



*As A Convict
Thinketh*

Mark Crawford

As A Convict Thinketh

Mark Crawford

Content

Content.....	3
Chapter 1.....	4
I, Convict.....	4
Chapter 1 - Review.....	6
Chapter 2.....	8
Why Am I Here?.....	8
Chapter 2 - Review.....	11
Chapter 3.....	12
I Am What I Am.....	12
Chapter 3 - Review.....	16
Chapter 4.....	17
Be Truthful.....	17
Chapter 4 - Review.....	21
Chapter 5.....	22
Don't Get In Your Feelings.....	22
Chapter 5 - Review.....	26
Chapter 6.....	27
Get a Program.....	27
Chapter 6 - Review.....	31
Chapter 7.....	32
Convict Develop Your Values.....	32
Chapter 7 - Review.....	36
Chapter 8.....	37
In Conclusion.....	37
The License.....	40

Chapter 1

I, Convict

Everything that we do or have ever done was at first a thought within our minds. Therefore, our present position in prison was created by our own thoughts, which were materialized into our daily actions and ultimately created our present life circumstances.

A person does not end up in the crack-house or the jailhouse by way of bad luck. Nor do these types of conditions materialize themselves because of a prejudice against you by the prevailing society in which you exist. For no right-minded person can be forced into crime or degradation by bitter circumstances, any more than a person of good moral fiber could suddenly become a sexual pervert simply because they live across the street from an elementary school. Circumstances are not what define a person, but are instead the projector which has illuminated to that person their true self! So-if a person such as you, or I, suddenly finds themselves behind bars, we can in truth blame none but ourselves.

There are no external forces, no devils per se, which can overcome a person and cause their downfall were their minds not first walking the pathway of those same mongrel desires. For example: Desiring money so badly that you will steal or kill for it - or desiring money so desperately that you will sell drugs for it (even though you know that you will go to prison when caught) are prime examples of the type of low-level, brute animal thinking which exemplifies an A-typical addiction.

We present and future convicts are addicts, slaves to one thing or another which has directed our life towards an abnormal outcome.

Addictions of any kind are failures, and are the result of a poor thinking process that has caused us to submit to a lifestyle that has proven to be destructive.

Ask yourself: What would I think about a person who continually put their hand into a burning flame time after time, until their flesh blistered and smoldered? I suspect that you'd think that they must enjoy self-mutilation, that they enjoyed pain, or that they have mental issues. But are you and I any better? Any smarter, when we continue to think and to do things which destroy our lives? At what point do we finally accept that our way of thinking has created a lifestyle which is self-destructive? At what point do we admit that we are addicts to a failed and flawed thinking process? Addicts to a thinking process which causes us to repeatedly stick our hand into the flame of failure by way of criminal thought. Addicts who have accepted failure as a way of life. At what point in this bastard existence behind bars, do we stop blaming others and sincerely ask ourselves, "Why am I in prison?"

Circumstances and Thought are one and the same. Each and every person is positioned, in the game of life, exactly where their own thoughts have placed them. It is true that some are born into a life of wealth and privilege, while others are born into a life of poverty and less fortunate conditions. But, there are many wealthy dope fiends, wealthy criminals, wealthy sexual deviants and wealthy parents who's children are failures, dope fiends and prisoners: just as there are many poor Teachers, poor Ministers and poor Social Workers. Do not be deceived by outward appearances, and don't get caught up in a false reality about what happiness really is, because many who on the surface seem to have it all, live in utter

misery and are constantly chased by the hounds of absolute sorrow. Just the same, there are many who appear deprived of material possessions per se, yet, who are in truth, rich in happiness and contentment. One's inner- state of being, be it happy or sorrowful, successful or unsuccessful, will always be harmoniously related to one's own thought process, not to one's wealth or circumstances at birth.

When you see someone suffering beneath the slings and arrows of dishonor, or flying high upon the wings of contentment, you can be certain they are reaping the harvests produced by the seeds from which they themselves have sown into their own hearts and minds, into their own thoughts and actions.

We are what we think! Dwell on thoughts about drugs and you will become involved with them and at some point experience prison. Think about thievery and you will become a thief. Think about gangs and you will become a gangster. Think violent thoughts and you shall have violence in your life. Think about owning and managing your own business and someday you shall do it. Think happy thoughts and you will have happiness. Think about spiritual things and you will become spiritual. You are made or unmade by your own thoughts.

This knowledge is the key to the chains which bind you. For the whole of Life and its twin sister living, is based upon this truth. The whole of human experience, the whole fruit of human success or the whole defecation of human failure is all contained within these five little words: "You are what you think."

By the process of Right Thinking and the proper application of that Right Thinking Process, a person can overcome any and all adversity, including an addiction to failure and its unsightly companion prison. To do this, you must only ask yourself, "What type of an addict am I? What am I thinking right now- this very moment? What have I been thinking about for most of this day? What are the people that I am hanging around with thinking?" Ask! Dare to question yourself, for to do so IS right thinking and the proper application for this Right Thinking Process is to question and then control what it is you allow yourself to think. This is accomplished by an awareness brought about by monitoring your own thoughts. Know what you are thinking. Know what is going on in your own mind. And, if you find yourself thinking about things which are related to failure, things which have caused you to fail in the past then make yourself stop thinking those thoughts by replacing them with something productive, like your family, a type of career you desire, a hobby, a mantra--anything that is productive. You must learn to recognize what you are thinking and then change any thoughts you might be having which are not part of a future that is on course with your higher goals in life.

You must learn to put your thoughts in check if you indeed hope to rise above the muck and mire of ill-fortune. What are you thinking? Are you thinking about violence, or are you thinking about how much you love your family? Are you constantly talking about your crime status on the streets, or are you talking about your dreams and aspirations? Are your thoughts and actions reflective of someone who cares more about their friends than their loved ones? If so, remember that violent thoughts bring violent results. A gangster mentality will always bring a gangster result.

If you are not in control of your own mind and where it is spending its time, then how can you hope to overcome a tainted thinking process which has brought you to the jailhouse of failure? How can you overcome a negative situation if your own thoughts are equally negative? You cannot! Two negatives equal a continued negative. Only something different will cause a different result. That something different is, in all cases, a positive thought process which in the end result will always overcome a negative situation.

Do you like being in prison? If so, then you have achieved your goal in life. If you do not like being in prison, then stop glamorizing it in your mind by thinking the same type of thoughts which put you here. The difference between someone who is happy and successful as opposed to someone who is unhappily a failure is what they have focused their thoughts upon.

Chapter 1 - Review

- A) Remember, before you can progress as a human being who desires to break free from those who want to spend the rest of their life in prison, you must first know yourself. By self-recognition you can identify your strengths and your weaknesses. If you are unable to see your own faults, then you will be unable to accept responsibility for your own position in life.
- B) If you are in prison you have failed yourself and your family. You must understand this and you must understand that irregardless of how the cops investigated your case or how the prosecution prosecuted you, fairly or unfairly, it was you who put yourself in the position where they could take a shot at you; you were in the game in one form or another. Therefore, you cannot not blame others for your failure, you are ultimately responsible, we all are, whether we admit it or not.
- C) Addiction to something means that that something is controlling you. To be a winner in life, one cannot allow themselves to be under the influence of something or someone less than they are.
- D) Be constantly aware of what you are thinking. In fact, develop the habit of asking yourself hourly---"What have I been thinking about for the last hour?" Then follow up by asking yourself, "Were those thoughts positive or negative, productive or destructive?"
- E) After your personal inventory review, decide if your thoughts from the previous hour are conducive to what is best for you and those you love. If not, change them. If you catch yourself thinking something hazardous to your freedom, change that thought immediately by replacing it with one that is positive.
- F) Pay attention to the words and actions of those you associate with, because those words and those actions are reflective of what THEY are thinking. And if THEY are not the thoughts and actions which you want influencing your life - then remove yourself from their company. Friends have an undeniable impact on your life.

My wife had a saying which I will share with you. "Tell me who you hang around with, and I'll tell you who you are." Would that I had listened to that bit of wisdom.

- G) In truth my reader, you are better off in life to have no friends. So choose those you do have, very carefully. To be a free thinker and a loner takes great strength, and in prison, it takes great courage, but you can do it if you sincerely try.

"All company is bad company except the company of one's equal."

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

One's equal is: One who has the same goals and aspirations. One who has the same morals. One who has the same personal discipline.

Do you like being in Prison? If so, then continue to think, act, and buddy up with the same type of friends as before. However, if you desire something better for yourself by altering who you are. This process starts by altering what you think and who you hang out with.

Chapter 2

Why Am I Here?

Why am I here?

I am here because of the way I think.

Why do I think the way that I do?

I think the way I do because I have been trained to think that way.

Here is a child born into a family with low-thinking aspirations. All throughout his days he sees his siblings and his neighborhood companion's idolizing and emulating the thug life. He sees it in their choice of clothing, he sees it in their gestures, in their manner of speech, the posters on the walls of his home and, he, being a child, cannot escape it. He is constantly barraged with thug music and all other sorts of thug propaganda; and so it is that this child himself must, without question, adapt himself to the same thug life mindset. As a result of this unholy brainwashing and subsequent acceptance of his potentially disastrous lifestyle, he begins to envision himself within that picture of existence. His mind and then his thoughts begin to create for him this reality which he has accepted; he begins to dress like, act like and think like that which he has come to admire, he has accepted this lifestyle and all that goes with it as his goal in life. He wants to be the best thug on the block. What chance does this child have of becoming anything other than a corpse or a convict? Without a change of thinking, zero.

Because like the snake who lies quietly in the grass to bite the heel of those who walk by it, so too does the serpent of failure lie quietly hidden within the grass of low order thinking to strike those who walk its path.

We, you and I, are this child. We too have fallen prey to the information which has been instilled into our minds by our family members, friends and choices of consumed entertainment. How can it be otherwise, this is the way a child learns how to behave both at home and around their peers in the neighborhood. Like this child we too made the choices which would ultimately direct our early lifestyles largely based upon what others liked and disliked, and our hearts and minds have become embedded with the poison of bad influences ever since. But, instead of wising up and seeing the failed outcome of these thoughts and ways, we, like so many before us, have accepted and then projected ourselves further into a lifestyle which has led us to prison - we have become the sum total of our own way of thinking.

