



A Newsletter For Prisoners
Based on the Conversations with God Material

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Truth and Other Illusions by Janine Cantin

Although I like it when I'm right, in the last few years I've been working on identifying when I need to be right and let it go as much as I can.

Being right is very seductive. The need to prove we are right leads to heated discussions, arguments, fighting and wars.

Just think about politics and religions and you'll know right away what I'm talking about.

Looking at the politics, for instance, we see that no Democrat can be heard to agree with a Republican and no Republican can ever seem to drift closer to the left. Agreeing with "the other side" is seen as a weakness.

How terrible is that, as a way to lead this country?

Religion is another topic that leads to major disagreements. Many seem to feel that there can only be one "true" religion and that all others must be proven wrong.

I've heard some pretty terrible

comments made in the name of religion, in the name of God. Wars have been fought, people killed, all in the name of God.

Something is not right with that.

"God's creatures killing one another in His Name? What kind of sense does that make? How is this happening over and over again?"

God's creatures killing one another in His Name? What kind of sense does that make? How is this happening over and over again?

So I'm left with the conviction that I need to stop thinking I have all the answers, much less the only answers, or even the best ones.

Some years ago, I got a visual that has helped me a great deal. I see myself in front of swirls of colors and shapes, trying to make sense of them, trying to understand Life and how it works.

As a child, my parents explained what the swirls were, what they meant, and how I should act accordingly. This explanation of Life was given to them by their own parents who got it from theirs. It was a Catholic per-

spective that was shared by everyone I knew, friends and family alike.

During my late teens, I started questioning some of those views, things that did not make sense to me. The swirls and colors did not seem to fit the perspective I had been taught.

So I started searching for answers that would satisfy me. And I first found them in the Conversations with God books.

As I started to apply this new perspective to my life, it seemed to fit. It worked for me.

I felt that I had been standing with my nose almost touching the swirls and had now taken a step back. The picture became much, much clearer. I suddenly understood much more who I was, what I was about, and how life worked.

And I started giving CwG books to just about everyone I knew. I fell so in love with the God I found there that I wanted to share this discovery, much as a person in love wants family and friends to meet and appreciate

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TRUTHS AND OTHER ILLUSIONS

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the new object of their adoration.

At around that time, my son died and that is when I realized that this kind of thinking really worked for me and I took another step away from the swirls and began to see a lovely painting of my life.

Things made sense to me and they worked even during the most painful time of my life. I just knew then that I had found the truth, the secret of life.

I've been living that truth since then. I've been "practicing what I preach" and find that as soon as I go within I find my answers. It's a great way to live, a very powerful perspective to have.

But then I have been seeing (for years!) that many people seem to be living a powerful, peaceful, loving life and those people do not all share my views.

Some practice a particular religion, some have different politics than I do, some understand what I talk about, others don't get me at all.

And some of these people have answers to questions I hadn't even thought to ask. What's up with that? Who has the real truth? Who has the correct answers? Who knows what life is really about, how it really works?

And that's when I had the visual that really blew me away. I'm not standing in front of a bunch of colorful swirls; I'm not in front of a painting of my life. I am standing about one foot in front of a huge mural.

I see the painting of my life and it makes sense to me. I have a good idea where I come from and

where I'm going. I know that living with intention, from the inside, listening to my inner connection to my Divine Light makes my life much better, more purposeful, more meaningful to me.

But I also know my understanding of Life may be completely off. I don't think I'm completely wrong since my life is working right now. But, although I don't think my beliefs are all off, I know that when I see the whole picture, when I step way back from my own little life and see the whole mural, I may smile when thinking about the beliefs I hold dear now.

My truth at this point is only an illusion. What I believe to be the way Life is, what works for me, may be such a small portion of what the Universe is really like as to be laughable. My understanding may be like that of a very small child facing a 1000 piece puzzle.

