

***God,
Youth & Felons:
We Need Your Help***
Booklet #1

by
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Preface

We are all born as innocent babies. Why do some have happy, fulfilling lives and others end up in prison?

Why do we put so much more focus on entertainment and the development and acquisition of physical things, including “stuff”, looks, sports, etc., than on solving societal problems that cause pain and suffering to so many?

Are we not smart enough or do we not care enough about one another to figure out how to stop the pain and suffering?

Teaching in prisons was not something I considered doing...until...(see chapter 1). Now there are few things I would rather do. My plan was simply to marry, have children, bake cookies, volunteer in my children’s classrooms and other such things. Boring to some - but not to me. Easy to achieve - or so I thought. How naïve I was!!!

Early heartaches and challenges, including my mother leaving, observed and received abuse from a stepmother, and then being adopted at age 8, contributed to me being a very serious-minded child. I was quiet, shy, highly observant and quick to decide what I did and didn’t like.

In 6th grade I needed to create a poster for a social studies class. My adoptive dad suggested I write the phrase, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.”, and draw a person behind bars. I did, having no clue of the significance or foreshadowing of the incident. Nor did I know at the time that he, himself, was an ex-felon. In looking back, growing up with him was my best preparation for becoming an effective teacher in prisons.

At 12 or so I decided I wanted to go to college. There were so many neat options it was hard settling on just one. Many details aside, it was determined my sophomore year while a student at St. Johns River Community College (now State College) that computer science is what I would pursue. Following severe failure the first weeks of my junior year at Brigham Young University, however, I switched to elementary education. What a blessed path that decision would help unfold!!! (And I still haven’t fully pursued my first three loves – animals, music, or baking. Thankfully, there’s still time.)

Life is quite the teacher!! Kind, loving and gentle at times; Harsh, hateful and far from gentle at other times. Long story short, I did a good deal of goal setting and planning as a child and youth. I progressed and succeeded; succeeded and progressed. After high school I obtained an associates degree from St. Johns River Community College, transferred to Brigham Young University, then WHOA!!, failure began!! My parents were understanding and supportive, I changed my major to Elementary Education, graduated a couple years later, taught a year, married, taught another year, had children, then, WHAM!!!! More, and increasingly intense challenges and failures, including moral issues of a spouse, divorce and a mental breakdown.

Why did noone tell me life was going to be so hard??!!! I had planned and worked diligently throughout childhood and as a youth toward achieving a happy, fulfilling adulthood. Little did I know how ill-prepared I was for the realities of life!!!

Fast forward eight years. I secured my first job in a prison - supervising an evening computer lab, oblivious of the mind- and door-opening experiences it would provide. Over the next eighteen years I would spend time teaching (and learning volumes) in 4 prisons and 1 residential substance-abuse treatment center – 2 in Oregon and 3 in Georgia.

This booklet is mainly about those experiences. Proceeds from sales of this booklet will go to nonprofit organization, *Achieve Greater Success*, an organization I created in 2010. My

first intention when first trying to start it in 2002 was to help struggling children. When I actually got it started in 2010, English language learners were the target population. Then, in 2014 after graduate school and teaching in my first Georgia women's prison, its focus shifted to working with incarcerated and released women. Now, in 2016, after teaching in a men's substance abuse treatment program, in spite of most people's belief that I try to do too many things, I want to include ALL those groups. AND I KNOW IT CAN AND WILL BE DONE!!!!!!.....especially as I get better at working with others and letting them assist me.

I plan to write future booklets, to further address my original questions:

We are all born as innocent babies. Why do some have happy, fulfilling lives and others end up in prison?

Why do we put so much more focus on entertainment and the development and acquisition of physical things, including "stuff", looks, sports, etc., than on solving societal problems that cause pain and suffering to so many?

Are we not smart enough or do we not care enough about one another to figure out how to stop the pain and suffering? I will go ahead and answer this paragraph's questions now: With God's help and the help of other key people involved in Georgia's prison and education reform, we are, we do and we will.

*Thank you for reading,
Linary Kingdon*

Chapter 1

1997

Wisdom from Within ...prison

**Oregon State Correctional Institution
Salem, Oregon**

In 1996, having decided as an employee of an accounting firm doing contract work for the Oregon State Government that I did not want the remainder of my life to be spent in a cubicle, I considered the pros and cons of returning to teaching. Having low tolerance for misbehavior I asked myself, “Where can I teach that I don’t have to babysit?” Pondering various things, I remembered a conversation I had had while a student at Brigham Young University with a woman who taught in a prison. She had said that as a teacher in prison you don’t have to tolerate inappropriate behavior; that if students speak or behave inappropriately they can be asked or made to leave. That sounded appealing so I started researching what it involved to teach in prison.

In 1997 I began supervising an evening computer lab at the Oregon State Correctional Institution (OSCI). Throughout the evening 3 different classes of students would come in – an ESL (English as a Second Language) class, a GED (General Educational Development) class, and an ABE (Adult Basic Education) class. This provided opportunities for me to observe, talk to the teachers and interact with the inmates a little. After a few weeks my supervisor asked if I was interested in teaching a GED class. I was not comfortable to do it, but the pay was 3 times higher and she said I could have whatever supplies I wanted...so I hesitantly decided to do it. What an experience it was!

Knowing writing was a critical part of passing the GED, realizing how inexperienced and uncomfortable most of my students were with writing, and not really enjoying writing myself or feeling very confident about teaching it, my goal was to approach it in as painless, yet meaningful, of a way as possible.

Having contemplated different approaches, one night I wrote a quotation on the board. I asked my students to write what the quotation meant. They wouldn’t write. I explained that I would not be critical of their writing, but rather, was eager to know their thoughts; that as I read what they wrote I would non-judgmentally indicate where they needed to correct capitalization, punctuation, etc, and would return their writings so they could see where their weaknesses were and improve for the future. They still wouldn’t write. One man eventually told me they didn’t understand the quote. We had a discussion about it and they then began writing. This was the beginning of an experience I will always cherish. From then on, during each class we would discuss a different quote or topic and my students would hand in their written thoughts/feelings about it. After a few weeks some of the students began composing things outside of class.

This chapter contains their responses to the quotations and other compositions. Throughout this experience, not only did we have excellent discussions, but my students began showing physical and emotional improvements. I, too, was growing - not only because of life in general, but largely because of the insights I was gaining while working with my students.

