

Radical Truths.

I was 13 the first time I was put in a cell / "cage" and shown what I thought, and felt did not matter. The very thing I had been trying to run from. At 18 I beat an old man to death during a home invasion robbery. I had first objected to, after then "falsely" being told "He's just an old child molester." Again trying to run and hide from what I thought and felt; Believing it did not matter, and I've served 23 years of an 85 year sentence. Most of which I spent trying to prove to myself and everyone else that I'm only what being in prison says I'm suppose to be and what I think and feel does it matter and in the process I became a worse human being then when I got here, which only made me more miserable then just what being in prison was, and, though I've said hundreds of prayers asking whatever force that's created and governs the Universe, begging "It, or Her, or Him" to let me die, because I have no purpose, I'm not allowed to think, or feel and still, I can't stop, which means something must be wrong with me, and I don't want to hurt and let down and hurt, anymore, But it has not worked.

I don't feel sorry for myself. Though I've had those times too. But, I am sorry for the life I took and the life I've wasted and I've spent the last seven years trying to prove it. Believing if I had the courage to do the right thing, No matter the consequences, (then I'd be the man / I think I would be).

have been if I had it made all the mistakes
in life that've lead me here, and that in doing so
these walls would dictate who I was, or, what
I could achieve. But no matter what I've done
I've only fallen short and between inmate/convict
thought process for what's appropriate, and what's
not (and P.O.C. rules that say we're not allowed
to be human beings, or, do the right thing without
being punished, I've only made life, and breathing
and sleep harder and seem less like it really
matters what we do in life. Especially when we
live in a society that uses everything we do
and, say against others to justify being less
then we'd otherwise say is right, or, expect
themselves to be treated; making the authorities
who set the standards for what's acceptable
and what's not is how we treat others, no better
then those they condemn to cages, which
means we're punishing people for what we as
individuals and collectively as a society can't
do. "Change", and in doing so we don't let
people grow and change and, become our
potential, and in that I feel afraid and sorry
for us all, but I keep trying to change, always
still believing more in who everyone else is, and,
their worth, then my own and that if I can,
then all the pain and suffering we caused and
lived won't be for nothing.

But until 2016 no matter what I did, I couldn't overcome my self defeating, self sabotaging destructive thought process and habits. Then I met a woman; she was a D.O.C employee, a person our D.O.C rules and expectations say I'm not allowed to think or care about. Not she I or any other inmate. Not as a person anyway and certainly not as a man. Only an inmate and whatever put us in these cages. (Even you, the vast majority of our society would think less of her if you thought or knew otherwise)

But I worked for, with, and around this lady for months and everyday I would watch dozens of people filing into her office or stopping her on the walk, begging her to be put in any job or program available and almost always there was nothing available and most knew it and as much as anything else, they just wanted and needed to talk to a woman, and everyday someone would try her, and while she didn't tolerate rudeness she never thought less of them and though she nor any other woman working in the D.O.C would be allowed to admit it, she more than once had her ego stroked, making whoever it was feel a little more human and manly than these walls otherwise let us and while she was often doubted and falsely accused of conduct she wasn't guilty of, shaming her because she would it.

be what they wanted her to be, and it used to keep her out of higher positions of responsibility she had otherwise earned. She never let it compromise who she was, or what she did, and though she did her best to hide it, even from herself. It was obvious she cared about, and, believed in, who people in prison are, and, can be, and, it made her brilliant at understanding what it takes and how people in prison have to be treated to help them overcome their self-doubting, self-sabotaging bad thought process and habits, and, in her struggles to overcome her youth and the constant peer group expectations that made her feel less than she was, and only trying to become the best person she could, I seen myself, and every other person in prison I'd ever met and though I did everything I could to avoid thinking about her and pretended not to, I loved her, and, we had spent enough time around each we didn't have to say much, if anything at all to know what the other was thinking, or, felt, and I knew she knew, as much as she knew, I knew it could never matter, and, I would never try, or, use it against her, even if I thought I could, or, wanted to, and her believing in who I was, even when I continued to doubt myself, made me believe in my own worth enough that I didn't want to die in prison anymore, believing something was wrong.

with me, never having served a purpose or loved and lived with an open heart, and one day she told me about an idea she had proposed to her boss about a program and therapy group not only for victims of child sexual abuse, but for those that take advantage of them. Having herself, been abused, suffering the self sabotaging consequence and wanting to know why and how to overcome it. But also believing those that take advantage of children, no more understand, or, like what they do than the rest of us, and, only when we can remove people from the ignorance of it and the painful isolation of shame, will we be able to overcome the hurt people, hurt people consequence, not just as individuals who personally suffer them, but collectively as a society, and, she was ignored.

So I've spent the past four years writing about it, knowing she would never be allowed to openly support what I've got to say without it being held against her, Hoping I could use everything I've learned since I was five, the first time I can remember being molested and everything in between until now, including the truth that DOC correctional staff are better people and more capable than the way they're "trained" to think, or, allowed to treat

people, which has more of an effect on who people become while they're in prison than anything else, to help you, our society and authority figures who set the standards for what's acceptable and what's not, in their examples of being able to admit what and how we're doing it doesn't work and changing it, not in words, but in actions, even if that means admitting they personally don't know what to do and giving someone else a chance and, in doing so, raise the standards of who we all are and what we can achieve together; reducing the violence and victimization in our country, which starts by believing in the best of who people are and can be, no matter what they do. Knowing what they do is because they don't believe in their own worth or purpose and only when someone sees, understands, and acknowledges them, by fighting for and not giving up on them and yourselves, will we as a society empower everyone, giving ourselves the ability to achieve our potential and what we'd otherwise say is right and want to be, and though I would not call myself a Christian, I've read the bible, and I believe Jesus is real and that he gave his life for all of us and in his last days when he knew he would be betrayed by his own people and crucified, he showed us the same thing when he said with his final

commandment Love your brother as I have loved you, and then he let us take his life. In doing so he said, I love you. No matter what you do to me I will not give up on you. In doing that (walking the talk) it empowered peoples sense of worth, and purpose and raised the standards of whats acceptable and whats not in how we treat one another and No matter who we are or, what faith one walks by its effected us all. Except we've forgotten or never understood that it took someone seeing, understanding and believing in the best of who we are, no matter what we do or, how much we doubt ourselves to change us, and even the lakota Native Americans know it and have a saying. Its their way of life and their "Amen at the end of every prayer. " Mitakuye Oyasin". It means "All my relations". meaning all life is related, and, connected and everything we do has an effect and they thrive to treat life and all people as their brother, and sister, Mother and father and we are taught in our society, if we are taught and preached to nothing else. "Never give up on family and when we can start treating all people like that. No matter who they are or, what they do, then" we'll change the world again. Together.

I never told that D.O.C employee that

women, that person, what I thought or felt,
out loud. I was afraid to, and in that I
let both us down and fell short of who I'm
trying to be. But, all I've ever wanted is
to be good enough to go home, to be
good enough to deserve being cared about
and respected, and I still don't and
I don't know what else to do. I can't do
it keeping my biggest desire just want to live.

Mitakuye Oyasmin,
J.J. Spivey Jr

I don't have your permission slip. But
you have my permission to send what
I've written to as many people as you can,
(Please.) I want nothing for it, just
to be heard. Not even my name
matters.

Thank you for who you are
and what you do.

J.J. Spivey Jr
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