I'm ok with that. I don't really care how close or far I am from The Ultimate Truth—if there is even such a thing. I don't care if, after I pass and come to understand it all...if that is even how it happens, I will find that nothing of what I now believe comes even close to The Way Things Are.

As a matter of fact, I'm at a point in my life I would be shocked to find out I have a real understanding of how Life Works, of What We Are All About.

So, do I believe there is something I don't know, the knowing of which would change everything?

I'd bet on it!

ZEN STORY OF HEAVEN AND HELL

Hakuin, the fiery and intensely dynamic Zen master, was once visited by a samurai warrior.

"I want to know about heaven and hell," said the samurai. "Do they really exist?" he asked Hakuin.

Hakuin looked at the soldier and asked, "Who are you?"

"I am a samurai," announced the proud warrior.

"Ha! exclaimed Hakuin. "What makes you think you can understand such insightful things? You are merely a callous, brutish soldier! Go away and do not waste my time with your foolish questions," Hakuin said, waving his hand to drive away the samurai.

The enraged samurai couldn't take Hakuin's insults. He drew his sword, readied for the kill, when Hakuin calmly retorted, "This is hell."

The soldier was taken aback. His face softened. Humbled by the wisdom of Hakuin, he put away his sword and bowed before the Zen Master.

"And this is heaven," Hakuin stated, just as calmly.

We create our own heaven and hell.

Quotable Quotes

Most of the shadows of this life are caused by our standing in our own sunshine.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

The first step in the acquisition of wisdom is silence, the second listening, the third memory, the fourth practice, the fifth teaching others.

-Solomon Ibn Gabriol

CONVERSATIONS WITH HUMANITY

Questions from *The Storm before the Calm*.

Book One in the Conversations with Humanity Series

by Neale Donald Walsch

In one of his latest books, "The Storm before the Calm", Neale Walsch describes what he believes is happening in 2012 and the new world we could be creating. He suggests we start a <Conversation with Humanity> in order to decide what this new world will look like and he suggests we ask ourselves seven questions I thought it would be a wonderful idea to have this conversation in Freedom Inside. The first question is this: "How is it possible that 6.9 billion people can all claim to want the same thing (peace, security, opportunity, prosperity, happiness, and love) and be singularly unable to get it?" Some of your answers to this question can be found in previous issues of FI. The following is one received recently. Keep your answers coming.

QUESTION ONE, ANSWER NINE

At a recent Buddhist gathering, the first of Neale's seven basic questions was posed.

Over the next few days the meaning of those words slowly dawned on me along with yet another awareness of my own life; if we have peace, happiness, love and joy, then we create more of each. If we do not have them but want them, then we create more want. Huh! I walk around within a US penitentiary and live here as a "guest" of the federal government, yet in doing so I have given myself more freedom than I can remember ever having before in my life. Frankly, within these walls I have found so much freedom that

I do not share much of it, and certainly not all of it, with many people. Sadly, as would be expected, people in here on both sides of the bars feel restrictions and confinement. And or course, I do feel some of that when I need a learning boost now and again, but I see the beauty of it, rather quickly anymore, instead of making it a burden and a deterrent. My gang just chimed in again with a beautiful catch-phrase they gave me quite some time ago, "Life is an inside job". I like to add the post script, "Totally". "Life is totally an inside job". The only frustration I encounter with verbalizing this gem in conversation is that, for most of the folks in here (again on both sides of

the bars) they too often want life to be a bitch so that then they die. (My gang just chimed in again, with their humor, as they usually do when I mention death and dying, "Not possible!"). So I guess for some folks, life's a bitch and then you get to learn it again...and again...and again...and...until we do. :-)

And life is beautiful all over again...and again...and again...and...life is definitely an E-ride; maximum thrills and excitement, even when it's not.

RI
Illinois

QUESTION TWO in our Conversations with Humanity:

Is it possible that there is something we don't fully understand about God and about life, the understanding of which would change everything?

QUESTION TWO, ANSWER ONE

I feel there is something about life, the understanding of which would change everything.

