

## Finding Freedom Inside of Prison

**When man has been consciously enslaved by the omnipresent manacles of stagnation, where does he turn in order to ingest the necessary resolve needed to break free from this self-induced sense of servitude?**

For much of my disparaged life I was, from a comprehensive standpoint, blind and reticent to the fact that I was helping to brand upon virtually every youthful black urbanite the systematic stigma contrived to culturally, morally, and spiritually extinguish. Due to the insensible mind state developed over time, I was completely ignorant to the longstanding perversion both propagandized and indoctrinated by the nefarious powers that be. My awareness to the overt debauchery imbued within the dark recesses of my community was obscured behind the predilections of my own selfish endeavors. In retrospect I was just as much a slave to the system ~~as my~~ as my beautiful ancestors were slaves to "White America" hundreds of years ago. The only difference, they were compelled by brute force to abandon the beatific origins of their homeland. While by sheer choice, I volunteered the advocacy of my own enslavement.

The abovementioned attestation is a rendition of the misguided individual I once was. However, "Finding Freedom Inside of Prison", is an authentic testament of who I am today. It characterizes a vivid depiction of a perfectly imperfect human being. Furthermore, the profundity of my story illustrates how I manage<sup>d</sup> to escape the powerful chains of psychological entrapment to find solace along the tranquil terrains of perceptive freedom.

My journey, like so many others existing under similar circumstances, has been

encompassed by a maelstrom of self-imposed decisions, most of which have led to severe consequences. In the mist of being victimized by my own madness, I blamed everyone for the reprehensible behavior I displayed on daily basis. But if hindsight is truly twenty-twenty I should have soundly ascertained that, by way of choice, the culpability of my actions were essentially mine to bear. From a sub-conscious mind frame I was creating a destiny completely counter-conducive to the auspicious nature of my true self. Consequently, I submitted to the masterful assertion that beguiles man into believing that he is somehow a product of his environment. How far from the truth is such misappropriated adage. Unlike every other creature that moves about Mother Earth, humans are inherently invested with the omnipotent gift of choice. Thus, by virtue of commonality we are products of our own habitual thoughts. Individual thinking is the mainstay that enables man to perceive the vast surroundings ~~around~~ <sup>before</sup> him from the unitary realm of subjectivity. Still, actuating those thoughts manifestly is an external responsibility that many adversely take for granted. Conducive thinking is the pattern of thought that has endued within me the indispensable vigor needed to break these diabolical chains of despair. I now realize with no resistance; I acknowledge with no qualms; and I accept with absolute accountability that all I have done in my life is a result of my own undoing. Point being, the impoverished environment from which I came did not "make" me succumb to the wicked influence of crime. I do admit that the covetous lure of fast money, women, and the acquisition of materialistic entities did have an intoxicating affect on my once young impressionable mind. Nevertheless, in the mist of my self-destructive foolery not once was I deprived of my innate volition to choose.

Prison, in its totality, is seen through two different sets of lenses. These views are construed amid extremely connotative perceptions. Some individuals enter the sinister folds of the penitentiary with the sole purpose to delve deeper into his/her chosen field of criminality. They perceive the condensed structure of these six by nine cubicles as nothing more than transitory layovers until they are afforded the opportunity to navigate their way back to the inclement shores of the "blocks" and "avenues". This is the time when such misguided souls propagate depravity, and consolidate the foundation of their dispassionate systems of belief.

On the ~~other~~<sup>other</sup> hand there are others that walk through the doors of these gated plantations with an assertive mentality to not only eradicate the disproportionate levels of misguidance, but to also rectify the distorted thinking that led to a decadent path of criminality. In order for this holistic transformation to authentically take its course, one has to dig well beyond the false images preceded by the fluctuating waves of thought. Only then can the aesthetic aura of one's true self organically permeate society abroad. This is the surest way to maintain and sustain an ascendant spirit.

Change, in its most fundamental aspect, is inevitably consequential. In relation to man, he will either change under the clause of betterment, or sequentially change for the worse. In essence no one person remains the same. Evolutionary cultivation is the celestial summit that all sagacious individuals should want to one day attain. However, the lack of fortitude and self-discipline are dual impediments that preclude many from ascending to such heights. Contrary to that, we eventually fall short of our consecrated purpose and become willing prey to the secularisms that hold little or no value to growth

and development.

The man I am today can be attributed in large part to my current circumstances. Most would be hard pressed to believe that the abysmal pit of the penitentiary could possess the capacity to furbish tarnished gems. For those who have assumed as much, the luminous ambience exuded through my own refined walk of life is proof that defy this so called exception to this the rule; this psuedo- anomaly. Reality is seldom seen through the blind eyes of pessimism. But trust when I say this: "Even a rose can bloom in a room that is consumed by darkness." When the duality of faith and persistence are dissected and properly directed, then what appears to be the impossible becomes the possible.