This experience came to an end a few months later when I needed to change my schedule to accommodate family needs. It was a hard decision to leave OSCI but I was able to transfer to a position at the Oregon Women’s Correctional Center (OWCC), a place I was interested to learn more about. My time at OWCC was quite another experience! - a topic for another time.

The last composition in this chapter is a poem I wrote for my students at OSCI as a gesture of appreciation for all they had shared and all I had learned during my time with them.

There were other meaningful experiences but this will do for now.

That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do. Not that the nature of the thing itself is changed, but our ability to do is increased.

April 28, 1997

- The harder we try, in the long run it gets easier.
- Basically, in my opinion, it means that if you continue to be persistent at things, over a period of time, your ability to be persistent will increase.
- When I persist in doing something, if I can finish the thought while I'm thinking about it, I do real well. But if I get bothered right in the middle of a thought, it messes me up totally. I'm usually a very persistent person when it comes to my doing something that I make up my mind that I want to do. Like whenever I go to the Law Library on the nights that I'm supposed to be in school. I found that I was missing too much school time by going to the Law Library on Monday and Tuesday nights, so I changed my Law Library from 6 PM to 7:45 am starting next week. I feel that I need help with certain things because of my learning disability that I have.
- If we are persistent in doing things, they do become easier. The easier things become, the more we like to do them. Once it becomes easier, the nature of the thing is changed, because it has gone from something that didn't seem too easy to us, to something that is now easy to do, so therefore the nature of the thing has changed. As the thing changes, we are able to increase what it is we are doing.
- In my opinion, I think that if you keep at something long enough, your mind tends to learn how to adjust to certain difficulties. In doing this, things will become easier for you.

***If you don't know where you're going,
you'll probably never get there.***

April 29, 1997

- ...but if you never ask or try, it only gets harder or longer.
- It basically means to me that if you don't or are not willing to set some basic goals for yourself, you will have nothing to reach for. Therefore, you can't possibly get there.
- I know where I'm going, but I'm sorry to say that it's going to take me a long time to get there. Why? Because I have 24 years to do in this place, and it's going to take awhile to get me where I want to go – which is surely some place other than in a prison somewhere.
- This probably means you're at a point in which you don't know where you're going, so you're lost, and you will never get to where you're going. In turn, you need to focus on where you're at, to get to where you're going.
- If you don't know where you're going, you may be lost. If you're lost, you'll probably never get to the place you were going to to begin with. So the best thing I can suggest is to get a map! Then you will always know where you are, and where you are going, so you'll always get there.
- I myself think it means, that if you don't have your goals set in your mind, you will more than likely fail in your attempts to accomplish your goals!
- If you don't know where you're going, you will never get there, so forget about where you're going, and you will get there.
- I think it means that if you don't know what you want in life, or where you want to go in the future, then you will never meet any goals of achievement or success.

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

May 5, 1997

- If you don't look ahead at your future, then your future will just pass you by and you could loose out on a golden opportunity.
- If you fail to plan and make out an agenda for your daily plans and your life's outlook, you are doomed to fail.
- If you fail to plan something, then you plan to fail. If you plan to fail, then you are not planning very wisely! If you take the time to plan something, then you don't have to worry about failing what it is you're planning.
- I think this means that if you don't plan out what you're going to do in life, you will end up having more obstacles to cross, by which you will fail in some of your goals in life.
- I feel if you can't plan out things, then you will never go anywhere in life, so you must plan things out to have a life.

***The ones who say, “can’t do it”, are those who never will;
For they start out defeated; each “can’t” becomes a nil.***

***But those who say, “I’ll do it!”, have half the battle won.
The state of mind that wills it, can help one get things done.***

***It’s not the brave or strongest who know how to begin;
But rather, those with spirit, who start, and do, and win!!***

May 6, 1997

- Try and try again, or the things you want will never materialize in one’s life. But if you keep trying and they aren’t to be, then it wasn’t a wasted effort.
- It means to me that if you tell yourself you can’t do anything, you basically are defeating yourself. But if you tell yourself, “Yes, I can”, you are already half way there, and the rest should be downhill.
- “Can’t do it” I feel that the people that say that they can’t do it, are the ones who don’t want to make anything of themselves and they from the very beginning of life start off defeated. There’s a lot of nothings in this world today.

“I’ll do it” This reminds me of me and what I do, because when I make up my mind to do something I usually do what I set out to do. But I always find it to be a battle that’s hard for me to win. When I’m in the right state of mind I can always get most things done and I’ll feel better about myself afterwards.

“The Brave” I don’t need to be a brave person to know how to begin doing something. I really don’t feel that I need to be a strong person in whatever I do either. I have a lot of spirit in my heart and most of the time I feel good about myself. And usually when I start something I don’t stop until I get it done.

- If you say you cannot do it, and then you don’t, doesn’t mean you ever won’t. If you try and try again, then maybe you will win. So never, never say you can’t, ‘cause if you do, then you have given in. Like it says above, if you have the spirit and you listen closely to it, then you do it, then you win.
- The way I interpret this is that if you have the attitude that is a “self defeatist” attitude, you will never have the courage to succeed in your adventures. With the right attitude you can accomplish almost anything if you set your mind to it.
- I think if you do get halfway, then you have done something to keep you going the rest of the way, and smart people go all the way.
- If you start on a project and have a negative outlook on it, then it will turn out negative.

I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past.