I am not this body. For I am a spiritual being on a physical journey for the purpose of spiritual evolution. God is experiencing life through me and all of us and all of that which is around us. The universe is his playground and we are beings among it for him to experienced that and evolve together.

That's it! I could go on for days and

days, pages and pages about all of the little things about life and how our interaction affects and is affected by it. But that would take a lifetime and I am sure my view would change from time to time as my experience would affect my new perceptions. The world and our part in it is what we perceive it to be at that moment in time that we perceive it. There is no right or wrong in life, there is only what woks or doesn't work. My truth will be different from others' based on my experience and how I perceive that experience to be.

I have been around since the beginning and I will be around for eternity as there is no end of that which is life. There is only change and all change is good. You may just not see it in that moment. Love life and it will love you back. For that is all you are and will ever be.

MB
Illinois

(Conversations with Humanity continues on page 7)

THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

by Tom Brown
Arizona

« Oh, no! Not this again! » We've all said words like these as the very things in life that we dislike the most keep reappearing. If something keeps recurring in our life, we have to ask, "What is it about me that allows this to bother me? And what allows it to happen over and over again?"

We need to resolve this or come into harmony with it—so that it no longer bothers us, or at least so that we can be amused by it. We are bound to whatever we can't accept, but once we accept it, we can be free from it. The best thing we can do with a problem for example, is simply to allow space for it, to let it be. This doesn't mean to condone or justify

it, it simply means to come into harmony with it. From this point, it can more easily be changed or eliminated. By denying it, rejecting it, fighting it, or complaining about it, we often only perpetuate it.

Once something no longer bothers us, often it miraculously disappears. Once we stop taking it so seriously, it may not come around quite so persistently anymore. It stops reappearing because we've worked it out, we've resolved it, and come into harmony with it. Once we do this, there's no further purpose for it.

In order to grow and mature spiritually, we must work with

whatever bothers us and reappears in situations, circumstances, other people—whatever it takes. This is the way the game is set up. Eventually, we'll see that it was a great game, and it seemed realistic at the time, but it was only a game nevertheless. It's Spirit's game—the greatest game there is and the only game in town.

This game participation will ultimately bring us to the realization that we can find boundless joy in what we have, in where we are, and in who we are. We'll see, at last, that there has been only one of us all along, and we'll feel the divine in every cubic inch of space.

WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND

by Tom Brown
Arizona

We cannot escape each other. When the government gets tough on crime, that hardness rebounds not only on criminals but on all of us. And when we raise the level of anxiety and despair among the poor by forgetting that they are real people who need help, then we raise our own level of anxiety, fear and despair. If we treat some people critically and disdainfully, it becomes easier to treat others badly. Wagons begin to circle. Sides are chosen. Before long, what goes around comes around. The Hindus and Buddhists call it karma. Jesus said, "that which you sow also shall you reap."

And what about our children? What happens to defenseless children in the homes of our land happens to all of us. The battered, the abused, the neglected, the poor, the addicted, the unloved children are not only our children. They are us. Are they helped by a hardened heart? We are interdependent; what we say and do about and to others, we say and do to ourselves.

If we forget this, we lose sight of any chance to bring genuine meaning and joy into our living. It is not getting tough or trying to shut ourselves away from the criminals, the poor, and the suffering that will bring us secu-

rity. It is giving our hearts and reaching out to them and helping them to build strong and meaningful lives. It is loving our neighbors as ourselves. It is sowing the seeds of joy and happiness. It is dispelling hatred with love. If what goes around, comes around, doesn't it make sense to offer a gently, healing and helping hand?

We are connected to other humans, to animals, to the plants and trees and flowers, to the mountains and seas and deserts, even to the distant stars. And it is all beautiful and sacred.

WHO AM I...

by ASH
Oregon

I had the great good luck to hear ASH read this text. It is my hope that the reading of it will be enough for you to appreciate the tone of it.