Convict, look at your prison, is this what you want for your children? Convict, look at the way you talk, walk, act and think, then ask yourself what are you projecting in the way of an acceptable lifestyle to your own children? What will your children learn to idolize as a result of your lifestyle? Of your conversations? Of your way of speaking? Of your way of dressing? Of your actions? Can you not see that the Angel of Destruction is standing with sword drawn over your own kinfolk? Can you not see that your own children are being herded like rabbits towards a trap, like bulls being let to the slaughter house by the violence of the low order lifestyles which have become fashionable in today's neighborhoods? Has the mirror of your own morality become so stained that it can no longer reflect the light of true recognition? When will you admit to the reality of truth and separate yourself from the loser mindset that

has destroyed you? When will you stop immolating those who refuse to awaken themselves from dreams of failure by dwelling in the very prisons they themselves have built? Don't you think it's time to stop and fight? Don't you think it's time that you become a shield to those behind you without weapons? Will you not become a staff upon which the weak might lean; the eyes to those unable to see; ears to those unable to hear? Convict think! It is within your power to change yourself and by doing so to become the salvation of those who look up to you for guidance. It is within your power to put aside the laziness of immorality, a laziness which paralyzes the intellect and turns it away from Right Thinking so that it can be blurred by our society's sudden acceptance of Third World gangster mentality.

Here is a man who wishes for a better lifestyle. He wishes to be a good father and a good provider for his family. He wishes to have a good job, a chance at a good career, a business and to escape the cycle of prison, yet he has the same old habits, the same old types of friends, the same old manner of speech, the same old ways which brought him to his present place within this house of failure. However, just as sheep cannot lie down with wolves, just as a man cannot carry fire in the palm of his hand, likewise you cannot find the well of change while shading yourself under the tree of habitual non-productiveness. So how can this man achieve any of the higher wishes he craves - he cannot. Why? Because all that has really changed in this man, are his wishes. To affect real change one must take the next step, the next leap, and change more than what he wishes for, he must change the way he thinks and acts. For to wish for a thing cannot overcome a thousand thoughts to the contrary, anymore than merely dreaming of freedom can cause your jailers to unbind you. Change requires change.

Change is a changing of habits, mannerisms, friends, acquaintances, ideals, thoughts and actions. Even though you may have been unwittingly indoctrinated into a lifestyle which greatly improved your chances at failure, it is still within your power to change and to overcome your past failures, just as it is within your power, even as a convict, to direct your own children towards a better lifestyle than the one you accepted. You have the power!

I know a young man who while in his early twenties committed what the government has called a, "hate crime against Jews". Here he sits within the belly of the serpent with a twenty-five year sentence, and for what? To what purpose has his hatred gained him? None, because his actions changed nothing except to deny him freedom.

My heart bleeds for this youngster, because I know that no child is born with this mindset, and so we can only conclude that some circumstance, or set of circumstances caused this man to hate at a very early age. Someone or something caused, even compelled this man to commit a series of Thoughts and Actions which would in the final analyses not only ruined his own life, but that of the woman who married and loved him as well. Understand that I am not telling you who to hate, or even not to hate, what I am trying to emphasize is, that this young man made decisions and then committed those decisions to actions which ruined his life. Who is to blame? His parents, his siblings, his friends, society? I do not know, nor do I care, what I do care about is that he is here, in prison, and has not learned from his mistakes. Here, he is the same misguided youth. Here he revels in his sentence as if it is a badge of honor, seeing himself not as a man who has ruined his life, but instead as an alpha-convict, as a savior of a cause who doesn't even know he exists. This man has not changed because he has not accepted the reality that his past ways of thinking has wrecked his life and robbed him of life's most precious of gifts - freedom. He has not changed because he likes what he is more than he likes those who love him and need him on the outside. Here is a man who prefers prison and living with men, over freedom and living with his wife. Harsh words, but sometimes it takes harsh words and a slap in the face to awaken someone to a truth

they refuse to recognize. Convict, my heart bleeds for what you could have been, what you could have done with your life, a life now wasted, what are you thinking?

Here is another prisoner given a stiff sentence for crimes he committed to support his drug habit. His heart bleeds constantly as he carries with him the weight of his earlier decisions, his pain consumes him as he thinks of his wife and children and all that he threw away, as if they were of no consequence. Here in prison he is alone with his mistakes. Here he is alone with his thoughts. Here he has seen the reality of his poor choices and the gateway to wisdom has been opened so that the light of prudence could shine forth upon him. Here he has decided to better himself by putting aside those thoughts of needles and spoons. Here he has not used drugs, because he has seen the truth, that using them will destroy all that he hopes to achieve. When I see him I feel his loneliness as if it were my own, yet in my heart I rejoice, for this one has awakened and decided that he can do better in life than drugs and prison. This one has broken the cycle of prison and its failure within his mind. He thinks of a better life and his actions here and now scream out the proof that he shall overcome. So drastically different is his way of thinking and acting that the walls of his prison must, by the laws of higher justice, fall down around him, because he has outgrown his need to be a convict and cannot therefore be continually confined by the chains of past error.

The point of these illustrations is to help you to reflect upon the powers of your own acceptances and to know that what has happened to you is dependent upon your own free-will. If you wish to divine your own future, you must only know your present thoughts, your own mind, for today's thoughts are tomorrow's actions and tomorrow's actions ARE the creators of your future.

What a person "accepts" as their dreams and aspirations will become the realities in their life, whether they recognize it as so or not. Whatever you achieve or do not achieve is a direct indication of your own thoughts, of your own thinking process. You are the Shot Caller of your own life, not someone else. Your weaknesses and your strengths are your own; they are the products of your own creation and can only be improved upon by you, never by another. You are what you have caused yourself to be; you are what you have allowed yourself to become! You are your highest aspiration. A man, who dreams of becoming a gangster with criminal intent, will achieve his goal, and all that comes with it, just as a man who dreams of a good career and a loving family will achieve this goal and all that comes with it. You are the Shot Caller of your own life.

And so it is that you and I, have, somewhere along the way, accepted a set of thoughts, and taken actions upon those thoughts, which have led us to our present position in life. We made the decisions which led us here, I and me, not they and them. However, the good news is, that in recognizing this truth about yourself you put yourself into the category of the master painter who paints the portrait of his own life, one who has the power to paint a new picture of himself any way he chooses it to look. And just as a painting is comprised of many different strokes and many different colors which overlap and cover previous strokes and colors, so too, can the masterpiece of your own life be improved with more disciplined top strokes and finishing colors. But, as any true creative mind knows, personal control and personal discipline are mandatory traits if one desires or aspires to the highest levels of creation, and personal control and personal discipline begin with the acceptance of responsibility.

I am the Shot Caller of my own life, and my success or my failure is of my own making. As I think, so I am. As I continue to think, so I will continue to be.

Chapter 2 - Review

- A) We were all trained from birth to think and act a certain way, but, as adults we have the power to change the way that we think and act.
- B) Most people in prison desire to have a more productive life - but, most will not do the mental work required to bring about that change.
- C) Change is: A changing of habits, mannerisms, friends, ideals, thoughts and actions.
- D) Teach your children, and those who love you and look to you for guidance, not to idolize a way of life which will compel them to follow your steps into the prison system. Teach them to desire something better for themselves.

Chapter 3

I Am What I Am

I am personally gifted. I am intelligent, articulate, wise, yet, I am in prison. What does this mean? It means that I am the biggest failure in the prison system. It's that simple. Being the prettiest girl in rehab or the smartest guy in prison is not something to be proud of. Prison is failure and addictions are failure. If you are here, or there, it is because you have failed at life. All that you and I, the convict, has achieved in life, or failed to achieve are direct results of our own thoughts. All that we have truly desired with intensity has become a reality in our life. We are our own creation, lock, stock and barrel. If we are weak minded it is by our own choice, just as it is our choice if we are strong minded, moral or immoral. We are what we ourselves have allowed ourselves to become. Therefore only we, you and I, can change what we at present are, not someone else, not the system which confines us, but me, we, control our place in life.

So, here we are at one of life's many crossroads and once again you are required to make a choice to either continue onward as before or to try something new. Someone who loves you has sent you this little book hoping that you will not only read it, but study it and think about the deeper messages contained within it concerning Life and Thought. But, the truth is, that one person cannot help another to obtain freedom by recognizing the destructiveness of undisciplined thought unless that person is willing to be helped, willing to recognize that they indeed are in need of help. Hard as it is to believe, I will say to you now that most convicts do not want to change, oh they want out of prison, but they are unwilling to recognize and alter their own faults and liabilities in the matter of their own role in their convictions. Convict you are what you think, and as you continue to think, so shall you remain.

Convict, your suffering or your happiness comes from within your own mind and are products of your own thoughts and actions. So the first question which you must answer is: Am I happy being in prison? And if you are like me with the big "L", then you must ask yourself a different question: Do I want to remain in the same cycle of thinking which gained me "Life in Prison," or am I mad enough about it to reject that way of thinking which projected me into the center of these low valleys and dense sulfurous walls to begin with? It is the ability to ask yourself questions like these that a con uses to put the brakes on a life out of control.

A person can conquer life's obstacles and succeed in life only by asking themselves the hard questions and subsequently disciplining their thoughts. Questioning ones ideals and a disciplined thought process is to success, as breath is to life, as heat is to the sun. Without disciplined thought there can be no goals in life, and without a set of goals there can be no success in life beyond that of the odds which the State Lottery affords. And personally, I like my chances at creating my own success more than I do at winning the lottery.

Each person, whether a free man or a convict is where they are in life by the cause of their own thoughts and actions, because they have used those thoughts and those actions to build their own character, and in the building of this character there is no element of chance, there is no accident, if you are successful it is because you have worked towards that goal, and likewise, if you are a convict, then believe it or not, but you too have made it so by your own hard work.. In addition, to the excuse maker

I say that if a person has been influenced into perdition by another, it is still their own fault for allowing themselves to be controlled by someone of lesser morality.

A person is what they think. You and I are products of the Universal Law of Cause and Effect, which says, if you do something, in return you receive something. Something violent brings violence in return. Something helpful brings something helpful in return. It is the law of the Universe. The same as up and down, light and dark, male and female positive and negative. And so it is that we are here not by chance nor by birth, but because we have caused it to be so. That I cannot stress enough. But what to do now? That is the question we must at present address by asking ourselves what we can do to alter our present circumstances.

If you owned or managed a corporation, you would have learned that periodically it would be in your best interest to stop and evaluate how that business is doing. You would set goals for that business to achieve? You would ask yourself, is this business presently on the right course to achieve those goals? Is it a profitable business or is it doomed to a disharmonious failure? Do I have the right kind of associates to grow this business or are they detrimental to its success? And so on and so on. Well my convict friend, your life is your business, in fact it is the most important business you could ever be a part of, and, like any other business you must, if you expect it to succeed, sit down periodically and evaluate it, if you do not, your life business will have no more chance at success than any other. "But I'm in prison!" you say. And I say that even though you are in prison you are not exempt from the responsibility of operating your "Life Business" in a productive manner. Being a convict with a lot of lost years behind us, or in front of us, does not excuse us from the responsibility of personal accountability. And to say that you are dysfunctional as a result of a dysfunctional upbringing is a crutch which must be laid aside if you indeed wish to progress, to think otherwise is wrong thinking.

