



*A Newsletter For Prisoners
Based on the Conversations with God Material*

*PO Box 507
Ashland, OR 97520
USA
freedom_inside@hotmail.com*

Issue # 55 January 2011

Let Go and Let God

Happy New Year, everyone!!

We've just started a new year (so soon?!?!?). Have you made any New Year Resolutions? How are you doing so far? Have you kept them all or are some already going by the wayside?

The end of one year and the beginning of another are often a time when we choose to re-think how we live and make new decisions about the things we want to do (or stop doing).

I like that about this time of year. I like the re-examination of my life that seems to come with it.

And I question why that is. Why do I allow a date to decide for me what I do or what I think about? What other dates are there that influence me as December 31 and January 1 do?

There is my birthday, of course, with the accompanying accounting of years but also when I hear from loved ones I may not have been in contact with very often.

There are other special days, Christmas, Thanksgiving, and

Labor Day come to mind, each, at least for me, with their own set of behaviors.

And in the last few years, I've noticed that I am starting to dislike these holidays. Well, not the holidays in themselves, but the routines that seem to have less and less meaning for me.

“Why do I allow a date to decide for me what I do or what I think about?”

I spent Christmas with one of my son and his family. Those of you who have small children will know the complete joy of Christmas morning after Santa has dropped by. I love sharing their joy.

I also love Thanksgiving. Not for the turkey, not for the elaborate meals but for the opportunity to remember all I have to be thankful for.

I also love Labor Day. This, while growing up, was always a time for my extended family to get together, make music and just have a blast.

But I'm wondering if it is necessary to wait for specific dates

before experiencing the joy I feel during those moments. Or are the feelings special because I do not feel them all the time?

Do I still need to be reminded to be joyful? Do I still need the off-days, when I don't feel so hot in order to enjoy when I feel great?

It seems I do. It seems even at 60, I still haven't mastered the skill of living in the moment, enjoying the moment to its fullest, just letting go of everything but the moment and let the Universe show me the next moment as it comes. Just Let Go and Let God.

This reminds me of a joke my dear friend Mike told us a little while ago. With apologies to him since he's a much better story teller than I am, here is how I remember it.

A man is hanging over a cliff. He has no foothold at all and his hands are slipping. He knows he won't be able to hold on for much longer.

He looks up and prays, “If there's anyone up there, please help me!”

Suddenly, he hears a deep, reso
(continued on page 2)

Let Go and Let God

(continued from page 1)

nating voice saying, "Let go....let go".

Astounded, he looks up, he looks down...way, way down...and after a while says, "Anybody else up there?"

©

I like this story because it so completely reflects what I do more often than I like to think about. When everything is going well, I can "let go and let God" but when problems come up, I start planning, trying to find strategies and solutions. In short, I take control.

And I forget that my life has brought me many, many surprises, many gifts, some disguised as painful dramas, but all exactly "right" for me. None of them planned, under my control; many of them I would never have chosen for myself.

So my New Year resolution is to not have a "New Year Resolutions" but to have "In The Moment Resolutions".

There is no reason why I should wait for specific dates to come around before I choose how I feel about anything. I can choose anew in each moment.

I can choose to be joyful, to share gifts with my loved ones at any time; I can choose to be grateful for all I have and all I have ever had; and I can choose to enjoy the people around me whoever they are.

My life is mine to create. I am creating it whether deliberately or not. I can choose to wait for specific dates before I feel joy, love, gratitude, or I can do that here and now.

I choose here and now and let the Universe decide what comes next.

*Love,
Janine*

Winter Feast for the Soul Brings Opportunity To Nourish Your Spirit

By Karon Korp, Director Winter Feast for the Soul

On January 15th an event begins that will bring together people from all over the world with a common focus: stillness. It is called Winter Feast for the Soul, and invites participants to commit themselves to forty days of spiritual practice, and encourages spending forty minutes each of those days in the pursuit of ourselves.

Now in its fourth year, the Winter Feast began as an idea in Sun Valley, Idaho and spread rapidly to other cities, then found its way to people around the world who felt the call of its purpose. From January 15th to February 23rd, people will practice meditation individually, in groups, and access free meditations online from the Winter Feast homepage given by sixteen different teachers from a variety of traditions.