Seeing and hearing it read? Poetry in motion.

*Enjoy,
Janine*

It's not about Who Am I with a question context, 'cause I know who I am.

These features I carry are ones I have constructed on my own, and some are ones I have picked up along the way. I am Everyone, 'cause Everyone I have ever come across in this journey is a part of what makes me my character.

I am my own person with the power to choose and decide what I like and don't like. I can, and do, choose my Do's and my Don'ts.

With that concept, I feel important to let it be known what I am Not. 'Cause what I am Not is a huge, huge factor in who I am. And that's where, and how Everyone helps me decide, build, make, and create the Ultimate Character, with features that meet perfection.

I strive to pick out the most Noblest of Actions I see within people, and I then take it in and process the tactic. I become new ways of structure instantly. The most interesting thing about this way I carry is that it is always surprising me, because I never know when it is going to come about. So a very safe statement I can make is that I'm constantly changing. I'm not the same person now as I was yesterday or even this morning. I experience different intervals, sometimes rapidly other times moderately. During the course of an hour it is

possible to pick up seven to eleven new ways of being. These ways being very effective and efficient, well-structured and productive ways of doing certain tasks. In these cases it would be absurd not to keep the knowledge just observed. I then have it to be used in future situations and events. And then I do things that make up that that I am. So let me take us in the direction of that that I'm not.

I learn of what I'm not many times before I am even that. Meaning I see many characteristics in people that I don't like, and therefore knowing how I don't want to be by watching others, so I'm not something I don't want to be before I ever be it. But in some cases I put myself in a position to where I found myself doing bad deeds. And when it was said and done, and looked back upon, I despised what had happened. Therefore vowed not to ever act in that manner again. For now, in this case I have learned how not to be in the first person degree. I feel that I can safely say that I'm not certain things today that I once was in the past, nor will I be in the future who I am today.

So a few things that I'm not by my own trials and errors is of these: I am not a junkie, because I've been one. I am not a liar, because I've been one. I am not a thief, because I've been one. I am not a bad son, but I have been one. In numerous aspects, I do know now

how I don't want to be.

I look at the good in things, look at the possibility and potential of a situation. I try to keep a positive feeling and attitude. And yes, they are two different things. My feelings are what's on the inside. My attitude is what I show on the outside. I strive to keep both in tune with the other. It is easier said than done, but it can be done.

Regardless of the situation, I am in control of how I choose to feel about whatever that situation is. I choose to feel a feeling which I enjoy, 'cause I'm the only one who feels my feel. Therefore I don't see logic or reason to choose a feel in which I am not comfortable with. I don't like to feel angry, mad, distrust or discontent. I choose happy and peaceful, ecstatic and joyful.

Another feature I care not to be and participate in is that of boredom. Being bored is a choice. I may be boring but I'm not bored. I don't need someone else to get my kicks for me; not to say I don't enjoy entertainment, 'cause I do. It feels good to feel good. I love humor. Laughter heals!

I am one who knows of the term "appreciation". I know what it's like to have something, then to have it taken away. To know what it's like to not have makes me appreciate when I do have.

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ILLUSIONS & FORGIVENESS

By WPR
Virginia

This is a story about two friends of mine who became primordial enemies. Stop, listen, and learn. There's a lesson in here somewhere. Conflict arose after a spiritual gathering. I attend a Hindu study group here at FCI on Friday nights. This particular night we had a guest volunteer from a nearby Krishna Temple. One attendant, who's not Hindu by the way, asked a lot of questions and took up a considerable amount of the volunteer's time.

After the service was over the leader of the Hindu study group confronted this individual and said some unflattering things. The Hindu leader got angry. The attendants became visibly upset. I was the unbiased witness and observer of this train wreck. Clearly two people whom I both consider to be friends were emotionally disturbed.

The friend who attended Hindu studies indicated that he wanted to talk to me. So we walked to pill line together. He complained vociferously about the Hindu leader's character and the way he ran the Hindu program. Never mind the fact that this guy professes to be a Mormon. What I heard was ego complaining about

another ego.