June 2, 1997

- In the past I have generalized on your quotes, but this quote really hit home so I will really expand on this one. My dreams and thoughts of the past are the reasons that I came here. When I was younger, my thoughts were very “juvenile” and just like kids get in trouble, so did I, but was punished as an adult. I’m glad I was. This has been a real learning experience. My dreams of the future include go back to college, continue acting as a man, rather than a boy. I can’t afford to let history repeat itself. That is to be my main goal in life. It’s so sad how I hear so many of the others around me saying how they plan to return to their childish ways, and for some reason, the concept that they will return here, they can’t conceive. To conclude, myself, my family, friends and children are proud of me for finally deciding to strive for my dreams of the future instead of striving for the wrongful ways of the past and being the productive man in life I was sent here to be. History has been a learning experience for me, as others, and I know the best is to come.
- The world is run by the dreams of our people, and once these dreams are fulfilled, then they become the history of the past.
- It would be nice if I could have dreams of the future, but I’m afraid my future isn’t going to be very good, as I found out today that I might end up doing 20 years in here. But I will say this – I want my future to be a whole lot better than my past, and all the history that for some ungodly reason has followed me way deep down into my past. But, yes, if I have my way about it, I will have a better future than what my past has been. In fact, I’m looking forward to making my future better than my past ever was.
- I like the dreams of the future, because you can choose to do things right – unlike the history of your past, you cannot go back and change. I like to dream of the future because I know I can make it right and avoid the bad things of my past. As for the history of the past, things could be done I differently, like no wars or presidential assassinations, or man-made disasters, like Chernoble nuclear disaster, and the Exxon Valdes oil spill. Those are the dreams of my future.
- Looking forward to tomorrow is far better than dwelling on the past. Living in the past you can’t possibly make any progress in your life or other’s around you. Looking forward to tomorrow, you can make plans and adjust them accordingly.
- I like things better today than what happened in the past, and you get through it by taking it one day at a time.

I have strong feelings about _____ (list 5) because.....

June 3, 1997

- 1. Healthy family
2. My friends
3. What's my future going to be?
4. To show loved ones the good about me.
5. My artwork and how people see me through my art.
What I'm going to be doing without all the drugs. What's my life going to be like, and what goals can I set to be a better person? And how I plan on not falling into the same old patterns as before.

- 1. Family
2. Freedom
3. Love
4. Happiness
5. Worldly acceptance

I have strong feelings about many things. I am a very independent person, and have strong feelings towards worldly views, love, friendship, and probably most of all, peace. To define myself a little better, my opinion on racism is that it sucks, and the stigma about men being "better" than women is completely out of line. There are many women and others of different races that I really admire. I feel society is wrong for judging people such as myself for having to spend a few months here. I strongly feel that I will be an excellent husband, business man, and family man. My morals and values are just too strong not to be. It's not right for people to choose to prejudge me, but that's life. I have a goal to prove to this world that I'm not the "typical prisoner", and will have a very successful life.

- 1. I want to get out of prison some day and live the rest of my life – what's left of it, by myself.
2. I would like for my family to all keep in touch with me while I'm in prison.
3. I would love for my daughter who is 26 years old now to get in touch with me and keep in touch with me.
4. I would like for people to stop looking down on me because of what I'm in prison for, but I know that will never happen.
5. I would like to get me a better paying job while I'm here besides the one I have now.
I have strong feelings about my cellie because he's one of a very few inmates that I've been celled up with that hasn't wanted to hurt me, and I respect him for that.

- 2. Being able to make a comfortable living is important to me also.
3. My daughter is Very important to me, because she is a part of me, and I love her very much.
4. Friends are very important, because everyone needs friends.
5. My freedom. Besides my family and daughter, freedom is the most important thing to me. I have very strong feelings about being a felon when I am released from prison, because who

wants an ex-con living next door to them? I don't know how people are going to react to me when they find out. I'm not scared of people, I'm just curious to see how they are going to react. It is something that just bothers me, and I have strong feelings toward those feelings.

- 1. My kids
- 2. My grandkids
- 3. My mom
- 4. My health
- 5. My brother and sister

I feel that I have real strong feelings about anyone that hurts my family. Then I get real upset and want to hurt someone, and I really want to hurt the one that hurt my family. It makes me want to kill them.

- Well, I have a strong feeling about my kids because they are my whole world, and my life is nothing without my kids. When I look at them, I look at them and I see God's gift to us. When my wife was giving birth to my kids, I was there, and that was the most beautiful thing I ever seen. Kids are a gift from God.

To be, or not to be? That is the question.

July 1, 1997

- If you take life by its horns, then you're more apt to go further in life in the direction you want. But if one lets life pass him/her by, then we have a slimmer chance on having a better life.
- To be the best in life possible, and achieve all your goals. And not to be here in prison because I chose the wrong road and the wrong life!
- To be released from prison, well that's up to the judge when I go back to court. Not to be released from prison, again, this is also up to the judge handling my case. Will I be getting some good news in the very near future about my court date? That is the question that I'm almost always finding myself thinking about.
- To have everything in life like money, good job, nice car, house and a good woman that won't stab you in the back. Not to be would mean that you're not trying hard enough to have all these things.
- To me, "to be or not to be" means that the writer couldn't make up his mind whether to be someone good or bad. Now I have never read any Shakespeare, so I cannot comment and know what the true meaning behind the meaning. My own thoughts, though, mean: should I or shouldn't I be a good citizen with good morals and standards, or to be an evil bad person who doesn't care one way or the other, and that I can't make up my mind one way or the other.
- I interpret this in a way that some may or may not agree with. "To be or not to be" can mean this or that. I think of it this way. Here goes... "To be" could mean – to go on and not give in to challenges. "Not to be" could mean – to quit or give up or die without even trying to control the way you accept challenge.
- That is to be in love or not to be in love with someone. The question is to have someone to be in love with, and them be in love with you.
- For me this means to be a servant of God. Seeking His good, acceptable, perfect will, in the way I live my life. I am not able of my own to live this kind of life. Only as I daily seek Him for His thoughts, His way, can I live this peaceful life. Most people will not understand now, but I know God understands. This means being compassionate, gentle with others, and at peace with myself and God.

“Change”

July 7, 1997

- Can a man change? Or does he stay the same? But life is full of surprises! But I think so, because I have changed.
- Let's see...One thing that I would do to change if I could is all of this prison time that I'm doing. I don't want to be an old man by the time I get out of here. (So, with that in mind...) One thing I know for a fact that I'm going to change is I'll never ever get married to a woman again who has kids. Even though I love kids when they're not mine, it makes no difference to me. I like being a father to kids. Anyway, I'm not going to put myself in the position that I'm in right now once I get out so that I will not end up on one of these places again for something that I didn't do. I hope that I get a new trial on my past conviction and that I make a big change in how I live.
- What change means to me is to keep up with the things that change around me from day to day and not let things get me down.
- Change is what I've gone through in my journey through the justice system. I'll never be the same man I was before my incarceration, but I know I'll be a better man when it's all over. People have noticed the changes I've been through. My change will always be for the better.
- When things are different, sometimes people change, and sometimes there is so much of a change you don't know how to handle it. Sometimes I know I have changed since I have come in here. I know I will never drink again, and I have gone through a divorce. But I have come back real good and that was quite a change and I don't know how much more I can change.
- Changing of my life goes on every day. Even this GED class is a part in my ongoing change. The unsureness that I have in engaging in the daily classroom interaction. In new situations like this class at this prison, I have difficulty figuring out how and what to say. As I am thinking about how change is accomplished, I heard another student talk about his concerns about his children with the teacher. I could have added information to the conversation based on my research about the subject, but given the setting and certain bitterness attitudes of certain inmates, I have been told that I speak too much information too freely. I need to learn how I can process my thoughts to generalize and properly figure out what is appropriate for the time, setting, and place. I am told that awareness through movement and functional integration are types of therapy that I need. This is the struggle I daily try to understand and figure out. Somehow I feel this limits my ability to function normally. I am getting some help with this from a counselor here.