Right Thinking and Right Actions are the tools used to build the Business of Life. Right Thinking and Right Actions are also the tools by which you re-build your life.

A person can succeed at Life only after recognizing and then practicing a program of disciplined thought. Success can only come in life if one lifts themselves above the mongrel indulgences. We are all adults here and so I will treat you as one by not making pathetic excuses for those among us in prison who spend more time thinking about how to get their stingers hard than they do trying to improve their character. I am not trying to be funny - the noble convict is a thing of the past, and I am only trying to call your attention to the pathetic mindset of those around you so that you might recognize them for what they are: which is wasted thought wasted motion and wasted life. Do not fall prey to these types of non-productive lifestyles, for this is a prime example of the low order animalistic mentality of which most of us have idolized and subsequently followed to failure. A person whose thoughts and actions are dominated by the low order thinking will become a slave to it and are destined to a slaves chained existence.

Before we can accomplish anything, even the simplest of things we must first lift our thought process above that of an animal. A person, be they male or female, whose thoughts are dominated by the sex drive, or as my daddy used to say, "A slave to their cocks," can neither think productively nor exert the discipline necessary to plan methodically, and will therefore fail to achieve their highest potential. For to be a slave to the body means you exist in a state of confusion and therefore cannot fix your mind upon higher thinking problems, nor the development of an improved lifestyle.

Look around you at those who's focus is dominated by the body sensations; they are either, exercising, masturbating or contemplating one or the other. This is the very real truth about the majority

of people in prison these days, and though it shames us to let people on the outside know the derogated status of those entering into prison at this time, it is none-the-less true and therefore reflective of our society on a grander scale. And, being true, we must address it rather than excuse it. We must categorize it so that we can understand it; because only by understanding a thing can we overcome it.

There can be no progress in life without sacrifice, and the first level of sacrifice is to get control over these animalistic tendencies and lift up your higher human qualities, to lift up and bring about a balance, an order, a system to your thoughts and actions so that you do not become addicted to any one set of failing principles. For instance, sex is a good thing when it is not the dominant factor in your life, but nothing is more repulsive than to see some perverted convict masturbating in a religious service while watching some kind sister who has, by her own freewill, entered these unholy walls to administer a little sanity. Or to see some weak-willed woman giving her body to the undeserved masses in a fit of nymphomania nunnery like some supplicant to the god of degradation. And a little drink here or there does no harm, but nothing is more unsightly than a slobbering drunk or more offensive to one's senses than a person who, through alcohol, abuses his spouse, or his children, or spends the rent money on their next drink. All things in life are good when mastered, but no thing is good when we are a slave to it. The body and its carnal desires must not be allowed to control the mind, instead the mind must be dominant, when this is not so, ones low order desires will dominate their higher aspirations and the mental development needed to plan and develop an alternative future cannot take place. The higher and more upright your thoughts and actions are, the more upright your success will be, the more secure your future Life Business will be.

Know your strengths and your weaknesses so that by proper thinking you can alter your course in life to overcome a way of thinking which has brought you to the failure of prison.

I have and will continue to call your attention to the fact that we are each of us responsible for what we have become in life, as well as what we will become. To understand this by refraining from blaming others for your mistakes will help to break you from a lifetime of depression and anger. Freeing yourself from the need to blame others for your life's mistakes brings with it the power to plot the course of an improved future and is essential to breaking the cycle of a failed and unfulfilled existence. Recognizing and accepting responsibility for your own actions also helps you to overcome your negative and non-productive habits, because when they can be seen for their true nature of destructiveness, and when they can be seen as your creation, it is easier to bring them under control. So let's now analyze how and where these negative ideals became our staple way of life.

All that we have allowed ourselves to become is a result of that which we have accepted as reality. This innumerable trove of learned habitual beliefs which we have accepted into our thinking process has created a belief system which has defined itself within us as a person, a Limited Person, a false concept who constantly tells you how to perceive yourself and your world. This Limited Person is a false you born from the womb of incomplete knowledge, a lifestyle of failed thinking that exists only because you have given it the power to do so. Oftentimes life as it has been presented to us by our associates is not based on factual truth, but on the thoughts and beliefs of delusional individuals who are less capable of rational thought than you yourself are. This Limited Person, this false way of thinking has taken on the life which you, by your own thoughts and beliefs, have given it. This Limited Person does not represent reality, but it has convinced you that it does. This Limited Person is a product of false information, of lies and mistruths taught to you by other false believers. This Limited Person speaks to you constantly through your undisciplined, chattering mind of false beliefs. This voice dictates your life by telling you things that are

wrong; for instance, it tells you that it is ok to be a sexual pervert. It tells you that it is ok to be disrespectful by putting your own personal desires above those of others. It tells you that it is ok to collect Welfare when you are capable of taking care of yourself. It tells you that it is ok to lie, to steal, to use narcotics. It tells you that society owes you something when it doesn't, that other races conspire to keep you down. It tells you all manner of false truths. But I tell you that the more vulnerable you are to these types of erroneous thoughts and beliefs, the more likely you are to fail in life. I tell you that the more you repeat these types of false beliefs the more likely you are to remain in the cycle of prisons wheeled existence. The point is, if you want to improve your environment you have to learn to monitor your thoughts and stop allowing yourself to be controlled by a Limited perspective.

When we form a relationship with another person their persona rubs off on us, their beliefs mix with our beliefs and our capacity to see the truth concerning reality is affected by our companionship with them. When we hang out with people who are delusional, then we too become somewhat influenced by their delusions. When you were an infant you knew nothing about what was good or bad, you did not see people as beautiful or ugly, you knew nothing of religion, patriotism, none of it, you were innocent. But as you grew older you began to listen to others around you and they began to tell you of their reality, of their beliefs. They convinced you that you should think this way or that way and the Limited Person inside of you came alive. Those thoughts and beliefs which were given to you as child are the contents of the film that has become the movie of your life. Everything that you think is nothing but a play of the mind, a trick unwittingly played on you by other Limited Thinkers.

Everything and everyone from television, radio, books, churches, friends, and family members and so on have all fed you their beliefs and opinions, and to this day it continues to grow and to influence your daily actions. What you now believe concerning life, politics, love, hatred, justice and injustice is largely reflective of what others have taught you to believe. So it was that when you tried as a youngster to figure out life and how to exist in it, all you were able to do was to consult that growing Limited Person inside and to use its opinions and beliefs to try and sort out what it is that you were supposed to do with your life. Remember this, because when others give us their beliefs, and when we accept them, they become our own. This is how all of life's dramas begin. We forget our own ability to reason and instead jump on the band wagon of ignorance by getting caught up in the tricks of the mind. If we continue to believe that there is some conspiracy to keep us poor, ignorant and a convict, then that is all we will be able to perceive in the world around us and as a result of focusing on those things that are not true, we will miss the opportunities to improve ourselves which have been made available to us by those we wrongly thought our oppressors. If you believe that there is nothing in the world except problems, then it becomes so by your own creative thoughts, however, if you can learn to see the positive things in the world around you, then they will become a part of your life instead of the negative things you have so far experienced.

The only reason we at present put down our society or hate the world we live in is because we have not yet learned to put aside our false beliefs and, unfortunately neither you nor I can alter what we as children were taught. However, the Good News is that as adults, if we recognize that we have allowed ourselves to become influenced in ways negative to our best interests, then we can free ourselves from those negative ideals by altering our thought process. When we truly understand that our future is determined by our thoughts, words and deeds, then we can assume control over how we live each moment thereafter and direct our lives in a course that will take us far from these prison walls.

I can not tell you how to fix your life, no one can, all I can tell you is how to improve your thoughts, and once your thoughts have improved then your life will improve on its own. However, without

a commitment to personal responsibility, without the understanding that it is the very things in life that we have allowed ourselves to idolize which have brought us to our knees beneath the weight of prisons yoke, we have no hope of creating a new life for ourselves outside of this prison. Without this commitment to personal development all meaning and purpose in life will flee from you, leaving you as you at present are, an uncontrolled floating leaf in a storm, because without an understanding of how our thoughts have the power to lift us up, or tear us down, we can have no understanding of our own part in our current life as a convict.

Chapter 3 - Review

- A) You are at a crossroad in life, not by accident but by design. The question is. Do you have the courage to improve yourself?
- B) Most convicts want out of prison, but not enough to see their own part in its manifestation.
- C) Your life is your business, so take care of it like you would any other business.
- D) Your sum total of knowledge concerning the world you live in is a result of false information.
- E) There is no progress in life without sacrifice.
- F) Control your thoughts. Your life, be it good or bad, is constructed from your thoughts.
- G) Know that everything happening in your life is a product of your own creation.

Chapter 4

Be Truthful

Let the work begin here:

One of the most valuable lessons that prison teaches a person is: The value of honoring your word. Here in the Penitentiary if a convict says something or commits to something they are required to honor it, even to the simplest of things such as, "I'll pay you those stamps I owe you, tomorrow." In prison if you do not honor your word, there exists the possibility, that someone will knock you in the head, or, put a piece of steel in you. Therefore, in the joint you must do exactly as you say, and as a result of these potential violent consequences we convicts have learned how to become very careful about what we commit ourselves to by way of our words. As a result of these potential harsh penalties we have become men who honor our word, men who have learned through trial and error that to lie to another convict can have devastating consequences.

When I first arrived at the penitentiary here in Florence, Colorado I did not understand the importance that convicts place upon the spoken word. And though I had spent four years behind county bars before arriving here, I was still the undisciplined man who through personal ignorance had engineered his own failure, his own "fall" as the cons say. I had not yet awakened to the truth about ME; and as a result my flawed Thought Process was still treading upon the dark pools of superficiality. I as of yet did not understand that I was the sheep who had been separated from the fold; the sheep separated from the flock by the wolves of wrong thought, the sheep devoured by failure until I had arrived here in this place of complete unforgiveness. I had yet to recognize my own part in this madman's play. I was still angry at my prosecutors deviousness, and therefore, unable to admit that his sin in no way relieved me of my responsibility in the matters at hand. Being that I refused to recognize my own character flaws I found my berth, here, to be a place of deafening noise and an all-out assault on whatever morality, intelligence and sanity I had remaining. It fell heavily upon me and consumed me totally. It was like being a living soul trapped within a corpse.