I simply said that I've been profoundly influenced by reading "A Course in Miracles" and "The Disappearance of the Universe" by Gary Renard. I said, "Look, I'm living my illusion. You're living your illusion. And the Hindu leader is living his illusion. You both simply need to forgive each other." Message sent but not received.

This person continued to attack the other's character adding "And he plans to sell religious oils to help pay for his tattoos" I said nothing else. A few days later the Hindu leader was called into the Chaplain's office and confronted with the accusation that he was selling incense and oils, Never mind the fact that none of this was true.

The Hindu leader felt betrayed by the Mormon. The next day in the chow hall he's staring at this guy and saying "you f-ing rat" loud enough to be overheard. Personally, I saw the whole situation as tragic and hopeless. Neither man wanted to hear of forgiveness.

A couple of days later the true informant "confessed" to another member of the Hindu services that

he had gone to the Chaplain and complained that the Hindu leader was selling religious incense and oils. The funny thing is that I thought only things like this happens to other religious groups. Well, confession must be good for the soul because that person in turn told us what he said.

Talk about illusions! My friend was mad at the wrong guy. The guy he thought was a rat wasn't a rat after all. I'm attempting to practice forgiveness. Renard claims that forgiveness is the quickest way to enlightenment and I do want to become enlightened. I suggested forgiveness.

Now my friends are a little more inclined to listen to me. After all, the illusion proved to be...well, an illusion! Now I know nothing like this happens in other prisons. But if it does, forgiveness is always the right answer. As Renard reluctantly admits, "It's simple but not always easy!" First we need to realize life's an illusion. And secondly, we need to forgive ourselves for being delusional. Forgiveness is the key because rarely do we ever see the whole picture. Instead we get mad at the fragments.

WHO AM I...

(continued from page 5)

I have experienced true pain, extensive and hurtful. And to know pain, really makes me appreciate it when I don't have it. To take it another step farther, I can say I appreciate pain 'cause I'm alive to feel it.

So with appreciation I associate gratitude. I'm grateful to walk, 'cause I've broken by back. I'm grateful to breathe, 'cause I've punctured my lungs. I'm grateful

for my family, 'cause I've lost family. I put on extended gratitude to the family, 'cause they're the ones I lied to, stole from, and betrayed. Yet they're the ones standing by my side today.

I am an individual of apologies, and I disperse them to all that they are owed to. I regret certain aspects of my life, and when I do apologize, I truly am sincere, I don't want to be the things that I've done that I don't like. I can't

undo what I've done, but I can "not do" what I did do. So without further ado, that's what I'm gonna do. I'm going to stay consistent, and the only thing consistent is change. I am going to keep progressing and growing, always doing the next right thing, the best way I know how. I will listen to my heart, for it is my compass. I look in the direction of success, I will succeed, I will survive...for who am I? I am me, I am ASH.

CONVERSATIONS WITH HUMANITY

(continued from page 3)

QUESTION TWO, ANSWER TWO

I believe that the answer to this question can be found in the Buddha's teachings on emptiness and impermanence. While these may be two of the harder to grasp aspects of Buddhism, and I am by no means a qualified teacher, I will do my best to explain these concepts in a way that makes them understandable to all.

Emptiness, or shunyata, is the idea that nothing is inherently existent in and of itself. This means that nothing just exists all by itself, but rather is a coming together of parts, causes, and conditions.

Let's take a car for example. We all see cars everyday, whether it be on the road or on television or in magazines. Still, there is not any one thing you can point to and say, "There's the car. That's what gives the cars its carness." Is the driver's door the car? Is the steering wheel the car? Is the gas pedal the car? The motor? The radiator? The exhaust pipe?

In the end you can dismantle your "car" until you have nothing but a pile of scrap metal, screws, and wires, and you still won't have any one thing you can call a car. It is only when we assemble all these pieces (and even then it must be in the right order and with the proper welds and applied labor) that we get something we can confidently call a car.

