

## The Inspiring Inspiration of Love

I have currently been incarcerated for 22 years, being separated from my family and life in general has been an agonizing experience and difficult to endure. There are never any "good" days in prison, some are merely more tolerable than others. However, my strength and motivation to overcome the intolerable derives from two very special women: Ma and Tiffany.

Ma, is a very religious woman and is like a second mother to me. I was married to her daughter in 2004. Even after that relationship ended, Ma has continued to be there for me relentlessly. She's knowledgeable and has vast wisdom, which she shares generously. Her sound advice, guidance, support and unconditional love keeps me grounded and focused.

In a place where the idea of love is suppressed, she motivates me to see the best in others and view them as human-beings, not simply as inmates or prisoners who committed a crime. With these qualities, I am able to recognize the compassion, empathy and natural connection to others within myself. Providing me with the insight to evaluate and deal with everyone I encounter as an individual.

Ma's always able to acknowledge and accentuate the positive aspects in any situation, while veering me away from the negativity, which is prevalent in this environment. She's a wonderfully amazing woman. I call her once a week to receive her wisdom and nourishment. Her words also humble me while drawing me away from the chaos. God bless her.

Tiffany, my daughter, is the primary reason for me not giving up hope. She has a heart of gold and is extremely intelligent, understanding and open-minded. Her calm voice, strong words and radiant smile unlocks my heart to love again. Our relationship was built and maintained on mutual trust and respect. She's a father's dream, always doing everything in her power to do what's right.

She allows me to see life from a more pleasant perspective. Life in general no longer appears all dark and gray. Tiffany inspires me to never give up hope while attempting to achieve my many goals, I always continue moving forward. She shows me that hope is the ability to see the good in tragedy, while looking forward to a more promising tomorrow. By visualizing the brighter side of any situation, I no longer gravitate towards those elements that have the potential to jeopardize my happiness and/or freedom.

So whenever I become depressed or stressed out, all I have to do is think of the two women whom I love dearly to make things better. They provide me with hope when none appears to be available. For all of this I am extremely grateful. This is also a daily reminder that . . . the inspiring inspiration of love possesses far-reaching effects.

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