In this mindset of failed thinking I began to drink heavily the rot gut pruno of prison fare. Being unable as it was to afford the high cost of prisons bootleg yield; I endeavored to make my own liquor and succeeded in becoming a purveyor of moonshine. Soon enough I was not only producing enough "Shine" to keep myself utterly pickled, but enough to sell for a little profit, as well. As a result of my nefarious activities one of the most dangerous prison gangs in the system became a client of mine. Here's what happened.

The day before the evening that I was to cook-off my product I cut a deal with the ShotCaller for the afore mentioned crew to sell him the entire batch I was cooking for thirty dollars a pint, or six books of stamps each, which is the currency used in lieu of money by convicts. This is a ten dollar, or two books, discount from the norm of forty dollars or eight books per pint.

Much to my disappointment that very morning before I could deliver the goods, the cops announced a "Fire Drill" which as every convict knows is really a cover-up for an unauthorized shakedown. What to do? Well I had two choices: 1.) pour all of my shine down the sink and cut my loses,

or 2.) try to carry it out past the cops who were patting down all the convicts leaving the cell-block. One of life's little decisions.

True to my already established flawed thinking process I put three pints on my person and a friend of mine took the last one and we headed towards the door. Upon closer scrutiny I knew that several of cops patting-down were lenient and that the odds were good, but, as my partner was pulled-over by one of those cops, I myself was pulled-over by the only Lieutenant on the line, a Levantine fellow who followed The Book to ridiculous proportions. I was doomed. He of course found and confiscated my Shine, then sent me on and out of the unit with the others, then proceeded to my cell and tore it apart, finding both my stinger and wires - shiners tools.

While outside, hoping that the Lt. would let me slide, my partner came over and with a big smile gave to me the one pint he had managed to smuggle out of the unit. At this same time over came the afore mentioned Shot-caller, stamps in hand. I regretfully explained that I had lost three of the four pints that I had made and therefore I only had one for sale, to which he replied that he understood and would take that one.

Not yet understanding the value that cons place upon a man's word, I boldly explained to him my rational position, which was, that it had cost me eight books to procure the necessary ingredients (here sugar is a controlled item) to make the batch and therefore could not honor my agreement of six books, needing to sell, as it was, the one pint I had left, for the normal eight books so as to recoup my investment. The Shot-Caller said he would not pay that much and burnt off. I then sounded out and found a customer for my last pint and later that day was escorted to the Hole for a nice little stay, as no pass was given. Lots of bad decisions. Lots of bad consequences.

Upon my completion of my "Hole" time, I returned once more to the yard where a friend of mine, a go between for the gang-leader who had been my shine customer, pulled me up and told me that I had been wrong for not selling my last pint of shine for the six books I had previously agreed upon. I explained my position about the cost of making another batch and so forth. After listening politely to my position he then explained to me what I now understand as the Prison Rule: "You do what you say, and you say what you do." He then explained that I could have been X-ed out over not honoring my word, but that I had been given a pass because I was new to prison etiquette, he also added that I could no longer do business with that particular prison gang as a result of me not honoring my word.

Later I reflected on that situation and my own thoughts and actions concerning it; I had to ask myself, "What did this teach me?" I concluded that it had taught me that one had to be careful what they said or committed to with another con. It also taught me that I could have been required to kill or die over ten dollars. It also brought to light that I had not been a man of my word; not then, and upon further reflection, ever.

Would that I, we, had lived our lives on the outside with the same awareness of consequences concerning our being honorable and doing the right thing, as we are required to do here in the underworld. Can you imagine how different a person we would have been, how different our lives would have been? Convict be honorable and keep your word. This is lesson one.

You might be wondering why I have put so much attention on this subject of honoring your word. The answer my friend is simple, for contained within this Discipline of Words, this commitment to truth, is an underlying windfall of personal benefit and personal growth. For when a person begins to be cautious about what they say, they are first required to THINK about it, and there in that Contemplation of

Consequences is the mule upon whose back you can ride the most treacherous of life's mountains. For the Contemplation of Consequences is the root of the rosebush beautiful enough to overcome the unsightly weed garden of our origins. To think before speaking and to think before acting is the one character trait upon which we can rebuild our tarnished life. After all, who among us desires to relive that which has destroyed us? Who among us, had we anticipated the final outcome of our present situation would not have altered our actions? That, convict, has always been our problem - we have failed to recognize the consequences of our choices before we committed them to actions. And so, here we sit, lost and judicially unforgiven.

The difference between us in here and them out there is not intellect, nor is it that they are our moral superiors, no it is not, the difference is that they, the straights, do not act upon all of their base desires. Believe me; they want the same fancy cars that we do. They want a fat bank roll just like we do. The difference is that they are unwilling to pay the consequences for obtaining them in an illegal manner. The difference is that they did not "Accept" the false reality that it is okay to break the rules in order to fulfill ones desires. They did not speak lies to themselves about how it is alright to risk freedom for a few paltry golden trinkets. They did not speak lies to themselves about not getting caught and prosecuted. They understood how to think an act through to its unavoidable consequence - we did not. And in the final analysis we must, (if we are trying to improve our station in life), conclude that We have not been honest with ourselves, nor were we fair to ourselves, and as proof I need only to remind you that here we sit, in chains, with none of the things we desired enough to risk everything to obtain. What have we profited? Nothing but sorrow and hardship. It is we, you and I, who have been hurt by our accepted lifestyle, or accepted way of thinking. We, you and I.

We cannot change what has happened to us anymore than we can change our place of birth; that is the reality which we must now recognize if we are to survive this dance of devils with any semblance of sanity. However, we cannot become self pitying fools and lie down to die, accepting convictism as the total sum or our potential in this life. Therefore we must stand up and be counted. We must strive to improve ourselves and our stature as human beings in spite of our present position, if not for ourselves then for those we have made our children, our spouses, for our mothers and all of those who have loved us and have believed in us even when we have not loved or believed in ourselves. For not even the most vile among us wishes prison upon those who carry our blood. Nor do the most passive among us enjoy being a convict.

Change. Change is what we must seek, what we must accomplish. I am not speaking to you of morals, for how can I speak of something in which I find my own self negligent, nor am I lecturing on what one should consider right or wrong in the eyes of one god or all gods. I care nothing about those things which are beyond me. Love, worship or hate whomever you will, that is your choice and I have no desire to influence you in things which your own heart and mind have deemed are an integral part of your character. My point is however, that you must, if you desire to be the best person you are capable of being, make your own decisions about them. Do not love this one and hate that one simply because those around you do. That is an "Acceptance" of an ideal based upon the thoughts and ideals of others. You do not have to be religious just because your mother is, nor do you have to become a convict just because your father is. Convict - think for yourself. Evaluate your every thought and then be mature enough to recognize that the world you live in has developed according to what you have allowed and accepted into your thinking reality. Be wise enough to look through the veil of illusion which you have been taught to accept and see that your point of view concerning everything from God to Politics, from Race to Religion are not your own but that of those you have allowed to influence you. See the mistruths

in your own life, stop the lies, and stop accepting a way of thinking which has brought you to the brink of destruction, to these chains and walls of desolation. Stop the lies. It is not okay to rape, rob and pillage. Drugs are not okay - just look around you and admit that nine out of ten people you see in prison are here because of something, some crime related to narcotics. This is not a moral issue. This is not about whether THEY should legalize drugs, or not. None of that is relevant today, right now, to you and me - convict to convict. What is relevant is the truth, and the truth is: That anything which causes a person to rob their own family, sell their house for, commit perverse acts for, rob a bank for - murder for, is not good. Nothing which completely controls people is good, so don't try to justify it to me. Stop the lies which have destroyed you. Reconsider the ideals which you have accepted. Be consciously aware of what it is that you are allowing yourself to think. Be "Convict Truthful" to yourself.

When a person begins to be truthful with themselves by analyzing what they say and think, they will then begin to analyze what others are saying and thinking. And when you have command over your own words and thoughts and then the words and thoughts of others, you become the master of your own life. And as master of your own destiny you become one who has harnessed the very same power of disciplined thought which all of the worlds greatest leaders have utilized to achieve heights unimaginable. Convict - think.

Know the powers of your own mind and change yourself into the person you were meant to be by being a productive thinker. It is your belief system, the things you accept, the things you allow your self to think about which will define your life. We have in the past, and we will in the future, base all of our decisions according to what we allow ourselves to believe. This is why it takes great courage for a person to challenge what they have spent a lifetime believing. It takes courage for a convict to stand on his or her own two feet and walk a new way of walking, to talk a new way of talking, to put aside and to disassociate themselves from those around him who are slaves to a failed mindset.

It takes courage and willpower and an awakened mind to overcome our pride and recognize that we have chosen a lifestyle which has engineered our own destruction. It takes wisdom to recognize that, we, for the most part are products of a failing society, but it takes courage to change ourselves, to overcome the handicaps of our crippled upbringing. It takes a special type of courage to stand-up and fight to become a better person when all those around you are consumed with ignorance and willingly accept the yoke of prison, the yoke of failure through slavery to immoral ideals.

Our lives - think about that - your life; is it what you want it to be? If it is, then I'm happy for you. If it is not, then change it; demand something more for yourself than prison. Demand something better from yourself and you shall have it.

Convict; be truthful in all things. Its step one upon the pathway to a new life.

Chapter 4 - Review

- A) Honoring your word will cause you to be cautious about what you say. This cautiousness will bring about an awareness concerning your own thinking process, which will cause you to evaluate the consequences of your words and actions before you commit to them.
- B) We convicts are no less intelligent or moral than our counterparts on the outside. The difference is that we have accepted a way of thinking which has doomed us to failure.
- C) We cannot change what has happened to us in the past, but we can change what will happen to us in the future by contemplating the consequences of our actions before we commit to them.
- D) Stop lying to yourself about your choices in life. Do not expect society to give you a crutch simply because you have refused to walk.
- E) It takes courage to admit your faults. It takes courage to change. It takes a desire for something better before you can obtain it.
- F) Step one in building a new life is to be truthful, not only to those who might bring you violence, but to every facet of your life. Be truthful in every way, to everyone, most especially to yourself. If you do this faithfully you will see your life altered before your eyes.

Chapter 5

Don't Get In Your Feelings

Unlike the streets where restraint rules, prison is a dangerous place where at anytime and for any reason a person can get into a potentially deadly situation. Therefore convicts must operate on a completely different set of rules than folks on the outside. For that reason we, in prison, have a saying which goes, "Don't get in your feelings", and like most prison advice this too was born from the wisdom of painful experience. However, most of us cons have not thoroughly examined this little piece of jailhouse wisdom in detail and cannot therefore truly appreciate it; so we will do that at this time.