Through the practice of stillness, the concept of building peace takes on new meaning: as we become more peaceful, the world becomes filled with more Peace. The themes of spiritual practice are numerous: meditation, yoga, tai chi, walking in the woods, reading sacred literature, all can be considered spiritual practice. There is no limitation to take part in the Feast, simply an intention to be a part of something larger, connecting us with soul-friends the world over who share our desire for a deeper experience.

When the mind is quieted, a whole new inner world opens itself to us revealing vast landscapes seldom seem in the chaotic canvas of the mind. Even if meditation is something we've never been good at, or never spent much time doing, it is easy to begin and takes little skill. Some people become confused at the difference between meditation and prayer, so let me clarify

that for you now. Prayer is active communication within the boundaries of your relationship with the Divine. It is an expression of your heart to the Greater Being whom many call God, and is known by countless other names as well. In prayer, our thoughts, desires, words and feelings are engaged.

Meditation is receptive. It means placing ourselves in the space of silence to receive, whether it be messages from spirit, the gift of healing, or simply the feeling of our grandness, far beyond the limitations of the physical world.

How can one experience freedom behind bars? By changing the mental constructs with which we view our reality, and bringing ourselves to a realization of a reality even greater than we can imagine. Scientists have not only postulated about dimensions beyond the third dimension in which we live, but have proven that there are actually many more. When we close our eyes and quiet our mind, we not only feel a greater presence of peace, we feel compassion, and forgiveness, and love. These are all part of that inner landscape waiting to be discovered.

So how does one begin meditating? Here are a few simple steps to help you get started.

-Find a place where you can sit in quietness without being disturbed. Sitting erect with your spine straight, get yourself into a comfortable position that will allow you to relax and concentrate on your process. It's not necessary to contort yourself into positions that cause pain or your limbs to go numb! Sitting in a chair will do.

-Begin focusing on your breathing: allowing your breath to flow easily and effortlessly in, and

(continued on page 5)

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

from *Miracle of Love*

By Paul Ferrini

Spirituality and religion are not necessarily the same thing. Religion is the outer form; spirituality in the inner content. Religion is the husk; spirituality is the seed. Religion is a set of beliefs; spirituality is a continuum of experience.

One can be spiritual and not attend church or temple. One can find one's spirituality in intimate sharing with others, in communion with nature, in being of service. Spiritual experience is simply that which relaxes the mind and uplifts the heart. Meditating, walking in the woods or by the ocean, holding an infant, or looking into a lover's eyes—these are all spiritual experiences. When there is love and acceptance in your heart, your spiritual nature is manifest and you can see the spiritual nature of other people.

To be spiritual is to see yourself and others without judgment, to see not just with the eyes, but with the heart. To be spiritual is to accept and appreciate "what is," instead of seeking "what is not."

A spiritual person sees beauty everywhere,

even in suffering. Whenever hearts are touched by the poignancy of life, there is beauty. Whenever people learn their life lessons and let the past fall away, beauty is present. There is beauty in the rain and clouds, and beauty in the sun. There is beauty in aloneness and in intimacy, in laughter and in tears. Wherever we turn, beauty awaits us.

A spiritual person does not focus on what appears to be ugly, cruel, or manipulative. S/he sees all these behaviors as coming from a lack of love. S/he gives love whenever it is asked for, even if it is requested in a fearful or aggressive way. A spiritual person looks upon his/her own suffering and that of others as a temporary disconnection from the experience of love.

A spiritual person knows that love is the answer to every perceived problem. If life does not unfold the way we want it, we have disconnected from love and acceptance. To reconnect, we need only surrender our expectations and accept what comes into our lives with gratitude.

Spirituality is the consciousness that life is

okay the way it is. It doesn't need to be changed or fixed. It just needs to be accepted. When we make peace with life, we have peace in our lives. It is that simple. We cannot blame anyone else for our unwillingness to make peace.