- Change is something that everyone experiences each and every day of their lives.....
Change to me is a new challenge and/or a new task as each day appears...
Change is a way that a person can change a part or parts of themselves into someone or something for the better and/or worse...
Change is something that you have to want and work for...
Change comes from one's inner self being...
Change comes from one's positive attitude, for change depends on what your attitude is...
Change isn't something that is going to happen overnight; it could take a week, a month, maybe even years...
Change – it will happen eventually, so don't give up on it, for if you give up, you not only let others down, but you let yourself down...
For if you really want to change, then you need to put all your focuses on it, to be able to accomplish it...
For once you have changed, don't quit, cause there's many other things that you may want to change also...
So give change a chance.
Who knows – maybe you'll like what the outcome is.

“Stress”

August 4, 1997

- When I get stressed out I get really mad, and can't think at all, because I try too hard! I don't know how to change the stress in my life, because I have always stressed myself out most of my life. Maybe time will tell.
- I stress out once a week whether I need it or not.
Stress is something I do not seek; it's something I've always got.
I duck and dodge to hide from stress, but stress will still be there.
So I suppose I must confess – My stress reflects one gray hair.
- Back in 1994 after putting up with my ex-wife's family and all of the ___ for nearly 4 years and always getting angry and all upset about it all of the time but not really saying anything about what my ex-wife's family was doing, because I felt that it would not have done me any good at the time or when each thing happened to get me all upset... I thought that when me and my ex-wife were married that she loved me as much as I loved her. But as the years went by I found out that she wasn't as much in love with me as I was with her. In the course of the three years and getting all stressed out and upset and have 3 minor spells with my heart, in Dec. 1994 I had a major heart attack and almost died because of all the stress I was going through and didn't know it until my heart gave out on me.
- I feel that when something stresses me out, I have to try and stop thinking about everything and clear my mind and control my anger that way I don't act out on it. There have been times when I acted out when I was stressed out about something, and did things I wouldn't do if I didn't feel all the stress. I do not feel like talking about this no more because I am getting stressed out.
- When I'm stressed out I make things or situations out to be worse than they really are or have to be. I had a serious problem dealing with it, but now I pretty much have it under control and can usually deal with it appropriately when I get in a stressful mood or situation.
- Well, let's see, since I decided what the quote and/or idea/topic was, it's really hard for me to write much down in the way of this particular subject. Most of the things I get stressed out about are the things we can't really write about. But I guess if I really have to, I can write something. The main things that are stressing me are: Will I have all of my stuff when I get out? Will I find a job?
- I think stress is something that has to do with one's self-ability, and that you can overcome stress by reading your Bible or by communicating with someone else that knows how to deal with it.
- I was in a stressful position when my Dad died. I thought the world had come to an end and I wanted to take my own life. That was all I could think of, and one day when I was drinking, I had too much to drink and I wanted to kill myself. But then I started to think about my kids and my wife, and then I knew I had a lot to live for, so then I would realize what I have and then I would want to live. But for a long time after my Dad died, I wanted to take my life so the only thing I can do is not drink and then I'm a happy person.

"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."

August 5, 1997

- Yes, it does take a single step after step to get away from this cold place of hell, and so in my mind I can go to a journey thousands of miles away.
- We will never know what special talents we have unless we search for them. The world is our stage and we are the actors.
- Mr. Quibble: First and foremost, let's get one thing straight – that first step must be from the right foot, because if it's from the left foot, then it won't be right.
Mr. Bloopy: That's complete nonsense. It don't matter at all what foot you use to take that first step.
Mr. Quibble: It certainly does. Did you know Hitler began his journey with the left foot, and notice where it got him.
Mr. Bloopy: Now how do you know that?
Mr. Quibble: Because he failed, and his journey was still left to accomplish.
Mr. Bloopy: Okay, if you're so smart, give me an example of someone who started off on the right foot.
Mr. Quibble: No problem – Jesus used his right foot first to start when he walked across the water.
Mr. Bloopy: Oh well, that's just too much for me. You're right; I agree.
Mr. Quibble: I never had any doubts about it. I knew you'd agree with my theory, because when I started out on my way to your office to discuss this with you, guess what I did?
Mr. Bloopy: And just what did you do?
Mr. Quibble: I started my journey by using my right foot to take that first step.
- I've started my journey by doing all the things I must to get out of here early, and get my life together. It's hard sometimes to do everything and keep on the path to early release, but I always find a way to keep my mind on it. I got kicked off my path a couple of times by going to the hole, but I got back on it and am staying on it. "The End" or The beginning
- To me the quote means that any obstacle can be overcome. But in order to overcome it, you must start somewhere. I was actually thinking about his quote today. I was thinking about the journey ahead of me and how I am close to the beginning of it. How one day it will be over and it will look insignificant. Everything, no matter how big or small, must begin somewhere. I can't think of much else to write, so I must be done.
- We often set ourselves out on different types of excursions and/or journeys. But in reality, you can not make it to your final destination if you do not take that first step, which I think is the hardest step of all because you are leary of total failure and/or leary of if you are going to make it to that destination without difficulty and/or problems. And if that journey consists of a thousand miles, then you have to do a lot of thinking and preparing for it. And you have to have the funds for your needs and supplies. Then when you do make it to your final destination, you have a feeling in you that makes you want to go on another journey. ((Thank you))
 - That means a thousand miles of a journey may just be one step to some people and mean a lifetime for others, and also mean you can go ahead in life and become a better person in your life and things can be better to you.