One beautiful morning here atop this God forsaken rock as I was entering the Chow Hall, I had an encounter with a youngster who bulled his way out the door at my expense. I of course reacted poorly, to which he reciprocated and a lot of folks were required to get involved in order to keep the situation from developing into a potentially riotous affair; as we were from different races.

As I was returning to my cellblock after the incident, I could feel myself fraught with anger. My cellie at the time, a guy we called Talken' Dave, noticed my emotional state and pulled me up on it. I told him how I felt and how I thought that I needed to "teach this guy a thing or two about manners," something he obviously knew nothing about in my opinion.

My cellie an old con who has spent the majority of his life behind bars for one reason or another, told me that in prison a person couldn't allow themselves to get in their feelings. When I pleaded my case, wanting him to understand how I felt, he blew it off as unimportant. "In prison," he said, "there is no right or wrong. There are only deadly situations and situations that are not. And, believe me, this is a deadly situation." He then went on to explain that on the inside, when it came to the gangster mentality, it was kill or be killed, because there is no such thing as a one on one fight when it came to the youngsters filling up our prisons today. This new breed of inmates finds absolutely no dishonor in having five, or ten, or twenty of them beat you down and then put the boots to you. He then explained that he had a Bonecrusher (homemade knife) hidden if I wanted it, he also told me that if I attacked this guy I would have to do it quickly, because whatever gang he belonged to would certainly try to protect him and mercilessly try to kill me if I moved on one of theirs.

A pause ensued and then he said something to me which I have reflected upon many a time and I will now share with you, this is what he said. "I grew up around these guys and you may not believe it, but, this guy probably meant no harm, he's just a stupid assed youngster whose parents were probably dope fiends and who never taught him a thing about manners, the way your parents did. It's not like you think, he wasn't just disrespecting you because he thought that you were weak, or nothing like that. He acts that way all the time. All of these young gang-bangers act that way, right up until somebody kills em."

That very same day, that same young man was stabbed in the neck, not ten feet from that same Chow Hall door, where he rolled down the hill and died, for what reason I do not know.

Years later I reflected upon that situation with that kid where I came to the conclusion that this youngster had not been the problem, even though he was wrong in his actions, he was still not the

problem, that I was the problem for allowing myself to become emotionally charged with anger over a situation which meant absolutely nothing in the grand scheme of my life. As a result I vowed to improve myself by deciding to monitor and control my emotions, knowing as all prisoners do, that in prison, our emotions are magnified and are therefore potentially perilous to our mental stability if left unchecked. I vowed to devise a plan to improve my emotional instabilities by monitoring what I allowed myself to think, and then to follow that plan step-by-step until improving my mental strength, I knew that I could not survive prison unscathed if I didn't. I resolved to grow stronger, to use every mental discipline that I had ever learned to improve myself so that I would not become that which I thoroughly despised. I concluded that emotions such as anger, fear, resentment, even love for my family, if allowed to go unchecked would undo me. I instinctively knew that I would lose all sense of morality if I did not put my emotions into check, for emotions can be potentially destructive to a convict who has been torn from all he or she loves and then cast into a world where they are under the constant threat of danger.

We humans are a grand design, we were engineered to survive - and our bodies are the vehicle we use for that survival. Like any other vehicle, this body vehicle of ours is equipped with warning mechanisms such as the Nervous System and the afore mentioned Emotional System. This warning system's purpose is to give us a jolt bringing to our attention the fact that we are doing something potentially unhealthy to our survival.

We do not always need to be told what is right or wrong by society or religion because we have been endowed with a natural instinct to survive and progress. The nerves of the body give us physical pain so that we can comprehend that something or someone is hurting our physical body. Our emotions, likewise, give us emotional pain whenever we are not progressing in a direction most beneficial to our progress as a person. So when you or I create for ourselves something potentially harmful such as a short temper, which is contrary to our progress, we encounter something painful such as a burned finger or an emotional outburst. As a result of these experiences we are supposed to learn from them and not repeat them. But, the truth is that most of us do not learn from our mistakes, from our emotional outbursts, until the day comes when we finally do something which results in our complete destruction and we end up dead outside of the chow hall. That my prisoner friend is why we are here in the situation that we are, because we, like that young gangbanger, through lack of disciplined thought, through lack of basic morals, have engineered our own destruction. And so it is that you and I are here together, so that together we might learn to alter our direction in life and become productive people through improving our morals by improving our ability to think clearly and for ourselves.

As convicts we cannot allow ourselves to fall prey to undisciplined emotions. Yes, our feelings of sadness, anger and remorse were all bought and paid for by blood, our own and that of others, but those facts cannot be changed now and no apologies will make things better or different, those decisions are in the past. The problem that we must now address is how to improve ourselves even though we are constantly revisited by our unpleasant circumstances, a reality which constantly throws into our face the unpleasant memories of our past bad decisions. But that does not mean that we should cling to them and keep them alive by repeating them until death finally comes to exact its toll. Yes, we did it, we put ourselves in prison, but to destroy yourself over past mistakes by not improving yourself is of no value to anyone, it is a valueless execution. We must learn from our mistakes and move forward in our evolutionary development as human beings, by putting ourselves into a clearer mindset. To do this we must first try to understand why it is that we react aggressively rather than rationally.

Take the incident I spoke of earlier; what was the underlying cause of my reaction to being bumped in the Chow Hall doorway, and what was the value of that reaction to me as a person, or to the people I care about?

If I follow the lessons of the last chapter on "Truthfulness", I must admit that my reaction to the afore mentioned event was due to my own ignoble character flaws. That the "Limited Person" which resides in me, convinced me through many hours of counsel on prison etiquette how I should react in those types of situations so that I would not appear weak to the other cons around me. But, a more rational reality is, that no one else cares how I react or do not react, because the others around me are so caught up in their own life dramas that what ever is happening in my world is of little concern to them. However, when I elevated the tension by reacting poorly to the situation in the Chow Hall doorway, I attracted their attention and drew them from their own fantasies and caused my world to crossover into theirs. I made myself visible to him by acting exactly like him. I left my world of peace and tranquility and entered his world of gangster violence. I caused the whole event by reacting to it.

On the next level, we convicts who wish to improve our life conditions must look at the possible outcomes of a situation before we react to it by determining how that outcome relates to the bigger picture of our life. This is what we failed to do in the free world; we did not analyze the possible outcomes of our actions before we committed ourselves to them.

Let us use our Right Thinking process on my situation concerning the event I spoke to you of concerning the young gangbanger.

A bump in a doorway without the usual "excuse me." Is that an event worth confronting? Yes or no.

Possible outcomes if confronted:

- 1) He might apologize and go on his way.
- 2) He might react harshly and I will be required to fight.
- 3) He might react so harshly that I would be required to put something in him, or get beat down as a coward, i.e. he might call me a punk, a rat or a coward.

When seen through the lens of Right Thinking, one can then decide with full confirmation his or her best avenue of response to any given situation.

The final part of the Right Thinking process is to evaluate how your decision relates to what is important in your life. For instance: If you want out of prison, if you have family who cares about you and so on, then options 2 & 3 would be a bad choice for you, because if you commit the violence those options afford, then you will likely be given a new case which will mean more time piled atop your present sentence; or you yourself could be killed in the process. And how are any of those things of benefit to you?

Right Thinking is what is best for us, in all situations. I am not advocating being passive, because we all understand that in prison a person has to be willing to defend themselves; but defending yourself means to protect yourself if someone tries to "put hands on you", not to act like a primate fighting over a banana, as I did. We are supposed to be smarter than that.

So if lesson one is "To be truthful in all things," then lesson two is, "Don't get in your feelings." To accomplish this you must understand that whatever happens around you is not personal, so don't take it personal, don't get in your feelings about it.

Nothing that other people do or say is personal; it is about them, about that other person who lives in them telling them what to think. The cons that are walking around in America's prisons are living in their own world and it is completely different from yours. In their minds they are living out some tough guy fantasy, some rich guy fantasy, some beautiful body fantasy, and some gangster fantasy and so on and so forth.

When something happens such as the incident I spoke of, it may seem personal, but it isn't, it has nothing to do with you. What people say what people do and all of their opinions concerning politics, religion or life in general are comprised of the things that they have ACCEPTED and are thinking in their own minds. They are the sum total of the programming they received during their own childhood upbringing.

If someone calls another fat, it is because they are insecure about themselves; they do not like themselves or the way that they look. Someone who is truly handsome knows it and does not need to belittle another. If someone is a bully, it's because they themselves are afraid. Haven't you noticed that the really tough guys don't have to bully people around? So don't get in your feelings about what others do or say, because when you, or I, allow another to trip the switch to our emotions by making us go off, or feel depressed, or hatred, we are allowing them to control us. When another person controls your emotions then their low order thinking becomes our low order thinking, their trash becomes our trash.

When you allow others to cause you to get in your feelings, then you will subsequently react thinking that you need to defend you own beliefs. An argument ensues and something big is created from something small. You do this because you are trying to protect what that Limited Person inside of you believes; you defend your own mind fantasy.

A person gets in their feelings as a result of defending a fantasy world, which they have created in their own minds. This fantasy world is a product of what they have been taught to believe and then what they have ALLOWED to remain in their own minds as they matured into adulthood.

If someone bullies their way out a doorway which affects you or I, they, as Talken Dave said, aren't doing it just to be disrespectful, no sir, they ain't, they're just acting out of ignorance to some tough guy fantasy in their own mind, which can only affect us if we allow it too by playing into their fantasy. After all, why should I care one bit what someone else thinks or does, as long as they don't "lay hands on me?" And when I understand the games people play within their own heads, I suddenly become their superior. To know yourself is to know others, and that is power. To use that power to improve yourself and your surroundings is the ultimate power. By knowing this about the minds of others you become their master, they are the children and you their mental parent. To understand this is critical to your development as a human being, because those who do not recognize the existence of their own fantasy world are slaves to it.

But, he or she, who comprehends is the Master of the House, the Master of Reality.

Convict: Don't get in your feelings.

Chapter 5 - Review

- A) In prison it is dangerous to allow yourself to get into your feelings. Therefore we are more reserved in our actions and reactions. This is a good habit to develop. For to be cautious in ones actions is to contemplate them first. That is Right Thinking.
- B) All people, to include you and I, are acting out some fantasy in their own mind. If someone walks up and asks you a question, most of the time they are not really concerned with what you think at all, they are only moving the conversation into a direction which will allow them to talk about what's going on in their own fantasy world. For instance: If someone walks up and says, "I see you've been working out?" What they are really saying is, "let's talk about my workout", which they will immediately do as soon as you answer their question. So don't get in your feelings about things around you, because people are reacting to life as they see it in their fantasy world, and you are nothing but a bit player in their play, unless YOU involve yourself by entering into their world through some form of interaction.
- C) Contemplate the outcome of your thoughts before you put them into actions, this is Right Thinking.