A spiritual person is peaceful, upbeat, helpful, encouraging. S/he doesn't complain about the past or look for happiness in the future. S/he doesn't try to fix other people or ask to be fixed. S/he lives in the present moment, filled with gratitude and acceptance.

Everyone is spiritual, but not everyone takes the time to explore spirituality. Many people become lost in the drama of their lives. They spend most of their time dealing with survival issues. They do not take the time to watch the sunset or smell the roses. They are missing out on a great deal of joy and beauty. If they would just stop, take a deep breath and look for a moment, they would realize what they are missing.

A spiritual person is a happy person. S/he refuses to sacrifice that

happiness for any reason. S/he does not think thoughts or perform actions that compromise his or her happiness in any moment. This is the discipline involved in living a spiritual life. There are many people who would draw you into their dramas of suffering and victimhood, but you must learn to say no to them. Bless them. Give them the space to have the experience they wish to have. But do not join them in that experience unless you can do so happily.

Do not seek to heal other people or rescue them from their dramas. Your ability to genuinely help them depends on your maintaining your own health and peacefulness. By holding the vibration of your own happiness, you help them see where they can find healing and salvation within themselves.

When you rest in your Self, you see that there are no problems to be fixed. Life just needs to be accepted in a heartfelt way. In that acceptance, peace and happiness are established and all that was obstructing love is dissolved.

Jane Kenyon wrote a poem, *Otherwise*, after being diagnosed with terminal cancer:

OTHERWISE

I got out of bed
on two strong legs.
It might have been otherwise.

I ate cereal
and ripe, flawless peach.
It might have been otherwise.

I took the dog uphill
to the birchwood.
All morning I did
the work I love.

But one day,
I know,
it will be otherwise.

Everything comes and goes; everything changes and vanishes so quickly. Everything around us will soon be gone and something unimaginable will take its place. Apple blossoms, aspen leaves, cumulus clouds and melting glaciers all whisper that every experience is fleeting, to be appreciated and enjoyed, but also to be released as soon as it passes from the peak of fullness.

As we look back over our lives, we find that most of the things we worried about never happened, most of the things we felt bad about turned out to be for the better, and most of the things we hoped would stay the same couldn't stay the same if they wanted to because change is the process of life itself.

Ah, but life is a wondrous play. If we could truly grasp what is going on now, we would never be bored. There would be a sense of wonder. The fact that someday it will be otherwise gives us a deeper understanding of how sacred life is and how fragile we human beings are. It reminds us of life's mystery and preciousness.

Let's celebrate this day, this moment. It will make our soul sing.

CTB
Arizona

A SLICE OF HUMBLE PIE

The ego has a constant need for recognition and praise. In fact, when two egotists meet, it's an I for an I. However, there's nothing quite like the prison environment to quell an inflated ego. In an atmosphere of degradation and sameness, the ego has little space to exert itself. We could say that an experience like this provides us with a large slice of humble pie.

Of course, there are always those who think that coming to prison is a badge of honor, something that proves how tough they are. But for

those who want to do the right thing and contribute to society, it's a humbling experience.

It's one thing, a good thing, to extend compassion to all living beings. It's another thing, a foolish thing, to be concerned with whether they perceive us as compassionate. It matters to our ego, or course. The ego is eager to turn any selfless act into a photo op.

The ego, you might say, is always running for reelection; no term limits here. The ego stays on message. The ego accepts cash, checks,

or credit cards. The ego is always willing to make one more speech, shake one more hand. "No problem" says the ego. "Leave it up to me, me, me."

In my humble opinion, humility is a very strange word. The minute you think you have it, you've lost it. Oops! I think I just lost it again.

CTB
Arizona

THE BEAUTY OF SIMPLICITY

The same daily routine on this prison yard challenges me to find the specialness in sameness.

Some 2500 years ago Lao-Tzu declared,

“When life is simple pretenses fall away; our essential natures shine through.”

We can allow our essential natures to shine by not enforcing judgments on ourselves that were imposed by others. It shines when we remind ourselves that we don't have to win, be number one, or any other number.

