

PRISON WISDOM

These years in prison have become the defining learning moments of my life. They have taught me more about people and the world in three years than the previous three decades. I've learned:

There is no feeling quite like the loss of freedom -- an unquantifiable pain beyond any known words.

Patience is never truly mastered.

I am a hurting, ignorant, son-of-a-bitch no better or worse than anyone else.

My loved ones are doing this time with me and that time away from them both tears the relationship apart and binds it together in new beautiful ways we never expected.

True friends are the family God allows us to choose and those ties can be stronger than blood.

There is such a thing as good bad people and bad bad people and monsters and angels exist among us...and in us.

Beauty exists in the details we too often take for granted: the smell of fresh cut grass, sound of our children's laughter, the warm embrace of someone who cares about you. Never take these moments for granted.

I have an extraordinary family. Their resilience and unwavering devotion

(cont. Prison Wisdom)

is beyond comprehension and something I will never be able to repay.

Stay focused on what you can change and let the rest of it go. (secret to happiness?)

Unknown depths to my own soul and that courage doesn't stem from the lack of fear, but from action in spite of it. And that facing and overcoming those fears will define my character.

True change can be slow and steady or come in spurts, but will always be painful. Learn to embrace the pain. Freedom can be found through pain.

New found compassion for my fellow man, most surprisingly, for those I barely know or even like. I've begun to open my heart and let people in. This is not normal for me and I'm not very good at it, but I'm glad its come about and hope to continue to nourish it.

We have a broken justice system and we're at a critical junction where we can either push towards creating a better, humane, fair system or lower our sights and continue to compromise our humanity and fall deeper into the darkness. The choice is entirely ours.

That the world is lost and confused. People are blind to their blessings--that can't see we've hit the fate lottery--living in the best time in history. For my part, my heart is full knowing that I'm living on the most beautiful planet among the most wonderous people ever.

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By Leo Cardez (pen name)