Chapter 6

Get a Program

Why is it that chickens don't rule the world? Chickens after all have a monopoly on the entire egg industry, which is one of the most consumed food items on the planet. Yet, chickens receive none of the monetary or political benefits from this invaluable product. Why is it that chickens don't band together and claim their rightful place in society as one of the world's most productive species? Why?

When I was a youngster and did something dumb my mom would say, "What's the matter with you? You act like you don't have sense enough to get out of the rain. Do you have a chicken's brain, or a boy's brain?" To which I would abashedly confirm that I indeed did have a boy's brain. Of course, now that I reflect back on some of the things I did, I'm not so sure.

Anyway, as I matured into adulthood I heard folks say of others that they were "scatterbrained, like a chicken". And having watched chickens as a kid, I at first, thought this an offensive comparison, but, as I matured mentally I realized that most people, to include myself, were indeed very scatterbrained and exactly like the chicken who sees not the storm clouds, but only the rain when it pelts them atop the head. Insult or not "Scatterbrained" is a very accurate description of humanity as an overarching definition.

Convict, find yourself a quiet place or at least a solitary spot, then sit, watch and listen to what goes on around you. What you will learn with a little observation is that ninety-nine out of a hundred convicts are involved in what we cons call "A Program." Just look around you at the walkers, the runners, the racial Napoleons, the super religious, and how about the guys who spend hours each day, everyday, jumping rope with their hands wrapped in rags attempting to look like boxers - why do they do this? They do this because it's their fantasy; it's how they see themselves and how they THINK others see them as well. Based upon this internal fantasy these convicts have developed "A Program" parallel to their particular visual intellectual capability, their fantastical prison movie. They have become delusional in their belief that this is who or what they in reality are. Don't think that I'm being critical, for in truth, I know full well that without "A Program" of some sort that a con will most certainly go insane. In fact, it's this understanding the need to Program which elevates the convict above the chicken brained, unfocused, scatterbrained norm prevalent in our society. It's the convict's commitment to a Program which in fact makes them superior in discipline to their counterparts on the outside. The only missing ingredient is to put aside our non-productive program and plan and develop one with unselfish yet productive purpose.

It's the person who can identify a purpose in life who can achieve it.

Most of the cons around us have mastered the discipline to develop a Program, but have not as of yet identified a goal capable of leading them away from the ape mentality of crime and punishment. For this reason they maintain for the most part a purposeless program of wasted years.

Prison is designed to waste time, and if you allow it to be so, then you will one day awaken to find that ten years have passed and that you have no incremental accomplishments other than to have played some ball, cards, dominoes and or watched a heck of a lot of television; and none of these things will

improve you as a person, help your loved ones, or help to provide you with an income when you return to freedom.

The prison system is not designed to help you learn a trade or good work ethics; it is not designed to remove you from society. The prison system is a babysitter whose purpose it is to feed you and clothe you and to pacify you with trinkets until you die, if not in this sentence, then in the next, or the next, or the next, when you, the un-rehabilitated ex-con re-offends. Listen carefully to what I am about to say: Your remaining non-productive is THEIR Program, THEIR job security. And if you or I am unwilling to improve our chances of escaping the cycle of prison by improving our mindfulness, then we are working THEIR program.

Look, listen and learn, the three "L" to becoming more than a repeat offender convict. If a person can recognize fire by its smoke, then surely they can also recognize their position in life by the footprints which lead them there? Look at the walls and chains and bars and lack of freedom in which you now exist. Look at your own thoughts and with truthfulness decide if they are conducive to your highest aspirations, ask yourself if they are thoughts that will help you achieve your goals in life, and if they are not, then change them. Learn a new way of thinking, a new way of speaking, a new way of acting and when you do these things, you will have a new way of living.

PURPOSE

What can I as a convict learn in prison which will be of true value to me as an individual and to those I love on the outside? That my reader friend is the question that I cannot answer for you, because the answer will vary from person to person, just as their individual fingerprints do. But, what I can tell you based upon my own personal inventory is, that we must first, like a child in school, start at the beginning.

The first thing that we must relearn is basic moral principles, because it's our violation of these basic human values which has utterly removed us from the opportunity to live as normal human beings with normal families and normal dreams. It's our dereliction of these infantile principles which has doomed us to the degradation of "bend over and spread em." And, I for one have not forgotten that I am a human being first and a convict second.

CONVICT'S BASIC REHAB PROGRAM

1. Be truthful in all things.

We lie because we have become complacent with the importance of being truthful, and it takes less courage to lie about a thing, than it does to be truthful about it. This we must change, for the truth is more than just words, as is a lie - it is a mirrored reflection of our character as a person. "Do what you say and say what you do."

To begin this marriage of truth, go one week without telling a lie for any reason. I promise you that at the end of only one week you will not only be proud of yourself, but you will gain power over the lies of others as well, because when you demand the Truth of your own word's, you will automatically recognize the Truth in the words of others, and subsequently all lies will become recognizable to you instantly. This is the secret of the Magi: To have power over something you must first have control over it in your own mind. Never forget that.

2. Control your emotions by remembering that nothing is personal unless you make it so by allowing others to penetrate your mindset.

3. Sharpen your weapon - your mind. Because a person who's mind is not strong enough to develop and then follow a program of self-improvement, can never be ready to advance in life beyond the labors of low-order tasks. This body in which you currently reside is a living vehicle that you are operating, it is a high order animal you are trying to understand, to train and to master. The training tool used for this purpose is called Willpower. Without willpower you are nothing more than the chicken who as a result of being unable to think and plan ahead, is rounded up and put into small fenced-in cubby- holes where they while away their life laying eggs from which others benefit with none of the freedom they were designed to have. Remember, a scattered willpower can never gather enough momentum to progress any measurable distance down the pathway of success, and to be a convict is no different than being a chicken.

Any measure of achievement is the budding result of thought consecrated into the willpower to execute it into action. One can have command over thought and one can have command over visual aspirations, but without the command over the necessary Willpower to combine the two, they are only dreamers who speak of what might be. If a person wishes to divine their future all they need do is measure their level of Willpower.

Achievement of any kind is the birth-child of Willpower, for it is by self-control, by well directed thought that a person rises above corruption, confusion and non- productivity. All achievements in life, be they spiritual, intellectual, or financial are the result of thoughts and actions bound into form by Willpower.

WILLPOWER

It takes Willpower to demand truthfulness from yourself and the untruthful reality in which you exist, and, it takes Willpower to not get in your feelings about things inconsequential. It also takes Willpower to regain your freedom.

Freedom, every convict talks about it, but what is freedom?

True freedom is the freedom to be the best person you are capable of being. True freedom is the power to put aside all thoughts and beliefs which others have used to mold you into this person who now sits behind bars. The power to put aside that limited person and become our own person; the one we were meant to be had we had a different life matrix.

Willpower and Freedom are two sides of the sword of mastery, just as Truthfulness and Calmness of Mind are two sides of the coin of destiny. For who among us can claim any progress as a human being without the freedom to demand truth? Look around you at a world which has of late become so complacent with the truth that lies are more prevalent than verity. Where snitching is more common than honor. Where a person need look no further than their televisions to see with complete clarity the failure of a brainwashed generation.

When you command the Willpower to demand the freedom of truthfulness from yourself in all things, you will experience a new beginning, an awakening which will allow you to see for the first time the hard reality of the low order mentality which has firmly gripped our society, and ruined the lives of untold numbers of its children, to include you and I. Wake up! Open your eyes and separate yourself from the ignorant masses. For only a convict who has the Willpower to lay down their past and walk away from it, completely, like a bad dream, has the necessary tools to be master of themselves and their future.

You are not the convict who walks stoically around behind these walls covered with tattoos from head to foot, that is the Limited Person's prison tough guy fantasy, in which you have been given a marquee role. You are, and have always been, the bright-eyed infant whose life was meant to be innocent and happy. You have been deceived into becoming what it is that you now see reflected in prisons mirror. But, be fooled no longer - because you can become anything you truly desire to be, for there is a world outside this nightmare, a world away from these walls standing open armed to comfort and to help any ex-con who truthfully desires to alter their doomed lifestyle. But - as I have already stated, most cons will not welcome a helping hand because in Truth, they like what they are, and prison affords them the platform upon which they can most efficiently act out their gangster fantasies. However, for those of you who do desire change, know that it starts with Truthfulness and ends with Willpower.

WILLPOWER AND HOW TO DEVELOP IT

Willpower is that which is earned from the development of personal discipline, it is the muscle of mental progress. The best way to develop Willpower is to make it your program to do so. You can begin by taking a vow of silence for one week. To be silent, completely silent, for a week will help you to comprehend the value of listening to those around you before engaging them in conversation.

Once your mind develops the habit of functioning in the listening capacity, instead of the talking capacity, you will quickly realize that the world is completely consumed in senseless chatter, and that those who truly do not understand something are the ones who speak the most concerning it. Go one week without speaking a single word and when someone questions you, be truthful, hold up a card which says that you are being silent for one week in an effort to train your mind. You will be surprised at the result you will get, for it will vary from ridicule to admiration - but the one consistent reaction you will get will be one of ostracization and suspicion, for people tend to disassociate themselves from anyone who is acting out a different fantasy than they themselves are.

Take a one week vow of silence. You may like it so much that it becomes a regular part of your life.

After one week of silence, your next practice is to discipline what you do say. For instance: Have you noticed how vulgar our language has become? On the surface it is rude in nature, but underneath this film of rudeness is the rotted and putrid stench of a demoralized society. If you monitor your own speaking habits as well, you will find that your failure in the proper usage of language is for the most part a result of laziness rather than ignorance.

A great way to develop the Willpower necessary to change your life is to change the way you speak, for a persons speech is a microcosmic reflection of how they think, disciplined speaking requires disciplined thought, just as undeveloped speech is the fruit of an undeveloped mind.

The best way to begin to improve your vocabulary is to make a vow to stop cursing. I'm not spouting religious dogma here, for in truth, I care nothing about religion; what I am saying is that, curse words, are uneducated replacement bywords for the proper words that one is supposed to use in the first place. So those of us who use a lot of explicative language are in reality only being lazy in the Thought-Word process. If you want to put this to the test, just sit down and think of someone you would like to say F--- Y-- to, then try replacing those words with words that are appropriate; what you will find is, that to do this requires a lot more thought to replace those curse words with other words reflecting your feelings, than it does to use bywords like some illiterate impertinent troglodyte, and therein lies the core purpose of this book, to trigger a response which will cause you to improve yourself, through improving your thinking process.