Our essential nature shines when we lighten the burden we're carry-

ing to be productive wealthy, and successful in the eyes of others, and replace it with an assertion that allows us to access our inner wisdom. Let's retreat into silence, knowing that all is well. Let's give ourselves permission to just BE.

We can get to this space by noticing what is revealed in this very moment. We can get so caught up in the details of our lives that we end up missing a lot. Children grow up and are gone. A loved one dies. A friend moves across the country. Things and people pass so quickly. It's easy to miss life's joys.

Out of the simplicity of the moment, we find that joy may be

found anywhere. It may be found while sipping a cup of coffee in the morning or in the reflective pause at work. It's the preciousness of the moment, realized. It shows a presence that needs no reward, no accomplishment, no finish, shining forth just as it is.

May we remember the beauty and grace of this moment. It shows its truth, what needs to be done and what can be left undone. It's the great play of existence, of life, and death, of all that was and is and shall be. It waits our recognition.

CTB
Arizona

Winter Feast for the Soul Brings Opportunity To Nourish Your Spirit

(continued from page 2)

out, gently. At this point we are choosing to remove ourselves from our normal thought processes and simply 'be' present in the moment. -If the mind kicks in and the ego becomes engaged, simply tell your mind and ego that you have taken a brief 'Vow of Silence' and you are choosing in this moment to be quiet. No thoughts. No ego. No judgments.

-Return your focus to your breath, and continue for as long as possible. We ask for forty minutes a day, and recognize that for some, two periods of twenty minutes works better. Either way, the important thing to remember is the intention: being still, quieting the mind, embracing peace within.

-It might be difficult to find a place that allows ample quietude without interruptions. In this case, the opportunity is being provided to sharpen your practice and become even more skillful at finding the quiet space within. Remove the mind from the equation, banish the

ego for a while, and it can be done.

It may seem challenging at first, given your surroundings, to move into a steady practice of meditation. Everyone faces a challenge of some kind, and we all share a certain level of distractions in our lives! Re-affirm your commitment to the process, be clear about your intention, and apply yourself in earnest to the forty days, realizing that results will come in time, and the benefits will be seen as you progress.

As we approach the beginning of Winter Feast, we invite those of you who are incarcerated to join us in this international effort of bringing more peace into the world. We invite you to share your experience with us by writing our office, and find more resources at our website: <http://www.winterfeastforthesoul.com>

Each and every day we wake up is

a new day, filled with fresh experiences and original moments. The past is behind us, and our future is determined by how well we utilize the gifts of the 'present'.

We invite you to join our table this year for the Winter Feast for the Soul, and in the process, you may just find your spirit being nourished as well.

Blessings to you all.

About the Author:

Karon Korp became the Director of Winter Feast for the Soul in April 2010. She is a nationally known author and speaker, and manages her own publishing business. She and her husband are committed to public service, realizing it is up to each of us to make the world a better place.

You can write to Winter Feast at: P.O. Box 2773, Asheville NC 28802

by Clara Moskowitz

as published in *Self-Realization (Summer 2010)*

A Magazine of the Self-Realization Fellowship

The pursuit of happiness is sometimes easier said than done.

Some scientists have argued that happiness is largely determined by genetics, health and other factors mostly outside of our control. But recent research suggests people actually can take charge of their own happiness and boost it through certain practices.

“The billion-dollar question is, is it possible to become happier?” said psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky of the University of California, Riverside. “Despite the finding that happiness is partially genetically determined, and despite the finding that life situations have a smaller influence on our happiness than we think they do, we argue that still a large portion of happiness is in our power to change.”

Lyubomirsky spoke here Saturday at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She and colleagues last year reviewed fifty-one studies that tested attempts to increase happiness through different types of

positive thinking, and found that these practices can significantly enhance well-being. The results were published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*.