My personal transition from absurdity to conscious propriety has been one of dire necessity. Without a transformative "reality check", I would have surely faltered under the guise of cultural submission. Never have I adhered to the conceptual notion embellished by happenstance. I believe that all things come into fruition bearing fruit with stems of reasoning attached to the succeeding action. One has to be willing to scratch beyond the surface of what appears to be in order to find the hidden jewels of true rationale. My coming through the folds of the penitentiary was a blessing in disguise. I am convinced with total conviction that had this life altering experience not transpired at the time in which it did, death at the unapologetic hands of addiction and or criminality would have been as imminent as night turning into day. Not only did prison save me from the wretched domain of my lower self, my circumstances also impelled me to discover, understand, and ultimately appreciate the ascendant qualities of my higher, much more refined existence.

I have a strong immovable belief that every single person has at their disposal a God ■

given purpose; a predetermined calling that solidifies their reason for living. Until that purpose is, at the very least, sought out we are but "existing entities", devoid of the glowing fervor of passion.

The first twenty- two years of life was spent in a motionless prism of stagnation. My lack of understanding coupled with my easily influenced mentality left me ensnared in a paradoxical maze with no exit to look towards. However, when man is infused with a purpose driven objective, he soon realizes that life is not about him; rather it is about what organic value he can bestow upon life that will make it more worthwhile for others. Once I was able to inscribe upon my psyche the prolific essence of this selfless idealism, the dark veil that obstructed my vision was lifted, and the beauty of living became readily visible.

Looking back at all the tumult I caused in my life as well as in the lives of others, I now understand that the causation of such was instigated by the contemptuous perception I garnered about myself. When the mirror reflects an image that one views with enmity, sub-consciously the world becomes a reflection of that image. Self-hatred is the most perilous emotion known to man, because such a noxious sentiment is not only imbibed with degradation, it is also disseminated with the same toxic air of negativity. Moreover, once apathy enters the heart, care and concern quickly becomes an afterthought.

It was through my own hardships, my own trials and tribulations that brought into nascence a unique personal significance; a germane purpose that was once a void in my life. I now possess a deep inspirational need to help erect that which I played an intricate role in helping to destroy. Perusing through the cathartic story of Malcom X strongly motivated me to begin the journey of self-education; hearing about the stalwart

expeditions of Marcus Garvey imparted in me the necessary wherewithal to lead towards ethnical prosperity instead of continuing to lead in the direction of racial destruction; and patiently studying the magniloquent works of Ghangis Khan broadened my understanding of universal reverence. The conspicuous range of knowledge I have acquired from the lessons taught by these extraordinary models of growth and development unveiled a curative awakening that has lain dormant in my idle psyche for as long as I can remember.

All that I have spoken on thus far can be summed up with one thought: I have truly found the meaning of "FREEDOM". My personal belief is that there does exist a widespread misconception regarding the humanized meaning of the word freedom. First and foremost freedom is predicated upon an individuals mind-state, not his/her circumstances or conditions. Many people in society are anything but free. Drugs, alcohol, money, sex etc. are the enabling factors that keep people slaves unto themselves. Such servility reigns supreme, not because of the tangible acquisition of those transitory things, but because of the mentality one subjects his/her self to in order to acquire those things. That deep, inexorable craving imprisons the mind, impelling the body to acquiesce to the disillusioned objectives intimated by the manipulative schemes of the mind. For the first time in my life I can honestly say that I am FREE. Free from the capricious thoughts that engendered falsehood and deliberate deception; I am free from the delusive normalacy of abnormal living; I am free from the servility of cultural inferiority; I am free from the shackles of self hatred; and finally, I am free from the biggest adversary I know of, myself. Prison has given me the platform and time to figure all this out.

Mental bondage is intrinsically detrimental to the momentous acclivity towards betterment. Locking ones mind, and precluding it from freely exploring the infinite possibilities that life has to offer is the ultimate crime one can impose on ones self. So again I ask, "When man has been consciously enslaved by the omnipresent manacles of stagnation, where does he turn in order to ingest the necessary resolve needed to break free from this self-induced sense of servitude? The struggle with "self" is a war that is encased with continuous battles; a conflictive contention that vacillates from one extreme to another. Until we as people take the time to get to know who we truly are, where we came from, and where we are trying to go, we will remain in a bottomless pit of nothingness. Knowing self and understanding that through all our personal trials and tribulations we have full range of choosing how to deal with all we go through. That, to me is the ultimate facet of man, as it pertains to growth and development. Acknowledgement, Acceptance, and Accountability are the three components that solidify the standard values of self. Once we fully comprehend and respectfully adhere to upholding these values,<sup>then</sup> surely we will be in a much freer mental state.