The development of Willpower through a Personal Discipline Program is that which will reveal to you your own hidden greatness. The way to accomplish this is to make it a priority in your life, because when a person prioritizes something it is because they have decided that it is important to them, and something which is important to you will get done. Do not underestimate the value of Willpower.

When my sons were young and would fall short on doing something that they were supposed to, they would seldom have a good reason for it. I would then remind them that they had not forgotten to put their pants on that morning and that the reason was, that having pants on was important to them. And that the reason that they had forgotten to do for me what I had asked them to do was because it was not important to them. Desire in Personal Discipline is that which separates the great from the mediocre.

Is being successful more important to you than the other things you do which occupy your time? That my friend is the defining question of your entire life!

Chapter 6 - Review

- A) Go one week without a lie - for any reason. This commitment to the truth will heighten your awareness to the lies of others allowing you to readily recognize them. Truth is a living entity and to be devoted to it, will bring the benefit of its devotion in return.
- B) With Personal Discipline and its twin sister Willpower you can become anything you desire.
- C) There is an entire world waiting open-armed to help any ex-con willing to improve themselves. Do not be fooled by the nay-sayers who tell you otherwise.
- D) The longer the mind can be instructed to conform to a program of mental discipline, the more you are guaranteed the success of your desires.
- E) Through a disciplined Willpower one can still the voice within by making it think and speak to you of those things which are positive and progressive to your program.

Chapter 7

Convict Develop Your Values

We are fulfilling a purpose. We have been groomed from birth for a specific role, and to understand this about ones life is the difference between being a king or being a pauper, a searcher or a sitter, a producer or a non-producer; of being awake or being asleep.

I can look back upon my torrential life and see with absolute clarity, the winds of fate which blew me gently or violently towards this awakening, this exact moment when you, who think yourself unknown to me, would set these words upon the brow of your consciousness for consideration. I can see the small parts, the small choices which turned me left, turned me right and brought me here with you today. I assure you that with sad eyes I can look back upon the past events of my life and know with certainty that had anyone of a million seemingly insignificant choices been different, that my entire life would have fallen into an alternate destiny. Yet, I, we, made them not and here we sit, you and I together.

For what purpose have we come to this place of least forgiveness? For what purpose am I here? For what purpose are you there with my words? This we must consider and solve together, because without me you are slightly different and without you giving them life, my words would have no purpose. Together we shall always be and so it is that we owe it to ourselves, our families and to humanity as a whole to become the best persons we are capable of being, and for some reason destiny has decreed that we shall do this together.

Destiny has brought us to this place and time so that we can learn to see our lives as a map, a starting point and a destination, and then to learn how to use this map to help plan the direction of a productive prison free future. Know this, if you can recognize the pathway behind you, then you can also recognize the pathway of that which is in front of you and can through this recognition, identify your final destination. If you can see the end result of your present course of activities, then you can evaluate if that end result is conducive to your life plan and if it is not, then you can alter your course to achieve the results you do want. A life map will not only help you to identify the highs and the lows in your past but will allow you to identify the decisions that you made which led up to them. For those things in your life which caused the biggest ripples in the pond of your existence are the forks in the road that you either took, or didn't take and those forks in our life are best made ahead of time using the Right Thinking process we spoke of earlier.

To create a Life Map you must look back upon your life, beginning with your earliest memories, and then write down in sequence, year by year, the things you can remember. Do not underestimate the value of a seemingly simple memory such as "The time my grandfather came to visit me and gave me a quarter" - I was about four years old at the time. Because, if something is important enough to have never been forgotten, my only memory for that year in this life of trillions of events, then it is worth noting, even if we do not at present understand why.

If you catalog year after year of your life in map form, your life will be enlivened before your very eyes. Soon you will see your future unfold before you as this map of your life reveals to you the present course upon which you sail. With this new knowledge concerning your direction in life you become

the Captain of your own vessel, the Captain able to at any time choose an alternate course. This is the power of free recognition, because they who know how to use this powerful tool can utilize it for their benefit by plotting the shortest course to their goals, and to likewise see life's pitfalls before committing wholeheartedly to them. But those who do not have the willpower to use the map of their life as a tool to help guide their own futures will drift aimlessly upon the tides of misfortune and are moved by the winds of others. These plan-less ones sail aimlessly through the oceans of life and fall prey to every storm of failure until claimed by that final shipwreck which dooms them to waters too deep to tread and are forever lost.

The past is like a empty space, which wants you to fall into it and be lost, however, you must refuse to be its minion, refuse to fall into its darkness by repeating its steps. I am, you are, not that painful past, but are instead creatures of a potentially new future. This is why I share these words with you - so that you will know that you, even as a convict, have a divine purpose and possibilities limited only by your own way of thinking. The gift of learning the importance of purpose is all that I am able at this time to bequeath you, but if you will inhale it with contemplation, tis a gift to be savored indeed. To know your purpose in life is the core meaning to the words "Know Thyself."

KNOW THY PURPOSE

As we begin to honestly examine the map of our life with careful contemplation, we can intuit that we have indeed lead a different sort of existence than the norm. We, for whatever reason are not normal in the sense of citizenry. We who chose to be convicts through our thoughts and by our actions, are as different from the average square as the moon is from the sun - and this is not by accident, it is because we knowingly or unknowingly, male or female, have followed the path of the Sociopath to one level or another. This is the truth about us, and our lives bear witness to it.

Now don't get into your feelings at being referred to as a Sociopath, because like all things, the definitions of "Sociopathic Tendencies" range from slight to extreme. And just so you know, we the convicts of this great nation, who are in possession of one degree or another of these tendencies, have these tendencies in common with all of the world's past, present and future leaders. If you doubt this then answer me this, who but a sociopath could believe in a religion built upon the principles of "I'm right and all others are wrong?" Who but a sociopath could accept a doctrine which states that all one must do to obtain heaven, or bliss, or nirvana is to believe one particular doctrine without question and go about the business of converting as many others as possible to this way of thinking? What about a military leader who orders "Take that hill", even though it costs the life of one or a thousand of those who will follow those orders, even though the taking of said hill has little to do with the overall war in which they die? What about a Congress or Senate, or President, or King or Dictator who declares a war to protect their way of life? Convict, don't you see that to be a leader, a decision maker, a person must have within their thinking process a certain amount of Sociopathic tendencies? I say yes. I tell you that to have Sociopathic tendencies is such a great a human quality that those who learn to control it are the leaders of the world in all categories, from Business, to Religion, to Government. So we convicts with our own Sociopathic issues have them in common with the greatest men and women on the planet. I will go one step further and say that to have Sociopathic tendencies is to have a more advanced state of mind, it is the leadership gene, per se. Convict you are able. So where did we go wrong?

The answer to this my reader is that we went wrong when we did not learn how to discipline ourselves to use these qualities properly, but instead fell slave to them by being consumed with the selfishness of advanced intelligence. We went wrong when we did not learn to use these tendencies as a

tool for rationality, falling instead like a leaf upon the winds of its negative qualities. We went wrong when we allowed these tendencies to strip us of all compassion towards the needs of others. And as a result of our selfishness we did not listen to the basic moral convictions that all humans inherently have concerning how to treat others and as a result subsequently built a life around the ways and values of others morally inferior to us. And then when we reaped the consequences of our criminal thinking we refused to accept our own responsibility in the matter, instead we began to shout discrimination and blame a porcelain justice system for our every failure. Black men blaming the White, White Men blaming the Jew, the Jew blaming the Arab, the Arab blaming the Infidel and so on and so on and so on, but in reality it is our ideals as human beings which are at fault. For every human being, most especially the Sociopath, must have ideals by which they govern themselves, ideals by which they rest and restrain the low order desires of their character; else they are consumed by the fires of their own undisciplined strength and end up as we did in prison.

If we expect to return to society and claim our rightful place as productive citizens with any hope of success or value to humanity, then we must put into action a practical set of ideals and principles which will help us to recognize and control our Sociopathic natures, ideals and moral values that we can anchor our lives to, for without this first step in highorder thinking we will be unable to utilize the gift of leadership qualities that we have been born with. Ideals are everything, and our lack of them has led us to this prison and its failure.

IDEALS

To be a truthful person is not something one does because it somehow benefits them, but because it is instead a way of strength. From an untruthful mind comes an untruthful and immoral existence, one doomed to failure in any and all task of character. But, to be known as truthful in the face of all consequences is to be loved and trusted and even idolized. For who among us does not respect a person whose word is their law? Who among us does not respect a person who puts their honor above personal gain? Are these not the heroes of our world? How can material property compare to personal honor and personal dignity which are the rightful heirs to the throne of Truth - it cannot, trust me, I know from my own personal experience as a lifetime liar. It is this commitment to truthfulness that is the rarest of all qualities, it is the mark of a man, it is the mantle of the matriarch, and it is the fruit of personal honor.

Look around you at the lying cops who command these prison walls. They will lie to a convict about anything which makes their job easier. They have no sense of truthfulness in them. Look around you and weep for our nation and what it has been allowed to become. Then, look around you and find that one cop who won't lie to you, who will honestly help you when they can, or give you an honest "No" when warranted. Look around you and find that one convict who has risen above the foolishness of prison gangsterism, criminal aspirations and perversion, the one who has brought honor into the darkest pit of human existence and rejoice, for in them and their kind we find our hope and the pattern to personal success and happiness.

Oh convict, my heart bleeds for you wherever you may be, and I cry at the conditions you presently find yourself in - but I am here to tell that these things will not break you unless you allow it to be so. Lift your eyes and raise your chin up from the doldrums of sorrow and grasp the meaning of dignity as a person, for it is the most important thing you must learn to embrace, if that is, you desire to be more than a convict. Free yourself from a failed mindset and replace it with one of the highest possibility. Use dignity as the foundation of your character and then trust it as you redirect your life.

Understand that it is impossible for a person to become free of their past indiscretions without becoming beholden to another new set of higher principles, therefore, we who endeavor to improve ourselves must have the mental fortitude to decide which influences we wish to subject ourselves too and which we do not, influences built upon moral values. A new way requires a new way.

Sit my friend and study your circumstances and know them deeply. Remember, do not become institutionalized and forget that you are in prison, know that all you can reasonably hope for if you are a rational person is to leap these walls and escape. However, before you can do this you must first realize that it is not these walls of brick and mortar which bind you, but the walls of you own ignorance. So, if you are to successfully escape this mental prison you will need to seek the help of those who have escaped before you. So find those with the wisdom of personal morality and cling to their words, their directions, so that you might do the work necessary to grow the wings of your own eternal freedom.

Like all things, liberation, will only come after great labor on your part. It will require all of your ingenuity, all of your skills, all of your concentration and all of your effort, but you can do it, you need only find those around you with honor and follow their lead so that others might look upon you and follow yours.