Here are five things that research has shown can improve happiness:

1. Be grateful—Some study participants were asked to write letters of gratitude to people who had helped them in some way. The study found that these people reported a lasting increase in happiness—over weeks and even months—after implementing the habit. What’s even more surprising: Sending the letter is not necessary. Even when people wrote letters but never delivered them to the addressee, they still reported feeling better afterwards.
2. Be optimistic—Another practice that seems to help is optimistic thinking. Study participants were asked to visualize an ideal future—for example, living with a loving and supportive partner, or finding a job that was fulfilling—and describe the image
3. Count your blessings—People who practice writing down three good things that have happened to them every week show significant boosts in happiness, studies have found. It seems the act of focusing on the positive helps people remember reasons to be glad.
4. Use your strengths—Another study asked people to identify their greatest strengths, and then to try to use these strengths in new ways. For example, someone who says they have a good sense of humor could try telling jokes to lighten up business meetings or cheer up sad friends. This habit, too, seems to heighten happiness.
5. Commit acts of kindness—It turns out helping others also helps ourselves. People who donate time or money to charity, or who altruistically assist people in need, report improvements in their own happiness.

Awakening the Spirit

My cellmate and I pray together daily, and our prayers are often answered in incredible ways. Prayer shows us that God is working behind the scenes where we can’t go. Some things that happen have no other explanation. We can call it luck or coincidence, but I choose to call it faith. It’s like the air we breathe or the love we feel. We can’t see it, but we know it’s there. It’s the same thing with God. We can’t see Him, but we know He’s there.

Sue Ellen Allen

As published in

Serving Productive Time

By Tom Lagana and Laura Lagana.

FREEDOM INSIDE NEEDS YOUR HELP

- **FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

If you think your family or friends would like to receive a free subscription of Freedom Inside, please send us their mailing information along with their email addresses if possible.

- **PRISONER ART**

We are thinking of having T-shirts made with some of the prisoner art we receive. We would use the proceeds from these sales to help defray the cost of this newsletter. If you have any art you would like to contribute, please send it in along with your permission to use for this purpose.

- **LETTERS OF GRATITUDE**

If reading any of the *Conversations with God* books or *Freedom Inside* has changed your life, please write us about it. We would love to use your words to help in our fund raising efforts. Please include your permission for us to publish your letters along with your initials and location.

A COURSE IN MIRACLES and more

Spirit Light Outreach was founded by an ex-prisoner, Joe Wolfe, specifically with the intention to deliver spiritual inspiration (free books, etc.,) to prisoners.

Some of the books that are provided include the full 1,300 page original edition of *A Course in Miracles*. This wonderful message has changed the lives of thousands and thousands of people throughout the world.

Other books we offer are the works of Dr. David R. Harkins, Gary Renard, Marianne Williamson, Jon Mundy, Byron Katie and others as well as Joe Wolfe's own, *The Five Signs*, that describe his spiritual awakening.

Any prisoner may request to be listed with Spirit Light Outreach simply by sending us a request at the address posted below. Express permission must be granted before we will post any names.

If you are requesting a book,

please be sure to indicate your prison's mail policies and guidelines.

Prisoners may also request a subscription to *The Miracles Magazine*, which is based on *A Course In Miracles*.

Those of you who are studying ACIM and have questions about the material can address those questions to Joe at the address below or to Janine at *Freedom Inside* and we will forward them to loving people, students of the material, who have volunteered their time to answer such questions.

To contact Joe:

Joe Wolfe
Spirit light Outreach
c/o The Peace Center
6833 Stanley Ave.
Berwyn, IL. 60402

Or email him at
booklist@sbcglobal.net

Or go to:
spiritlightoutreach.org

FREE BOOKS FOR PRISONERS

Neale Donald Walsch along with Em Claire, whose poems are in the book, have generously offered to donate

- *When Everything Changes, Change Everything* (WECCE)

to any prisoner who is interested. This book can change your life. It was written to help those who are in bad places in their lives, who see no way out, who are ready for a real change. If this sounds good to you, this book may just be the answer to your prayers. Please write *Freedom Inside* for your copy of WECCE.

Make sure you let me know if you are allowed to receive hard cover books or not.

