., you use the first three or four hooks closest to the landing, and I have only one or two with the farthest to reach." I stopped what I was doing and immediately took down all my clothes that were not absolutely necessary, and put them in the cellar, and what was left, I put on the last two hooks, and moved her things closest to the landing.

This was all on automatic, with absolutely no resistance. I have to admit we both were a little surprised at the speed, efficiency, and lack of resistance surrounding this move. Then the thought process

started to kick in.

When things are running along smoothly, and then there is a disruption of some kind, and your attention to what you were doing is interrupted, for a split second there is a void while you are deciding how you will respond to new stimulus. You are not concentrating on the old focus, and your system has not yet focused on the new. It is rare that you will consciously think through what your response to the new issue will be. Your system will start the ball rolling automatically, based on how you normally handle things of that particular nature. If you are programmed to respond with anger, that is what will come up. If you are conditioned to respond with compassion, that is what will come up, etc. I have conditioned myself to fill this void with unconditional love first as a background, and then shift into full awareness for a more detailed response.

When you create a void, it must be filled. The universe does not permit voids. If you plow up a piece of ground, and do nothing with it, in no time there will be grass, weeds, and all kinds of vegetation on that spot, provided there is enough water to sustain life of some form. Well, in human beings, who create a void as I did, that void was filled immediately with unconditional love. Not that unconditional love wasn't there before, but now a void has to be filled according to the intention of the universe, and unconditional love is the best candidate for the job. I can't tell you how I marveled over this epiphany, and all the effort I have put into not resisting, and seeing the gift in all that shows up for me, really was experienced in this glorious moment. When one can align one's self with the intention of the universe on automatic, without even thinking about it for a second, what a rush!!!!!! It's like an athlete who steps into the zone, with the first

step onto the playing field. The prior conditioning allows no thought to be required for this to happen. Thanks to CwG, and the coaching training, my efforts to accomplish this were minimal.

Now if we just sit back, and allow our minds to wander, and imagine what is possible when this process is done on a daily basis, on automatic pilot. Wow! Amazing what shows up! Can you imagine every action on your part being beneficial not only to you, but to everybody with whom you come in contact? Obviously this is a conditioning process, and should be started as young as possible, but nevertheless, think of the possibilities!

I will close for now, but would love to hear your response, if any, to this rambling, and excitement.

Love you guys

Bill

Hey Bill!

Congratulations for your great breakthrough. Let this incidence become a reference point in the new foundation of consciousness you are building for yourself. The "ZONE" metaphor is right on the money. When you connect the dots in this way, you are registering what happened at a different level of knowingness; a level that will have a lasting and profound effect on the rest of your life. It is a spiritual "nuclear explosion" precipitated by creating a critical mass that acts as a catalyst in causing the huge breakthrough. It is one thing to know these elements on an intellectual level but a whole new reality feeling them in the core of your being. Isn't it amazing how it all happens so effortlessly? You are simply being who you really are.

Bless you, my brother!
Jim

Most of us do deeply believe that stealing is wrong. Nevertheless, look at how many excuses we come up with for stealing:

“It’s no big deal, they deserve it.”
 “It’s a big company, they will not miss it.”
 “I need it more than he does.”
 “He’d do it to me if he had the chance.”

And so on; it’s the same thing with living simply in our lives. Deep in our heart we truly do believe that a simple, uncluttered life is much healthier for our selves, our family and the planet. Our ego may shout; “But you need this!” “You deserve it!” or, “You had better save yourself from this or that!” The ego can shout anything it wants, but if we can’t learn to recognize and live by our true values, we are going to screw up our lives royally. Many of us have already permanently done that to where if we ever do get out, we will still be screwed. We can try to cover the screw-ups with rationalizations and all sorts of excuses, or an “I

don’t care anyway” attitude, but we can never fool our own hearts—and quite frankly, nobody else here cares about our excuses or philosophies.

How other people perceive us has a lot more to do with our essence than words.

And if we secretly hate ourselves, our essence isn’t going to be too impressive. No matter how well our egos do their endless dances of con games and shadow boxing. How we feel inside is eventually going to come out, there is no way around that. Trust me on that one...

The good thing that you must remember is that we are all really good, decent human beings in our hearts. And as tough as it may be sometimes to discover that goodness (and live up to it) it’s a lot tougher in the end not to. I’ve tried!

Our world here at Valdosta State Prison, is filled with people who do not recognize their own

goodness. Don’t allow the food, the treatment by the officers, or the medical care, distract and rob you of your awareness of who you truly are, and the choices you have to make in order to better yourself. You have a choice between selfishness and unselfishness, greed or charity, faith or fear, love or hate, acceptance or rejection of your situation. To the degree that we choose the simple and good, our lives will be a gift to the ones we love, and will be in harmony with our own deepest nature. To the degree we choose the other, our lives will be just more statistics of the madness which has engulfed human beings since the beginning of time. This is not just food for thought; it’s a vital truth of your life. No matter what you did to get here on “vacation”, what you must do is decide how you want to spend your time now that you are here. More of the same? Or do you want a different life?

ANH
 Georgia

Quotable Quotes

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind

Nobody can hurt me without my permission

All quotes from Mahatma Gandhi

These beautiful poems were all written by a Christian prisoner who, to my great joy, has just become a contributor to this newsletter. Thank you, HS for sharing.