Prison is a Place

July 7, 1997

Prison is a Place where simple things that we tend to ignore, seem to be more important than before. Like sitting long enough to watch a spider spin a web. There is plenty of opportunity to do that now; it kind of fits somehow. Maybe it's all a part of God's great plan.

Prison is a Place where we sit and read a book, something we thought was really stupid, until we really took a look. We didn't want to read it on the street, so read it now – it's right there within your reach. There is plenty of opportunity for knowledge and for fun, only if you open a book, no one else can do it, though – you're the only one.

Prison is a Place where you can make a friend, but be aware because not everyone is a friend. They may say they are, but most of the time you can really tell, and the longer you spend around them, you'll get to know, that friend you thought was a friend, is really a foe. But on that rare occasion, when you really make a friend, you tend to cling to them until the end.

Prison is a Place where you have a lot of time to think. Oh, how I wish I were on the street again! I'd take advantage of these things. 'Just to smell a flower, or to pet a cat.

Prison is a Place, my friend, and that is where I'm at.

I Need You

1997

The day was long and lonely
because I had you on my mind.
I know the love we share is real,
and good love is hard to find.

I wake up in the nighttime
when I hear you call my name.
These cold walls surround me
and, Baby, you're so far away.

Sometimes I feel the teardrops
falling upon my skin.
Because I try to fight my feelings
but I never seem to win.

I know I'm lost without you,
and, Baby, I can't stand the pain,
'cause at night I hear your laughter,
and it's driving me insane.

I sit here with my feelings;
it seems they're my only friend
because I wake up here without you.
Sometimes it's hard to find those words
to tell you how I feel,
but if our love can last through this,
we'll know that love is real.

I Need You!

Dream World

1997

Welcome to my little dream
where I live a life of lies.
'Surrounded by the things I despise,
and where my happiness lives or dies.

Am I destined to be lonely –
separated from my one and only?
Am I leaning on false hope,
not knowing how to cope?

Here I am trying to start over,
looking for that four-leaf clover.
The love I had has come to an end
from which my heart may never mend.
Because the final piece was stoled
for one other to behold.

I had a life once before
until another came through the door.
And from my little dream,
I wake to a terrified scream.

To Ms. Kingdon

June 30, 1997

Sitting in this cell
listening to my thoughts
as they float off on the wind.
And if I listen close enough
I am sure to hear the sound
of a pause so old time seems to stop...
in everything around.
In this eternal silence
my cry would seem to call
down corridors long gone to dust
away beyond these walls.
And time that seems to bind me
no longer keeps me chained
to the physical realities
of memories full of pain.
And so my mind is free to go
from this eternal perch
to still the echoes of my cry
the reason that I search.
And day by day as time rolls on
my mind remains in flight
to find that one to pull me
from this darkness into light.
For I am not reason enough
to step under the sun
and lay to rest deeds in my past
and time already done.
I need that spark of love inside
so I can come alive
or forever in this darkness
my lonely heart shall hide.
I feel my mind returning
as I hear my cell door shut
on the unfilled search persisting
in the aching of my gut –
on the hopes and dreams that burn inside
to be free of this place
as my head sinks to my pillow
and the tears roll down my face.

This is my personal life.

1997

My past was really bad because of drugs, and because I made drugs like a God to me, and because I would rob or kill for it. I have hurt a lot of people, and I cry inside of my heart. So when I came to prison, my life was saved, and because if I would have stayed out of prison I would have been killed, or died because of drugs. I know that there is a God because he saved my life from the hell I have lived. My future is going to be really nice now, and I'll be able to be with my kids, and my family too, and to start my restaurant. I thank you, God, for giving me my life back.

Chained Freedom

August 5, 1997

I'm a bird that is chained
to a handcuff with no key.

Oh, I wonder what my father
has in store for you and me.

Even though I'm locked up at this time
my Holy Father still lets me stand free.

He is my power and my wisdom
to a kingdom of great love and pure understanding.

But for now, my brothers and sisters,
I'm still chained to this evil system
that mankind has put upon me.

Sound the trumpets because the LORD is among us always.

Dreamer

August 8, 1997
3:22 am

Here I lay dreaming again...
dreaming of what it's gonna be like this time around!
As I go back to the outside once again...
Not knowing if society is gonna accept me this time,
for I have let them down time & time again in the past...
But although I know it is gonna be different
in many ways this time around.
So different that, those who knew me before
might not know me now.
For I have changed dramatically!
This time around, for the better, that is...
But I still have dreams all the time-
Dreams of how it was before,
and dreams of how it is now.
Being clean & sober for all this time
that I have been down for...
It feels great knowing that I have given up
those drugs & alcohol that was once in my life...
But although I have given them up in here,
can I really give them up out there?...
I ~~think~~ know so!
For I have dreamed of a better way of life out there,
and that is a drug & alcohol free way of life...
So if you have dreamed the same dreams
that I have during this time,
and don't think they are possible;
then just dream a little harder
and just maybe, there is some kind of power
or special being up there!
That will help our dreams come true...
AMEN!!!

I'll Never Forget

1997

The bars have closed
all around me now.
I can't get out, for I doubt
I know how.
It's lonely in here.
There's a cry in the night.
I just lay on my bunk
and pray for daylight.
I can not sleep,
I can not dream,
'Cause out of the silence
comes a terrible scream.
My mind will wander,
my mind will roam.
My thoughts are all twisted
and I wish I were home.
But where is my home,
away from this place?
In here, looking out,
there's nothing but space.
I'm in here because I owe society a debt.
And for the rest of my life
I'll never forget.
I jump and I cringe
with every loud sound.
Even when there is
no one around.
Oh, Lord up above,
how do I forget
a part of my life
I'll always regret?

Guardian Angel

1997

Last night I had a dream
that an angel fell to earth.
Her wings were torn and tattered;
had this angel lost her worth?

Her halo lay beside her,
A tear fell from her eye.
I kneeled down to help her,
and hoped she would not die.

How can this be so?
What can I do for you?
Please tell me, little angel,
What happened? Why? And who?

She sadly looked up at me,
and this is what she said –
that torn and tattered angel,
so close, but not yet dead:

“I am your guardian angel,
and I’ve followed you through hell.
That’s why I’m torn and tattered,
and from the sky I fell.”

“You’ve led me through a life of crime;
you’ve battled all the way.
You haven’t listened to one word
that I have tried to say.”