ALSO, you can still receive a free copy of the booklet,

- *ReCreating Your Self*

donated by the CWG Foundation

Plus, there is a download of the

- *WECCE Workbook*

that Neale has offered to donate to interested prisoners. This download is a 75 page book that can be copied and mailed to you. Please make sure you can receive so many copied pages as some prisons do not allow more than 15 copies or so in one mailing

*Thank you so much
Neale, Em Claire,
and the CWG Foundation!*



AN ANSWER TO *Why Is It So Hard?*

Dear Janine,

Hello! But, *Why Is It So Hard?*

I'm writing to say: It's hard, because just maybe—you prefer it that way?

It's hard because you have too many therapies and formulas. It's hard because you just won't accept the beauty in, or of the middle-aged, "thick" or overweight...gentlewoman with wrinkles. Yes, those lines, of well-seasoned maturity.

It's hard because...you live near all those trees, and never take the time to enjoy them.

It's hard because...you have not taken the time to go fishing. Yes, out! To the water. To bait a hook. To cast a live. To fish, with bait, tackle and rod, from the shore. To be there. To just fish and forget your worries. To fish, and feel the bliss of "God". All about you, outdoors! Tell you what...do it differently. Put on a dress and heels. Do your make up and hair. "Splash" on some perfume! Then grab the fishing gear; climb into your truck, and head on out, to that lake; with the huge rocks, and seagulls.

You know, you'll find serenity there. The trees and bees will sense and see you're beautiful and shall appreciate your presence, right there in an outdoor domain, in which all the animals call home. "There". You are instructed to be happy! To be at peace. To be fulfilled. To feel the abundance of beauty and God. In you, and in all which surrounds you. Don't think of habits. Think of fish. Because you are there, in your beauty to catch a fish. But if you don't, on your way back home, you'll surely catch a man, who will adore the wrinkles, overweight, and laughter, and conversation of a middle-aged women! Dig me?!

Hey, I'd choose you for a date. I'd take you out to dine on steak, sweet potato fries, and a taste of apple pie. And afterwards we'd drive to a place, a lake, for hot coffee and warm conversation.

And I'd tell you, how lovely you look in your dress, heels, makeup, and perfume...as you hold the rod, in your hand, and you consider—no more— why it is so hard? Because then you'll know.

"Life is short." Too much time is wasted being too hard on yourself. Open up. Become the light. Be lighter. Learn to love and be loved always.

It is no longer hard. It is now soft and easy. Smile and enjoy your life.

PJ
Pennsylvania

Dear, dear PJ,

Thank you so very much for this response to my article of the September 2010 issue.

You are so very correct in thinking that enjoying the moment, however it is, wherever I am, whoever is with me, is the secret of having an easy life.

I have never been more lovingly scolded.

Thank you again,

Janine

A Most Important Question

I am now going to a Christmas retreat with Neale Donald Walsch. I am there to help the staff and I get to hear some wonderful messages from Neale and incredibly moving stories from the participants.

The retreat started only yesterday and already Neale has asked a profound question I wanted to

share with you.

I believe we all have an idea of the kind of life we are here to live, the kind of purpose we wish to see fulfilled in our lifetime.

The question is, "What are we willing to let go of in order to make room for this most glorious life?"

I invite you all to think of your dream of the best life you can imagine. What are you willing to release in order to achieve it?

Think about it.

Love,

Janine



MY RELEASE

Dear Janine,

On Monday the 23rd, at about 8 AM, I'll walk out of this place. Finally!!!

I just wanted to share a list of the many blessings I have in store for me.

1. The parents of my best friend have prepared the master bedroom in their home for me.
2. I can fix up one of their five bicycles they have so I'll have immediate transportation.
3. If I get my license and can keep it filled with gas, there's a car available to me.
4. A weight bench and weights await me; a gift from my friends.
5. A cell phone has been purchased and activated for me.
6. There are several boxes of both new and used clothes in my size waiting for me.
7. A friend wants to sell and market my art for me.
8. I have two potential job offers.
9. I qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation through the state and the Veteran's Administration/
10. I get my 30% disability Compensation reinstated.
11. My friends purchased canvases, paints and brushes for me.
12. I get to choose my first meal: pork chops, apple sauce, cream corn, green salad, Pepsi, and strawberry cheesecake. Yum!
13. I get some of my stuff back that I forgot about like my acoustic guitar and com-

- puter desk.
14. My best friend and Alcoholics Anonymous buddy is picking me up and taking me to 90 meetings in 90 days.

