

December 25, 2020

To those out there and inside,

This journey is one of many I've taken along this road. The rumor is that it supposedly gets easier the more times you're on it. Like I said, that's the rumor.

The reality is that you should never let it get easier. In fact, go out of your way to make it harder. And by that I don't mean fall victim to the so-called traditions of incarceration, namely, drugs, violence, sexual or otherwise and any form of negative substance.

Face each day in here as a challenge to your natural state and build, not destroy. As I mentioned at the top of this essay, this isn't my first time but it is the first time, the normal nets of safety, such as a friend or a lover even mom are not with me this time. The first two, left when it seemed as if I would ride the bars indefinitely. The third and the most painful was losing my mom last year.

It's not been an easy year for us inmates, Covid lockdowns and the seemingly free for all, the justice systems ~~is~~ face is taking, has put new pressures on us, on a day to day even hour to hour. Rather than think or work on our cases, we must deal with quarantine, Covid tests, constant shipping between dorms because the idea is to stay ahead of this thing.

Many have chosen to self medicate, legal or not, others have decided not to care at all. I believe this is the wrong approach. For my part, I went and signed up for a Paralegal course. I also went against type and opened myself up to write conversation by that I mean rather than isolation (Radio, books, under the blanket). I chose to listen and give feedback to anyone who wished it.

This has opened my mind to new and interesting possibilities and that's, to believe, the key to doing this thing we call time.

Be open to the possibilities. To am  
by no means playing down this place  
but I could not in good conscience  
write that everything here is all  
doom. To me that's a cliché

What I will say is that this is  
the time for lawmakers to step up  
and install programs back into the  
system. The money is out there and  
the willingness is in here. I've been  
in now since the 26<sup>th</sup> of June I've  
gone through 4 quarantines and one  
facility wide ~~low~~ outbreak and thru  
it all Corrections has stepped up with  
masks, yard to allow for spraying  
and decontaminating the units. I've  
seen hardened veterans in here go  
out of their way with the new arrivals  
and I've seen us come together not to  
interrupt but to push a good point  
to forefront

To my brothers and sisters in facilities  
around the country. I know things  
are hard. I've been diagnosed with  
cancer in here, to wear a colostomy  
bag

It hurts to smile when all I want  
is to cry and rage.

But that is like a drug, it only  
lasts for so long until reality sets  
in. And then what do you have?

This is not an easy road, for many  
of us the hard truth is this journey  
will be a long one. Some of us may  
not even make it out of here.

That's the simple truth, Brothers and Sisters  
to sugarcoat it would do all of you  
a disservice and <sup>be</sup> a disrespect.

But we can learn to do time rather  
than letting time do us. Below are  
what I truly believe to be essential  
for that.

Read: anything and everything  
Volunteer: for unit clean up, trusty, anything  
that puts you with others for the exchange  
of ideas, dreams and hopes.

Study, Take a course or two if you  
can.

Make a promise to God and read the Bible from the first page to the last. Even if you don't get it, in time you will understand it.

And understanding unlocks many doors.

Be tolerant resist cliques and race hatred. Don't fall into the pettiness of this place.

And above all don't let time do you, you do the time.

Remember, these walls can trick you one day. They are your friend and then suddenly turn on you.

Learn to recognize that moment and when you do, fight it, not your fellow inmates.

The year is almost over now, so I extend my hope that all of you find you fight at whatever tunnel you're in.

Sincerely  
C. G. Palmer

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