THE SOURCES OF STRESS IN A PRISON ENVIRONMENT ARE A GREAT MANY. I ONLY THUS FAR HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH A CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON'S RECEPTION CENTER FOR GENERAL POPULATION INMATES COMING MOSTLY FROM COUNTIES IN THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, BUT NOT ALL OF THEM. I ASSUME, BASED ON MY TIME HERE, THAT LIFE IN THE MAINLINE INSTITUTIONS WITHIN CDCR IS PROBABLY THE SAME, BUT WITH SOME MINOR IMPROVEMENTS, I THINK. THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS, HOWEVER, THAT CDCR DEFINITELY FAILS AT, WHETHER AT A RECEPTION CENTER OR MAINLINE INSTITUTION, AND I'm FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT THIS FAILURE IS CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT ALL OF CALIFORNIAS PRISONS. I WILL ATTEMPT TO SPEAK TO THAT "FAILURE" THROUGH THE LATTER PART OF THIS PAPER.

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS + REHABILITATION PUTS NEWLY ARRIVING INMATES THROUGH RECEPTION CENTER PROCESSING UPON ARRIVAL. THIS IS A VERY LENGTHY PROCESS FOR MANY INMATES WITH VERY LITTLE TO DO, ESPECIALLY THOSE HOUSED IN CELLS. CELL LIVING INITIALLY SEEMED LIKE A BLESSING TO ME, THAT BROUGHT A HUGE SMILE TO MY FACE. I STILL ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF IT, BUT HAVE REGRETTIBLY FOUND A VARIETY OF THINGS TO REGARD AS VERY STRESSFUL AND DEFINITELY AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT THAT CDCR SHOULD ADDRESS.

APPROXIMATELY 22 TO 23 HOURS OF MOST DAYS ARE SPENT IN THE CELL. THE CELL AFFORDS ABOUT 6FT OF WIDTH BY ABOUT 12FT OF LENGTH; A TOP BUNK AND BOTTOM BUNK; AND A SINK/TOILET. THIS IS HARDLY ENOUGH ROOM FOR TWO ADULT MALES TO LIVE AND GO ABOUT DAILY "PROGRAM" OR ROUTINE COMFORTABLY, ON GOOD DAYS. LET'S IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST BE LIKE ON A BAD DAY, FOR ONE SECOND. AND THEN, ON AN EVEN WORST DAY. IT WOULD SEEM TO AN INTELLIGENT PERSON THAT CDCR ALMOST, IF NOT SURELY, ARRANGES LIVING QUARTERS OF CONFLICT FOR THEIR OWN SICK SENSE OF ENTERTAINMENT, AND ENJOYMENT. ONE WOULD ASSUME SOME TEST OR SCREENING OF COMPATIBILITY, HOWEVER THIS HAS PROVEN

TO NOT BE THE CASE IN MY EXPERIENCE THUS FAR. WE ARE, AFTER ALL, TALKING ABOUT ONE OF THE LARGEST WASTES OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS IN THE STATE. WERE IT NOT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL INMATES AND THEIR SENSE OF DISCIPLINE, INGENUITY, AND DETERMINATION TO LIVE HARMLY IN PRISON, THERE WOULD BE NOTHING MORE THAN CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT TAKING PLACE HERE; MOST DEFINITELY NOTHING CLOSE TO CORRECTIONS OR REHABILITATION.

OVERCROWDING IN CA PRISONS DEFINITELY HAS LEAD TO THE DECAYS EXPERIENCED IN RECEPTION PROCESSING, HOWEVER, THIS COULD EASILY BE REMEDIED WERE IT NOT FOR THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN CALIFORNIA'S VOTERS, PEACE OFFICERS, AND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.

LIFE IN PRISON IS MUCH LIKE LIFE ON THE OUTS, WITH THE EXCEPTION THAT PACKING UP + MOVING TO A NEW APARTMENT WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE CONFLICT WITH YOUR ROOMMATE IS NOT AN OPTION. CONFLICTS IN PRISON MUST BE DEALT WITH AND RESOLVED IF HARMONIOUS LIVING IS THE GOAL. JUST LIKE ON THE OUTS, COMMUNICATION IS KEY TO EFFECTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION. TIMES WHEN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CELL MATES IS REFUSED OR NOT POSSIBLE PRESENT SOME OF THE MOST DIFFICULT MOMENTS, DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS, AND SO ON.

IF FOR NOTHING MORE THAN THE FACILITATION OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IS WHY I STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF CELL MATE COMPATIBILITY. CDCR DOES VERY LITTLE TO DETERMINE PROPER CELL MATE COMPATIBILITY, IF ANYTHING AT ALL, OTHER THAN PRISON POLITICAL AFFILIATION. A TEST OF SORTS, MUCH LIKE FINDING A ROOM MATE ON THE OUTS, THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE MANY FACTORS THAT MAKE UP A PERSON AND THEIR PERSONALITY, SHOULD DEFINITELY BE IMPLIMENTED.

CELL MATE INCOMPATIBILITY UNDOUBTEDLY LEADS TO STRESS OF EPIC PROPORTIONS, VIOLENCE, AND LOTS OF OTHER NEGATIVES THAT CDCR SHOULD BE CONCERNED WITH. THE CONCERN THAT EXISTS

REGARDING CDCR OPERATIONS, INMATE LIVING CONDITIONS, WELL-BEING, ETC, ON THE OUTS BY CALIFORNIAS TAX PAYING POPULATION IS IN DIRECT CONTRAST WITH THE TOTAL + COMPLETE LACK OF CONCERN FOR ANY OF THOSE ITEMS WITHIN THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION. IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THAT CALIFORNIANS ARE HAPPY WITH THE FACT THAT A NON-VIOLENT FIRST TIMER WITH NO PRIOR FELONIES SPENDS 4½ MONTHS OF A 11 TO 12 MONTH SENTENCE IN RECEPTION AWAITING PROCESSING, DOING NOTHING REHABILITATIVE AT ALL. IN FACT, DOING NOTHING AT ALL, BUT WAITING IN A CELL, ALL DAY, EVERY DAY. IF CALIFORNIAS WELL BEING, THE INMATES REHABILITATION, CRIME PREVENTION, AND DECREASING RECIDIVISM WERE ACTUAL PRIORITIES OF CDCR, THEN WHY ON EARTH WOULD THIS INMATE STILL BE WAITING AROUND, DOING NOTHING THAT CONTRIBUTES TO ANY OF THE ADVERTISED AND PROPAGANDIZED "GOALS" OF THE DEPARTMENT.

POLICIES AROUND CDCR ARE CHANGING ALWAYS, SO WE'LL SEE IF THINGS IMPROVE. THOSE OF US WHO ARE GOOD, SHOULD GET TO STAY GOOD AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION SYSTEM THAT WE'VE PAID FOR AND CONTINUE TO PAY FOR, FULLY, WITHOUT ANY LIMITATIONS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF US, OUR FRIENDS, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, STATE, AND COUNTRY.