

Bigotry at Jameson Annex.

The definition of a bigot according to the American Heritage Dictionary is: n. One who is intolerant esp. in matters of religion, race, or politics.

Myself being white or I guess to politically correct term, ~~caucasian~~ Caucasian and a Zen Buddhist who practices meditation and runs the ~~big~~ small Buddhist Group here at the Jameson Annex of the South Dakota State Penitentiary, I can tell you I have experienced bigotry here in it's many forms.

My personal view is that it is ignorant for a person or a group of people, whether it be inmates or prison staff to hate a person ~~because~~ simply for practicing a different religion or way of life that is different from their own.

I can't count the number of times I have been labeled as "crazy," "retarded," "weird," "Buddha rat," etc. because of my religious/spiritual practice. This is especially true when inmates or prison staff see me practicing seated meditation in my cell or out on the recreation yard. I also do a walking meditation called Ken-hen. Zen Buddhism translates to meditation Buddhism.

It never ceases to amaze me how close minded people are towards others who are, in their eyes, different.

I have been teaching/leading the Jameson Buddhist Group for years and I have noticed it is a constant struggle within people between Ignorance verses Wisdom.

There may be alot of misunderstandings and misinformation given about a prisoner like myself practicing meditation and Buddhism. In this day and age, I am still confused as to people enjoying to gossip and be negative about a person or religious practice instead of actually sitting down over a cup of coffee and having a five minute ~~an~~ honest conversation. I encourage all people to find out what is true for themselves. I leave you with this quote to ponder from Buddha:

"Don't believe everything you see, read, or hear from others, whether ~~from~~ of authority, religious teachers or text. Find out for yourself what is truth, what is real."

respectfully Submitted by Shane Bell #10443

Shane Bell

P.O. Box 5911

Sioux Falls SD 57112-5911