This same concept can be applied to everything, including ourselves. Are you your liver? Your spine? Your eye? Your toe? That's right, even we, the almighty human beings, are nothing more than a series of parts coming together under the right causes and conditions. Yet for some reason, we seem to be convinced that we are this solid, permanent, unchanging creature entitled to all the good things in life that make us happy.

This is where our other big misconception comes into play—our view that we, along

with other things, are permanent. Impermanence teaches us that everything is always changing. The leaves fall off the trees, the car breaks down, even the plastic bag biodegrades and decomposes eventually. Our bodies too wear out and break down over time and eventually we die.

if we had ourselves a better understanding and acceptance of these two truths, I believe it could change everything. We would see the world in a new way, one in which it would be much harder to get caught up in the craving and attachment for things we know will wear away and don't exist in such a solid sense in the first place.

Much Metta,

JK

Illinois

QUESTION TWO, ANSWER THREE

I thought, initially, that it would be pretty hard responding the Question Two of the *Conversations with Humanity*. I almost started to not respond to it, but then I thought that it's kind of like that in our so-called civilization i.e. people neglecting their own responsibility to the collective. With people sharing their views, their understanding against a background of some other's view and understanding, the outcome will be an understanding or view that encompasses all.

[So here is my answer to Question Two]

Yes, there is a possibility that there are many things that I do not fully understand about God and Life—the understanding of which would change everything.

First, God to me, is the Source of all the "is" and "is not".

My understanding of God is mostly derived from other people's interpretations—where their impressions are written in sacred books, stories, mythologies, allegories, parables, and/or speech conversations.

Perhaps what's most significant about these people's interpretations of God is the fact that whether their impressions were derived from inspirations from the Source (God), or insight, or wisdom from accumulated and expanded awareness, their interpretations are still limited and biased—either by their beliefs or philosophies and their languages."

Nevertheless, I've still come to accept and appreciate the breadth and depth of those impressions of God in my experi-

ences. Unfortunately, as beautiful as those experiences are, it has also been my experience that for the last four decades of my life, each decade of discovering other beliefs and philosophies of God and Life, and of responding to other people through those impressions, I have gathered more understanding of what God and an ideal life could possibly consist of. Thus, it is apparent that there is so much more for me to come to understand about God and Life as my understanding so far has already made gradual positive differences in my life. Anticipating a continuous ascension of my BEing—due to further understanding—is an additional source of my freedom inside.

HJ

North Carolina

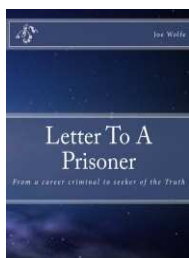
SUGGESTED READING FOR PRISONERS

Dear Prisoner,

The list of books below are some of the most profoundly helpful and the ones I would highly suggest for your library. You can request them from me, and if it's within my power, I'll send one or more to you, free of charge.

I could use your help. Save this list and send it to friends or family. I've included the internet links for them to access each particular title..

- (1) A Course in Miracles,
- (2) The End of Reincarnation with The Five Signs, by Joe Wolfe, Gary Renard and Carrie Triffet
<http://TheFiveSigns.com>
- (3) Conversations With God, by Neale Donald Walsch
<http://CWG.org>
- (4) The Holy Spirit's Interpretation of The New Testament by Regina Dawn Akers
<http://ForHolySpirit.org>
- (5) Power vs Force by Dr. David R. Hawkins
<http://Veritaspub.com>
- (6) A New Earth by Eckhart Tolle,
<http://NamastePublishing.com>
- (7) A Parenthesis In Eternity, by Joel Goldsmith
<http://Amazon.com>
- (8) The Disappearance of The Universe, by Gary R. Renard
<http://GaryRenard.com>
- (9) Long Time No See, by Carrie Triffet,
<http://UnlikelyMessenger.com>
- (10) Books by Dr. Jon Mundy,
<http://MiraclesMagazine.org>
- (11) Books by Beverly Hutchison,
<http://MiraclesDistributionCenter.org>
- (12) Time Ocular (A Novel) by Joe Wolfe
<http://TimeOcular.com>
- (13) Books by Robert Perry
- (14) Books by David Hoffmeister
- (15) Books by Ken Wapnick
- (16) Letter to a Prisoner