And I hear hints of other surprises (a party?)

Janine, I really hope you print this because there's a valuable lesson here. I am not "lucky" nor blessed in some extraordinary way unattainable to others. On the contrary, we are all equally worthy. Blessings await all of us. We need only claim our inheritance.

Do you recall the letter I once sent, "What No One Else Will Tell You?" The Truth is simple. Too simple it seems. I've explained it countless times in countless ways. A few have listened, very few. Or maybe I'm just not privy to the ones listening. I keep trying...

When we were born we looked into our mother's eyes with perfect love and perfect trust. No fear, anger, bias, nor sadness. She may've had a unibrow, tattoos, or whatever. We only saw a perfect vessel of love. We were perfect vessels of love. We saw only love, through eyes of love.

That spark of pure love still exists in each of us. It may be buried under lies, fears, and all sorts of learned negativity, but it's still there, waiting.

With a little focus, imagination and sincerity and anyone can begin to reacquaint themselves with their true, original na-

tures.

From this altruistic, innocent center we attract and give all blessings.

No, I don't claim to be enlightened nor privy to special revelation. I just see so much suffering and it's all, self imposed. Men in here that may never get out, people out there with health, financial, family and emotional concerns. Peace does NOT depend on external circumstances! Peace=Love. Love is what we are. We are made from, molded from "Love Stuff". Any perception to the contrary is a lie, an illusion. This is Goddess, in, through, around and for all of creation. We are in the midst of Divinity at all times because we are Divinity!

I know, "that's easy to say when you're not spending the rest of your life in prison, haven't lost a child, parent or spouse, aren't deformed or crippled or a minority, etc, etc." I have endured tremendous pain, great loss, am discriminated against, et. I do understand. Who better to talk of such things than someone who's been there?

Ok I'll stop. I know I get preachy frequently. I can't help it. I want others to be as happy as I am.

Namaste,

MG
Nevada

There was once a man who had given up on life. He found no joy in his work, his family, or his community. And so he prayed to God to let him leave this world. "Show me the way to Paradise!" he implored.

God answered him, "Are you sure that's what you want?"

The man replied, "I am sure with all my heart."

"Very well," replied God, who showed him the way to Paradise.

As it turned out, Paradise wasn't far away—just a few days' journey from his village. So late one afternoon he set out on his way. He walked until nightfall and then decided to rest beneath a leafy tree. Just before he fell asleep, it occurred to him that in the morning he might become confused and forget which was the way to Paradise and which was the way back to the village. So he left his shoes by the roadside, with the tips pointing toward Paradise so that in the morning all he'd have to do was jump into his shoes and continue on his way.

But sometimes unexpected things happen. Shoes get turned around. Was it an imp? Was it an angel? Was it just a squirrel? Who knows? But somehow the man's shoes got turned around. In the morning he rose feeling rested from his sleep, ate from the fruit of the tree, and prepared to set off on his journey. He went to the roadway, stepped into his

shoes, and began walking—unaware that he was in fact returning home.

By noon, he could see a village on the next hillside, and his heart leapt. "I've arrived in Paradise!" he thought. "My village was always so crowded, so noisy. This is different, so filled with life and joy!" He sat down on the bench in the square and witnessed the life of the village. He heard the songs the children sang at school and the sounds of the adults at work. He felt the vitality, the energy, and the love that filled the village. He sat in the square all day. In the evening he heard the joyful sounds of families reunited at home and smelled the meals that were being enjoyed by each family. And he began to feel hungry.

He thought, "Since Paradise looks so much like my village, I wonder if there is a street in Paradise like my street." And so he went to look. Just where he thought it might be, there it was! Just as he was wondering at this marvelous coincidence, a woman came to the door—a woman who bore a striking resemblance to his wife. The woman called his name and asked him to come in for dinner.

His heart leapt. "They know me in Paradise! There is a place set for me in Paradise!"