She doesn’t deserve to suffer
for all the wrong I’ve done.
The price she is now paying,
is too high for anyone.

I looked down to the angel;
her wings began to mend.
I thanked the Lord in Heaven
that this is not the end.

It took a tattered, torn up angel
for me to see the light.
But thanks to her and God above –
my life’s now going right.

You are Love and Poetry

1997

I am inspired by your beauty
to only see love and poetry.
Sweet is the love which nature brings
that flows from my heart as my soul sings.
Because you are the candle
and I am the flame;
Hot fires so wild it can not be tamed.
Flowing together in this towering ?(I couldn't read his writing for this word.)
as the flame consumes the candle of our desire.
My precious sweet stuff, can't you see
that I love you so completely?
I love you as much as a man can.
I love you with all that I am.
I love you so much
that the poetry flows
straight from the well
where our love grows.
It grows in your spirit and your beauty
because you are my poetry.

Ps: A friend for life.

Parts of letters from two students

1997

(not edited)

#1

Last week, I readed two books. One of the by name is "I Can't Accept Not Trying" about some part of Michael Jordan life and were he has been, To get hiself to the level he's at right now. The book is about "As a Woman ThinKeth", Me personal don't believe half this booklet, or i didn't understand it 100% percent.

Now this book written about how Michael Jordan couldn't stop trying in anything he does. I found in my walks of life that he didn't follow what's in his book, "I Can't Accept Not Trying". Am African American and i can't say all my life i never gave up on life or trying. Am just becoming a man and understanding my feeling towards myself. I don't have a true friend in this world. I never had a true father in this world or mother. I never had the tools to learn the things that would get me over in life. See i have learn that a Child needs someone to teach them the thing they need to know in life that will gave the understanding of "I Can't Accept Not Trying".

Have you every been lonily?, Where everyone tells you that they care that it hurts even more. It hurts me alot when i meet people over a bowl of soup and they say., [name withheld], i care about you try this, try that, But in reality all they want or need is they'll paychecks. Am just another dumb black person to the world. I better end this because am getting very upset because once again am a very lonily young man.

#2

I didn't get much of a chance to thank you for all your time and effort that you put forth in helping me gain my GED. It sure is amazing what a person can forget since leaving high school. Without all your demonstrations and words of refreshing wisdom I don't beleave it would have been possable for me to acheive. I was a bit disapointed when they said I couldn't retake a couple test's to improve my score. They really have no "reason" for there decision, they just say it can't be done. I tend to disagree with them because I know of others who have. Not here but on the outs. I have been in the process of filling out my forms for financial aid to attend college. As I mentioned to you earlier I wanted to pursue my education as a paramedic. But this state don't allow it with a felony conviction. I studied there book from the college and believe I will pursue "Resort Management". I can get a BA degree from [name withheld]. The money nots bad and neather is the study. As you know they changed my release date from July 11 to October 15th. Once again they clame no aparent reason for takeing "90" day's of good time. They just say Im not entilted to it. I got a damn got attorney who seems to think he will get me out befor then but who knows. I just know I'm tired of doing time. this place has been a real eye opener for me. I dont' belong here nor will I come back. Hell Mrs. Kingdon I don't even write my friend's only my family. When they call my parents she just says Im still in college in [state withheld] and will be home for Christmas. Im to ashamed to let them know Im in this god forsaken place. I tell myself daily never again, never again. Alot can change for a guy in 8 months. Last November my ex the mother of my child got married to a gentalmen in the Army. I just got a letter last week saying she's getting a devorce and wants to try and make things work again. She's 37 don't work and has nothing going for herself. Part of me says to try for the sake of our child. But I just can't do it. I love my child to death as most fathers do. But the feeling ain't at all there for her. So I think I will just stay content with seeing my child as often as possable. Well Im probally boring the hell out of ya by now so I will close. I wish ya good luck. Take care and hope to see ya on the 12th (insert by Linary...GED Graduation was going to be on the 12th. I met his parents. It was wonderful.)

Sincerly your friend:

[name withheld]

PSS I probally broke very grammer and punctuation rule you tuaght me, writeing has never been a high point for me!!

Prison Life...Who's the Teacher?

Hi. My name is Ms. Kingdon.
I'm your new GED teacher.
You are my students.
What are your names?
Tell me a little about yourself.
Oh, really? Hmmmm...
Now, WHY did you do that?
I think I understand. I don't quite agree
Or wouldn't have handled it that same way,
But given the little bit I know
I can somewhat see where you're coming from.

What about laws and rules?
Do they not apply to you?
You think you were justified to do what you did?
And now you think you're being treated unfairly?
Hmmm...that's interesting.
Do you care to explain?
Sorry...I have a hard time buying that.
The fact is:
You're human; I'm human.
We live in the same society.
We have the same rules; the same laws.
It is VERY unfortunate some aren't taught like other,
But that's not an excuse.
Or is it?

Justice....
You break it – You pay for it.

What about warped senses of values
...especially those developed throughout the generations?
Who is responsible?

Life is often so complicated;
.....yet, at other times
So simple.

Sure, I draw the paycheck.
I'm the official teacher.
But because you're paying
I got the opportunity to be the learner.

**Thank you for everything you've shared.
It's been an invaluable education.**

Chapter 2

1997

Incarcerated Women
...Intense!

Oregon Women's Correctional Center
Salem, Oregon

My experience with women in prison began in December 1996 when a church choir in which I sang was scheduled to present a Christmas program inside the Oregon Women's Correctional Center (OWCC). While waiting in the parking lot we were told something had occurred inside and our event was cancelled. I was disappointed.

My next experience began roughly a year later when I transferred from OSCI to OWCC to supervise a daytime computer lab where women worked on assignments from various classes. My exact dates at OWCC were Sept 29 – Dec 15, 1997.

Before beginning I was warned about a particular woman who was serving time for a "caveman-style" murder and was told she was a master manipulator. I did my best to be prepared.

I can still envision the computer lab so clearly. My desk and computer were at the head of the room. There was a space of about three feet in front of my desk and then four long rows of tables extending out, on which computers sat side-by-side. The women would file in, sit at a computer and work on assignments from their other classes. Most worked quietly. A few talked here and there. The woman I was warned about – I'll call her Trailey – LOVED talking!! How engaging and charming she was!! What a trip she was!!