Letter To A Prisoner is a 370 page book produced by an ex-prisoner with the intention to reach any prisoner with a glimpse of Hope, Love, Light and the Peace of God. It has changed the lives, beliefs and behavior of many people either in prison or headed there. Friends and family can order *Letter To A Prisoner* directly through Amazon

Joe Wolfe, Spirit Light Outreach
c/o American Chiropractic & Wellness Center
8951 W. Cermak Road,
North Riverside, Illinois 60546

FREE BOOKS FOR PRISONERS

• NEW BOOKLET OFFERED:

As of today, I have been allowed to offer you a printed copy of the booklet, *BRINGERS OF THE LIGHT*, that completes the list of concepts found in *ReCreating Your Self*. This will be about 20 double-sided and stapled pages. Again, make sure you are allowed to receive these many copies before requesting *Bringers of the Light*

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*
- *WECCE Workbook*

This is a downloaded edition, 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 NEALE , EM and the
CWG FOUNDATION FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT

WHERE WE PLACE OUR DREAMS

by Jimmy Santiago Baca
Former prisoner

The elegance with which,
In the sweetest humility, the
Lilac senses the time
to show itself-
fights adversity all winter
coldest nights
blowing storms,
clinging to fence posts,
tossed and heaved,
trampled, pecked by crows,
almost eaten by insects,
pummeled by brute heat-
yet the whole time
still as a stone-carved Buddha
meditating,
silently greets the world
in its vow of silence, birth to death alone, in the rain
weaving its being into a nameless red blossom
opening at dawn.

And is body
we preserve
in pages of books,
that have kept our belief in love,
next to poetry lines we love so much
where we place our dreams
for safekeeping
from the harmful world
that hurts us so much sometimes,
I place this flower.

BLINDFOLDED

by DRM
California

I am beginning to understand that I waver in faith,
Because my spiritual vision is in need of correction.
I miss the mark so often
Because I fail to see
With the same perspective,
Dear Heavenly Father,
As You

I repent of both near- and far-sightedness today.
They're blindfolds on the eyes of my heart.
With the skill of a masterful "Father", Lord,
Would you please remove them and take them away
So that I will be able to see clearly and embrace You,
my Lord and Savior, for all eternity
on your right hand side, Jesus

**THE GOD IN ME SEE AND HONORS
THE GOD IN YOU**

by REK
Florida

I can see you in there...
I know who your are...
Do you remember who I am...
Can you see back that far...

It only takes an instant...
To lift the veil from your eyes...
But how long is an instant...
I can hear your spirit's cries...

Re-establish perfect sanity...
Perfect peace and perfect love...
See heaven where it is...
Not below and not above...

Just look inside of me...
Your reflection you will see...
Our oneness is so real...
The ego cannot steal...

The God in me sees...
And honors the God in you...
Your radiance sets the tone...
And now we'll never feel alone

EVENING PRAYER

from *Illuminata* (1994)
by Marianne Williamson

Dear God,
I surrender to you the day now over.
May only the love remain.
Take all else into the fire of your transformative power.
Release me, release others,
from any effects of my wrong-mindedness or wrong-doing.

Dear god,
Return me to Your light.
As I now give to You who I am, what I did, who I loved,
who I failed to love, please make all things right.
Take all things.
May I continue to grow in Your light and love,
Tomorrow, may I be better.
Amen

SHED

By AM
Wisconsin

I had a dream, or maybe it was a vision-

I stood at the pearly gates asking permission
for entry, wondering if they'd swing open
behind me, I heard my name being spoken.
I made half a spin, facing the words stated,
a smooth, suited dude whom I knew was Satan
approached me with a gait of antiquated gangsters.