"I don't know what's in Paradise," the woman responded, "but your soup is getting cold at home. Come inside!"

He entered the house. This

house in paradise was nothing like his house in the village. That house was always crowded, cluttered, filled with commotion. This place was cozy and homey and filled with life. He sat at the table and ate the best meal he'd ever had. He complimented the woman on her heavenly soup. Afterward he went up to his bedroom and entered the deepest, most restful sleep he'd ever known.

In the morning the woman who looked like his wife handed him his tools and sent him to work. At first the man was incredulous. Who ever heard of working in Paradise? But then it occurred to him that even in paradise there were tasks to be done. And he found that his work was different from the work he'd done before. Not dull or tedious, it filled him with a sense of purpose. And that night he returned to the same warm and loving home, the same kind woman, and more of the wonderful soup.

Do you know that in all the years that followed, no one could convince the man that he hadn't made it to Paradise! Every one of his days from then on was filled with more wonder, more purpose, more joy, and more life than the day before.

From *Capturing the Moon: Classic and Modern Jewish Tales*, by Edward Feinstein
As published in *Self-Realization* magazine (Winter 2010)

Quotable Quotes

The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, not to worry about the future, or not to anticipate troubles, but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly
- The Buddha

Past and future are in the mind only—I am now.
- Sri Nisargadatta Mahara

At the moment, you have a choice, that either leads you closer to your spirit or further away from it.
- Thich Nhat Hanh

WHAT ARE WE THANKFUL FOR?

I receive this poem just before Thanksgiving 2010. The November issue had gone out already. But I think the feeling of thanksgiving is also just as wonderful at the beginning of the year as it is any other time. I love this one.

It's Thanksgiving time
And this is true:
I'm thankful to
Have friends like you.

I'm thankful for
My friends who care;
And thankful for
The love they share.

I'm thankful for all
Of my family so dear;
With them by my side,
I have nothing to fear.

I'm thankful, I say,
To have found the Lord;
He's helped me get through,
All the bad I've endured.

I'm thankful to God,
For the flowers so sweet;
I'm thankful to God,
For the food that I eat.

I'm thankful to God,
For the birds that sing;
I'm thankful to God,
For everything.

I'm thankful to God,
For the sun, rain and snow;
I'm thankful to God,
More than He'll ever know.

I'm thankful to God,
For all He has made;
I'm thankful to God,
For His love that won't fade.

I'm thankful to God,

Who gave us His son;
Who then gave His life,
Our salvation He won.

For food and for friendship,
And for family so caring;
Thanksgiving's a time,
A time that's for sharing.

So thanks to my family,
And thanks to my friends;
And thanks to the good Lord,
For the love that He sends.

What are you thankful for,
On this Thanksgiving day?
Take a moment to think,
And then you can say.

DN
Ohio

FIND FORGIVENESS

There are things that happen in our lives,
That seem out of our control.
It's things like this that make us feel,
We've completely lost our souls.

Although our actions hurt someone else,
In one way or another.
We feel sorry for ourselves,
With heartache we can't cover.

We know, some feel, we should show more concern,
For our victims, and it's true ...
But hearts are beating, with so much pain,
There's not much we can do.

We think about the ones we hurt.
Every minute of every day.
And hope their lives can get on track.
And their pain will go away.

We all pray for forgiveness.

RW
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



*PO Box 507
Ashland, OR 97520
USA*

Know anyone who would like to receive this newsletter?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Send to : *Freedom inside/subscriptions*
PO Box 507
Ashland, OR 97520
USA

Or e-mail us to:
freedom_inside@hotmail.com

DONATIONS

To help defray to cost of Freedom Inside, you can make a TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION to the Conversations with God Foundation

- *Send a check made to the order of and mailed to: CWG Foundation/ Prison Outreach
PO 507
Ashland, OR 97520*
- *Or go to the cwg.org and make a donation. Please SPECIFY AT CHECKOUT, IN THE "COMMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS" BOX, that your donation should be used for the Prison Outreach Program.*

You are blessed and a blessing to all

Janine