Monitor your thoughts and replace non-productive ones with progressive ones, ones of anger with ones of contemplation. And be not a complainer.

I never realized just how much of my day was spent in criticism. I hated my circumstances; I hated the weather, prison food, my receding hairline, the dirt on the yard, my prison issue clothing, the way this person acted, or that person, and on and on. Then one day I snapped awake when my son made reference on the phone that I had had a hard life. I hated to hear that from him because I knew that in his love for me it saddened him. I vowed to let him and anyone else who would listen know that my life has certainly been a drama, but that the positives of my life far outweigh the negatives and that in spite of the sorrows I have experienced, that I have had millions of happy moments, such as those with my family, my own satisfaction at being productive in spite of my circumstances and my awakening to the truth about myself and about life as a whole. I am proud of the fact that I have chosen to rise above that which most others cannot and I do not want to cause those I love, or those I hate, further pain through negative thoughts. So beware of your complaining about how your life has turned out, instead contemplate on the positive things in your life, because your complaints affect not only your present state of mind, but that of those who love you as well. Do your best to live without complaints or negative comments, my mom used to say, "If you can't say something nice about someone, don't say anything at all." Follow that rule and you will be a better person for it.

Prison is a place of maximums. Here everything is magnified, over exaggerated, overemphasized and over dramatized. We have maximum penalties upon us, maximum security around us, maximum ignorance, maximum perversion, maximum disrespect and maximum discomfort and so on. Yet, within this world of maximums we also have maximum opportunity to overcome in life. The bigger the challenge, the greater the reward. And the one who learns to overcome here, in this hard place, can overcome anything, anywhere. We are men and women, mothers and fathers, daughters and sons; and though we have had everything to include our dignity rightly taken from us, we can, if we so choose, overcome it all and succeed in ways heretofore undreamt of.

Each of us has a destiny - that destiny is not to be unhappy, unloved, lonely, poor, unlearned, or to be a convicted felon. Those my friends are only the tools used to direct us towards that which we were

born to become. Every affliction in life is there to test you as a person, and each of these afflictions will show whether you, as a person, are inclined to do good or to do evil. The things which happen to you are but your own thoughts and actions reflected in the mirror of your life. These lessons when given proper contemplation will be revealed as nothing more than steps in the stairway of your resolve as a person, either upwards or downwards upon the scale of knowledge or ignorance.

There is a highest form of Honor, and a highest form of Dignity that can only be won upon the battlefield of experience and therein lays the value of striving, and prison being the most extreme experience affords the greatest challenge and therefore the greatest opportunity to overcome.

It has been said that he or she who wishes to save their own life shall lose it, and he or she who is willing to lose it, shall save it. The meaning of this is, if you wish to save your own life, you must lose your old ways of thinking and acting.

Chapter 7 - Review

- A) Do not find fault in others, for this mindset can only bring with it a decline in morality.
- B) Do not lie, even if your life depends upon it.
- C) Do not break your word. Do what you say, say what you do.
- D) Do not steal, for that action will have a reaction, mentally, spiritually and physically that you will not like.
- E) Do not hate, for that hatred will bring you nothing but hatred in return.
- F) If you feel the need to have a shank, it is because you have put yourself into a position where you think you have a need of it.
- G) Create a Life-Map. Begin by going back to your first year. Take a sheet of paper and write on it only things which you remember happening your first year on earth. It does not have to be a memory, it can be an event such as "My family pulled up stakes and moved to Florida." Next, do the same for every year of your life to the present which will require more notes as the events of your life become more memorable. What you will learn about yourself is that there are great gaps in your life where you did nothing of significance. Realizing this about yourself will inspire you to do things which lead to results. You will suddenly become aware of the time which you have wasted and still waste and hopefully this will embolden you to do something of value with the short time you have left in this life. For without a doubt, you are closer to death than you were when you read this.
- H) Final thought: Work diligently towards the day when you can say, "There is not one who weeps, fails, or suffers through any act of mine." That is what it means to have Honor.

Chapter 8

In Conclusion

Freedom, we contemplate it constantly while shuffling around behind the well trodden unforgiveness of these walls and fences. But, who or what is it that is stopping us from being free? Is it the Government who brought us to task? Is it the cop who turns the key to our cell doors? Is it the cruel banter of destiny which has decreed that we are to wear the mark of imprisonment upon sloped foreheads? Or is it something else entirely? These are the questions for which you now, having read this book, are subject. "To be, or not to be - that is the question."

With an opened mind you must contemplate the errors of a past life, and with an opened mind you must also plot a future life of success. If you are to burst loose from the grasp of prisondoms yoke, you will first be required to put forth a plan whereby you will not be revisited by its want. For those without designed purpose will most certainly fall prey to the failed mindset of past ways and means, whereby they will once again be remanded into the darkness of walls and bars beset upon as they are by the illiterate ignorance of criminal activity.

To understand freedom one must first understand incarceration. This is our advantage over the unfallen. We the prisoners of this world have been given the gift of reality concerning success and failure. Who but one previously blinded can appreciate sight? Who but a woman who has regained her hearing can truly appreciate the music of a songbird? Who but the family relocating to our shores from one of absolute poverty can in truth appreciate the economic opportunities of our nation? Who but those intimately familiar with the greatest of failures can fully understand an earned success? Who but someone guilty of committing the most heinous of crimes can grasp the gift of forgiveness? Who but a convict can accurately spell freedom?

So you have fallen. So you are bloody in guilt. So you are tattooed in fruitlessness. So you are devoid of a schooled certificate. So you have been beaten and enslaved to the whip of addiction. So What! Get over it! You are alive and in possession of a working mind. This means that if you so desire, you can improve yourself and your stature in life. This means that if you lay down the mantle of self-pity and accept responsibility for your life; if you set goals towards being productive and then act upon them with all diligence, you can overcome and achieve greatness beyond that of those without the full tilt of life's experiences.

Look around and see those who while away the hours of their days as if they are without end. Look at those around you who sit and wait to be given their meals like mendicants waiting to be taken care without shame. Look at the sheep who are so lazy and undisciplined that they have become unable to think for themselves, ones whose single greatest aspiration in life is to be a prison Shot-Caller. Look at them and know that you do not have to be like them, unless you so choose to be.

What to do you ask?

Start by educating yourself in the knowledge of personal discipline. Be honorable. Be truthful. Do something progressive. Think upright. Act upright. Be upright.

Around us are people from many different nations with many different tongues. Today as I look around me I see convicts on this yard who speak Spanish, French, German, Arabic and several Oriental languages. Do you know that if you were to learn these languages that you could command a place of high employment with thousands of large corporations? So what is stopping you from learning? You have the time and you have the opportunity. And languages are no different from any other form of learning, which means that if you were to dedicate yourself to one hour a day towards any one of them, that in one year you could master it. In four years you could master four of them.

Write, paint, or learn a hobby craft. I see guys here who mass produce leather goods, ceramic pieces, and art works of all sorts which they sell to support themselves. Be productive, refuse to lie down and die without contribution.

Here is a man who is a dope-fiend. He has money which his lawyer allots to him monthly. He has nothing in his locker; it is bare because all of his money goes up his arm. I have been guilty of calling him an oxygen thief, worthless.

One day as I went to his cell to ask him about a novel he had read, I noticed that atop his desk was some paperwork on orphaned children. Being curious I ask him about it and much to my chagrin I learned that on a monthly basis he sent twenty-five dollars to sponsor an orphaned child. He was more of a man than I had given him credit for, seeing as I did only the apparent failures of his life. Convict, no matter who you are or what you are you can still have a positive affect on this world.

So you have fallen, are you going to lay down and prove the Judge correct by becoming a victim of present circumstances, or are you going to rise up and start new? Are you a warrior upon whose back ideals are founded, or are you content to be a beggar upon his knees before those whose very ideals subjugated you?

To remain unaltered, unfazed, unchanged in the face of past misappropriations and present circumstances is the only true definition of worthlessness, of an oxygen thief. Accepted ignorance is the only unforgivable sin.

Believe in yourself. If you do not, then you are destroying the most vital part of yourself; you're freewill. Your life has not been predetermined; you have the ability to alter it, to improve it. But, if you act without disciplined thought you cast yourself upon the Sea of Fate to be blown from event to event by the will of others less moral than yourself.

Actions are what will separate you from the pack. To be active, is to be progressive. To be inactive is to be non-productive. Inactivity is to sit in front of a television everyday for your whole bit, because you are too lazy, or too afraid to be committed to progressive action. You might have great ideas, but without action they are worthless. Without action there can be no realization, no creation and no reward.

You are alive and the best way to prove that it as so is to do something honorable with yourself. Whatever misfortune has taken from you, let it go and begin anew, soon you will discover that there is great pleasure to be had in the accomplishment of reconstructing your life and great ecstasy in overcoming insurmountable odds.

Even convicts were born with the right to have happiness, so claim it. You do not need to prove your self-worth to those around you who remain shackled to failed ways and failed ideals, so stop trying.

Do your best at all things, be the best person you can be. You do not need to be a genius, or in possession of great wealth to be a great person, an asset to humanity. All you need do is be committed to being honest and productive.

By doing your best daily, by being truthful to a fault, by not allowing others to get in your feelings, by letting go of past failures and all other foolishness, you can aspire to greatness. If you but do your best you will become the master of your own future, the draftsman who meticulously lays out the grids of their own life map.

Now is the time when you must stand upon your own laurels and be not influenced by self-pity. It is time to accept honor as your weapon and use it as your sword against all life's atrocities. And when through daily application your every thought and every aspiration is to the accountability of your actions, you will gain the freedom and success at life that you were born to have.

A few years ago another convict passed me a little booklet entitled, "As a Man Thinketh" by James Allen. He informed me that this little booklet had been handed out to the convicts by the Psychology Department at the joint he just came from.

In time I came to read this little treasure and soon thereafter adopted it as my daily devotional. After great thought I came to the conclusion that we convicts could benefit from a similar work directed to our specific needs. This was the spark of creation. But, as I began to labor with my endeavor, I quickly realized that our society had millions of prisoners who to a large part had no one left in our present "Get tough on crime society" who honestly cared about their futures. In that I found my purpose in this book, which is to be blunt and truthful about our warts and to be blunt and truthful about our potential as human beings. And therein is the whole of this little book - it is an extended hand to any past, present or future convict who truly desires a better way of life.

The License



Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)

This is a human-readable summary of (and not a substitute for) the license. Disclaimer.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

This license is acceptable for Free Cultural Works.

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Author: Mark Crawford, America

Design: Konnichiwa, Switzerland