I felt a bit of trepidation, then ice cold anger,
Unsure of why I was headed in that direction,
but he paused six steps from me and inspected,
saying, "It's good to see you've made it home!
Looking back, I know your absence must have seemed long!"
Throwing me for a loop was the warmth in his words,
a parental tone in his banter, I swear I heard.
Quite confused by this shyster who spoke with sincerity,
I peered into the distance, mind searching for clarity
Noticing my boggled mind and lack of reply,
He laughed to himself, "Didn't expect me to be this fly?"
Surely you knew that your sense of style I'd mimic
I figured this would help you not feel quite timid.

Then my eyes touched his, his smile shone bright
causing me to recognize that he was so right.
I relaxed, but then had to finally ask,
"Am I headed to hell, did I fail my task?"
Unexpectedly he chuckled a suave, cool laugh
Reaching around my shoulder, shaking me just a tad,
"Did you truly even ask that? You should know better!
After all you've learned living, I figured you'd know whether
hell was a place or fictitious destination."
Then he stopped talking. I feared his hesitation.
"Not only did you pass, you did so sans effort!
I stacked the deck in your favor so you could have failed never!"

Smiling now, I recognized who this being was,
I couldn't hold back, I had to give him a hug!
"Finally I've made it, now I stand in heaven!
I'm so excited to be where all is pleasant!"
Swiftly slipped my lips, faster than I could think,
and I noticed my own tears were on the brink.
"Questions in mountains I have, do you have answers?"
"Definitely I do, perfect ones, so go on, ask 'em",
he returned. I didn't pause. I let one loose,
"Why is it that so many don't know the truths?"

(continued on next page)

SHED

(continued from previous page)

“Many do and they feel it, the heart tells no tales,
but they ignore their feeling and experience their hells.
and there have been those guided by their own greed,
insecurities, fears, misguided souls proceed
down paths they created until they see the light,
while some view the shine and deem it too bright!”

“Still, millions suffer, even as we hate the pains
we pray for absolution, we get hurts the same.”
I said back acerbically, while being confused.

His eyes went vibrant, seeming diamond infused.
“Pain is a teacher, showing you smarter ways
And it’s true that many pray on their harder days.
I’ve always answered, in exactly the needed means
But many fail to see that nothing is as it seems.
My responses brought solace, even when ignored.
It extended ideas that went unexplored.”

Then I knew instantly that his words were honesty,
So I posed the next question instilled with modesty,
“Why is life so chaotic, why is Earth out of hand?
Is this how things should be, is this in your plans?”

He paused then swept his arm, clearing a path of clouds,
“Watch,” he said, and I could see a street with one house.
His finger flicked, the roof dissolved and I saw inside,
around a table, a family of 6 sat, saying grace in pride
“I never lost control my son, I’ve always held you close
and the days you felt abandoned is when I held you most.
I don’t worry of how you play since I know you’re safe.
Your life is just a waking dream, it ends and you come here,
so don’t dare walk in cloudy days, there is no need for fear.
At any time you need a rest, I shall hold the door,
so you can take a respite then go back to play some more.
Life is not ‘chaotic’ but beautiful and all you may dream!
When it’s not, be quick to go and choose a different scene.”

Then I woke, still seeing his smile, a haze in my head.
Knowing that the conversation was light meaning to be shed.

Quotable Quotes

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

“Dream as if you’ll live forever, live as if you’ll die today.” - James Dean

“You see things; and say, ‘Why?’ I dream things that never were, and I say,
‘Why not?’” - George Bernard Shaw

“Somehow I can’t believe that there are any heights that can’t be scaled by a
man who knows the secrets of making dreams come true” - Walt Disney



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You are blessed and a blessing to all

Janine