Another woman who especially stood out was SOOO incredibly like Mrs. Howell from Gilligan's Island!!! Every time I interacted with her I felt like I was on the show! She had a hard time seeing the computer screen and was very appreciative of my assistance in getting glasses for her. I appreciated her gratitude. Like most, I enjoy and value being appreciated.

The strongest of my memories from this prison experience revolve around six basic things – "Mrs. Howell", four things related to Trailey, and some situations that led me to better understand and be less judgmental regarding homosexuality.

The Trailey topics: 1) an unusual mental experience when sitting next to her at a computer, 2) her "wedding", 3) her love of the Hallelujah Chorus, and 4) her escape. Oh, my! Her escape!! The intensity of thoughts and feelings I had upon learning about it and until she was caught are beyond what I hope to ever experience again!!

The unusual mental experience when sitting next to Trailey at a computer: On this particular day there was something I wanted to work on and the program I wanted to use was not on my computer so I sat at one of the student computers. While working, it felt like Trailey was calling me. I knew I did not *hear* anything...but it was a very clear, never-before-felt, feeling. After a little while of this I looked at her and asked what she wanted. I don't recall the exact details of our exchange, but remember that she mainly just laughed. I returned to my work and it happened again. I don't recall how it ended, but just remember it was a most odd, unique experience, unlike any I had previously experienced. I am still perplexed and hope to one day better understand just what went on.

Her "wedding": I chuckle to myself anytime I think back on it. The lead up to her "marriage" happened over a few weeks period. It started with her telling me about her girlfriend coming to visit. One of her reports was about them becoming engaged in the visitation area. At another point she reported that they were now married and showed me a ring. When I asked how they did it she said they sat next to each other and had their own little ceremony. Alrighty then!

Her love of the Hallelujah Chorus: Though our choir performance for 1996 was cancelled, the one for 1997 happened. I told those in computer lab class about it and invited them to come. I was only aware of Trailey and one other woman from my group who were in attendance, however, when combined with the others, we had a nice size audience. Amongst the pieces we performed were *Joy In the Morning*, a piece where I played my trombone and two

others, the trumpet. I love that piece! We also sang the Hallelujah Chorus. My next time at the prison after the performance, Trailey expressed how much she enjoyed the performance. She was especially animated when she described what she enjoyed about the Hallelujah Chorus – a certain phrase, repeated over and over, that went higher and higher each time. It was quite amusing watching and listening to her describe it. I was happy she enjoyed it so much.

I don't recall the exact date of our performance, but am guessing it was the first half of December. Things had been becoming increasingly busy and challenging in my life and I needed to let something go so requested a leave of absence from OWCC, anticipating I would return when life slowed down. December 15 was my last day at OWCC. Things didn't slow down. In fact, they became increasingly challenging. I looked back through my journals to help accurately document some things in this book and am amazed at all I was juggling at the time. Life!!!

Her escape!!!: I rarely read the newspaper or watched tv, but for some reason, on a particular day I happened to see the front cover of the local newspaper. It contained two small profile shots of women. One of the women looked slightly familiar. As I began reading I realized, "OH MY GOSH!! I KNOW HER!! TRALEY HAS ESCAPED!!!" I was frantic!! She might come after me!! Or even worse, my 2 young daughters!!! I knew that she knew I was a nice person and was afraid she might try to secretly contact me, requesting my help. I was afraid of what she might do if I didn't oblige, knowing that I absolutely would not oblige. The Lindbergh kidnapping came to mind. The heinous crime for which she was incarcerated left the possibilities wide open of what else she might do!! My daughters, ages 10 and 12, and I lived alone in our apartment. I was extremely scared, unsure of what to do!!

I settled enough to think rationally and called Lori, my supervisor from when I worked at OWCC, and asked what had happened. She explained and advised me to not worry...to just do what I would normally do. Her reassurance helped, but only for a short while. My imagination again ran wild. We were living on the 2nd floor of an apartment complex. Our apartment was above part of the apartment of the manager so that helped a bit, thinking she could help keep an eye and ear out for unusual people or situations. A problem, though, is that the management office, which was connected to the manager's apartment, was only one story, so I could envision Trailey, or possibly a crony, climbing from the roof of the office into one of our 2nd story windows. Relief was not easy to find!!

During this time, as if that wasn't enough, a former student from the men's prison called and asked if I would meet up with him after he got out. What in the world was he doing calling me???? How did he get my number???? Do they not supervise who inmates call???? I was not at peace!!!

I tried, but had a very high stress level until learning that Trailey had finally been caught. August 28, 1998 is when she escaped and Sept 28, 1998 is when she and her accomplice were captured – on the complete opposite side of the US in Rhode Island! Considering the amount of stress I experienced in relation to "Trailey", it amazes me I even ever considered returning to teach in prison.

It wasn't until writing this booklet that I researched "Trailey's" escape to learn greater details. I remembered her first name was Tracey, though she tried to convince me that the Oregon Department of Corrections had listed her name incorrectly and that Trailey was her real name. My research reminded me that her full name was Tracey Lee Poirer. There is a good deal of information about her on the internet in case anyone is interested. Personally, I am perfectly fine to let things regarding her remain in the past!

One thing I decided early on when working in prisons that helped simplify things: to take what most inmates told me with a grain of salt. Yes, I knew that what some would say will be true, but one can rarely ever know for sure. Thank goodness for the very good training that prepared me for the manipulative efforts and “games” many inmates play.

Last, but not least, the 6th topic regarding my time at OWCC - Situations that led me to better understand and be less judgmental regarding homosexuality: Once again my naivety got the best of me. I was talking...don't remember to whom or about what, but all of a sudden it was DEAD SILENT...the strongest I had ever felt that feeling of where you could “cut the air with a knife”. I looked around and naïvely asked, “What’s wrong?” Several of the women were glaring at me and one of them said in a very unhappy, unappreciative tone, “Don’t you know most of us in here are homosexual?” Oh, my!!!! I wished I could become invisible!!! I realized I must have just said something that indicated my opinion regarding homosexuality.

I said, “No, I didn’t realize that. I’m sorry. I am not. You can be. I am sorry.” I felt like a piece of dirt!!! The women resumed their work and I just sat quietly at my desk, feeling exceptionally awkward, wishing the time would pass more quickly. I didn’t say another word. Just wished I could crawl out of the room and leave. It was a very humbling and major learning experience. I realized how judgmental I was – and about so many different things. I didn’t know these ladies. I didn’t know their experiences. Who was I to judge? The next time we held class a few of the students did not come. When I asked why, the others told me it was because of what I had said. They were no longer going to attend class. Again, I felt terrible and began learning a very important lesson.