*Keep them coming!
Love and blessings,
Janine*

THE SET OF THE SAIL

I stood on the shore beside the sea
 The wind from the west blew
 fresh and free
 While past the rocks
 at the harbor's mouth
 The ships went north
 and the ships went south
 And some sailed out
 on an unknown quest
 And some sailed into the harbor's rest
 Yet ever the wind blew out of the west

I said to one who sailed the sea
 That this was a marvel unto me
 For how can the ships go safely forth
 Some to the south and some to the north
 Far out to sea on their golden quest
 Or in the harbor's calm and rest
 And ever the wind blew out of the west?

The sailor smiled as he answered me
 "Go where you will
 when you're on the sea
 Though head winds baffle
 and squalls delay
 You can keep the course from day to day
 Drive with the breeze or against the gale
 It will not matter what winds prevail
 For all depends on the set of the sail."

Voyager soul on the sea of life
 Over waves of sorrow and sin and strife
 When fogs bewilder and foes betray
 Steer straight on your course
 from day to day
 Though unseen currents
 run deep and swift
 Where rocks are hidden
 and sandbars shift
 All helpless and aimless,
 you need not drift

Oh, set your sail to the heavenly gale
 And then, no matter what winds prevail
 No reef shall wreck you, no calm delay
 No mist shall hinder, no storm shall stay
 Though far you wander
 and long you roam
 Through salt sea-spray
 and over white sea-foam
 No wind that can blow
 but shall speed you home.

PRISONER'S PRAYER

Though it is hard day in and day out
 Sometimes we read, pray and workout
 Like anxious dogs we wait for our food
 Try to God to be in a good mood
 I don't blame anyone
 for where now I call home
 It was part of God's plan
 and mistakes of my own
 With faith I sit in my prison cell
 twenty-three hours a day
 But with the help of the Lord,
 I'll be molded like clay
 Into what God has planned
 a soldier of the Lord
 But when I get out
 will I have the strength of a sword
 To never bend and to stand
 firm in my beliefs
 I know the answer is always,
 as the Lord protects me
 This walk with god has been hard,
 but yet I know
 There are two sets of footprints
 and only one was my own.

GUARD YOUR MIND

Be careful what you think
 Shun every evil strife
 Because one thing is certain
 Your thoughts can run your life

Wherever dwells the mind
 The eyes and ears go, too
 What you see and hear
 Affects the work you do

Keep your thought life pure
 Take captive each wrong done
 In the name of Jesus
 The victory is won!

I AM A PRISON

I am a prison; I'm damp and I'm cold
 I hold men and women
 who are young and ones who are old
 I'm surrounded by fence,
 cell doors, and gates that have locks
 My walls are all made of steel,
 iron, and concrete blocks

I am a prison and I'm feared by all
 I'll give you a chill
 when you hear me call
 Your name becomes a number,
 your face just another
 I'll show you no pity,
 I am not your mother

I am a prison, designed to be rough
 I am where society houses its tough
 Nobody has beat me,
 though they may have tried
 But mostly they all still remain inside
 I have no answers, so don't ask me why
 I put those tears in your loved ones' eyes

I am a prison where nobody wants to be
 I confine men and women
 who once were free
 I control their pace,
 I slow down their stride
 I strip them of dignity, I take their pride
 Like animals that you might
 put in a cage
 I contain these men and women
 and watch them age

I am a prison, I am full of despair
 I can be a person's worst nightmare
 I've been here many years
 and will be many more
 You'll recognize me
 by my loud slamming door

I am a prison,
 a place you don't really want to live
 I've so much to take but nothing to give
 But there is one who does
 and He hears all your pleas
 So pray to the Lord Jesus,
 for He has the Keys.

HS
 Missouri

*Here are the poems of another new contributor. We are surely doubly blessed this month.
Thank you SJ. Feel « free » to write again anytime
Love,
Janine*

PRISON INSIDE US ALL

There's a prison inside us all
Even if we think we're free to fall.
We don't have to be behind bars
Or be wasted 'cause we've gone too far.

In and out of these prison walls
Some will try and deny the call.
Break away, hear the voice
Fight the battle, make another choice.

Freedom, freedom, freedom
Freedom lives inside.
Freedom, freedom, freedom
Freedom lives inside.

Kick it off, drop it back
Do what I can, get back on track.
A high road, a steep climb
Stand up, realize, freedom lives inside.

SHE CAN BE FREE

She reaches out, try and change her world
Frantic and faithful, save the lost pearl.
Timid and fearful, love turned to dust
Her whole world fell apart as it must.

Burn down the bridges, let them fall away
Pray for a vision, take her pain away.

She can be free if she wants to
She can be standing on a higher peak.
She has the power to see how
The courage to do the right thing.

Turn around, feel the ground, cages never work
Turn around, feel the ground, angels quench the thirst.

TAKE MY LOVE

You can take my hat, remove my coat
Feel free, take my dope.
Take my shirt, remove my glove,
I won't let you take my love.

You can't take away my freedom
You can't take away my soul,
No, I won't let you
I am whole.

You can take my shoes, walk a mile
Go ahead and try to take away my smile.
Lie or steal, float or sink
I won't let you make me drink.

Show me what you want
I've got everything I need
Catch a falling star
Effect the air I breathe.

I do what I can
Walking with the one.
I've got everything I need to face the sun.

You can take my box, and all you find
I won't let you add more time.
Take my shirt, remove my glove
I won't let you take my love.

SJ
California

**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



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Janine Cantin*

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