That experience led to a great deal of thinking. I was also at a point in my own life where I had recently moved out from a 2 month marriage that was not only becoming verbally abusive, with the threat of physical abuse, but where one very intense evening I discovered a side of me I had no idea existed. One of my writings in chapter 3, entitled, “Abuse, Anger, Self-Control and Freedom”, tells a bit about it. It was because of this experience, including rage I experienced the night before leaving, that I came to better understand why some women end up in prison.

Also, the absence of physical intimacy after moving out from my marriage, yet no decrease in sexual desire, made me better understand why some women, and I guess men, too, sometimes turn to the same gender to fulfill sexual and other desires. I realize homosexuality is far more complex of a topic than my experiences explain, however, I value the meaningful insight gained.

Chapter 3

2000

HOPE for a Brighter Future

**D. Ray James Prison
Folkston, Georgia**

I wrote this chapter as its own booklet in December 2000, shortly after resigning from teaching remedial reading in Folkston, Georgia. The weeks that followed my resignation were some of the lowest in my life. I had been working at various jobs for two years, paying toward debt acquired from a failed business in Oregon and was getting nowhere. I was also greatly impacted because I was very much missing my 12 and 14 year old daughters who were living with their father and stepmother 3,000 miles away. My oldest was there by choice, but not my youngest. My youngest had recently left to attend her dad and stepmother's wedding, but while there her dad and I made the decision for her to stay because I felt I could make faster progress eliminating my debt if I worked two or three jobs - but I didn't want her to be home alone. Also, I felt she would be better off being with two parents instead of just one. Years later, my daughter shared that that experience caused feelings of abandonment. I hated that!!

At the time of writing this chapter I desperately needed a sense of hope. I had come to realize I was experiencing hopelessness because I no longer had faith in anything or anyone. After several days of these terrible feelings the best thing I could think to do was compile verses on the topic of faith from the Bible and Book of Mormon. I also began writing this chapter to give me something to do while I was figuring out how to proceed with my life. Most of these writings came from unanswered questions, sense I was trying to make of things, and pain I was feeling. The HOPE in the title of my booklet was somewhat for my incarcerated students, but also for myself.

I was missing my students...wishing I could give a copy of my writings to them...to share my hopes for them.

One writing in particular, "Abuse, Anger, Self-Control and Freedom", was in reaction to extremely intense feelings regarding an ex-husband – feelings that made me better understand why some women end up in prison.

As far as my teaching experience at D. Ray James Prison it was good other than something near the end that aggravated me so much I resigned - a story for another day.

Before starting classes I had to make sense of the curriculum. It turns out there were many different parts to it and several of the parts were missing. I used a master inventory list and ordered what we were missing, as well as created a large file containing copies of each of the components.

I had two classes called "rotations".

Actually, I want to get this book finished so will save more details until another time.



HOPE

*for a
Brighter Future*

*Writings on abuse, incarceration,
motherhood, religion and other important topics*

By Linary Kingdon

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Opening Remarks

It's not long 'til Christmas. I want to have this done so I can give it to them as a gift. I want them to know I think of them often and that I haven't, nor will I ever, forget them. Why have they left such an impression on me? Why do I have this longing to go back; to see them again; to see how they've progressed?

Respect...a large part of it is respect. I love the respect I felt from them; the way they treated me; the way they accepted me. I love the things they taught me. I love the way they listened as I tried to teach them.

Hope...another part of it is hope. I hope they are doing well. I hope they've made progress toward getting their heads on straight so that when they get out they'll be able to enjoy a happy and productive life. I hope they've learned what's really important...that it's much more satisfying and socially acceptable to be good and live straight than to do the types of things they did that got them there.

The Gospel...to see if they know what it's about. To see if they understand that God sent His son, Jesus Christ, to earth as a gift. To help them see that the example and teachings of Jesus are very valuable in helping deal with the problems and heartaches we face in our lives. Unfortunately, unfair and inappropriate things happen in peoples' lives. It is especially tragic when negative or painful things happen to children or youth. Sometimes parents, usually in innocence, do things that adversely affect their children. Sometimes influences outside the home adversely affect family members. If the pain and damage from negative things aren't handled properly, other problems often follow. Unwise choices are often made. Pain, discouragement and frustration build. These feelings often lead to poor decisions, which at times, bring the consequence of incarceration. With knowledge of the Gospel, pains can be healed, wrongs can be made right. Injustices and other inappropriate things can be overcome. That's exactly what the atonement was for.

Peace...to teach them there are ways of finding peace amidst their struggles – peace from the hells they've survived in the past; peace from the hells they may currently be experiencing, and peace from the hells they may yet experience.

Gratitude...to express my gratitude for the part they played in my life; for the depth and development of thought and feeling they contributed to.

It is with respect, gratitude and hope for a brighter future that I dedicate this booklet to my former students in prison. May the Lord guide and bless you in your efforts of developing and maintaining a happy and fulfilling life. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

Respectfully,

Linary Kingdon

Prison Life...Who's the Teacher?

Hi. My name is Ms. Kingdon.
I'm your new GED teacher.
You are my students.
What are your names?
Tell me a little about yourself.
Oh, really? Hmmmm...
Now, WHY did you do that?
I think I understand. I don't quite agree
Or wouldn't have handled it that same way,
But given the little bit I know
I can somewhat see where you're coming from.

What about laws and rules?
Do they not apply to you?
You think you were justified to do what you did?
And now you think you're being treated unfairly?
Hmmmm...that's interesting.
Do you care to explain?
Sorry...I have a hard time buying that.
The fact is:
You're human; I'm human.
We live in the same society.
We have the same rules; the same laws.
It is VERY unfortunate some aren't taught like other,
But that's not an excuse.
Or is it?

Justice....
You break it – You pay for it.

What about warped senses of values
...especially those developed throughout the generations?
Who is responsible?

Life is often so complicated;
.....yet, at other times
So simple.

Sure, I draw the paycheck.
I'm the official teacher.
But because you're paying
I got the opportunity to be the learner.

**Thank you for everything you've shared.
It's been an invaluable education.**

Wish Upon a Star

If wishes made upon a star
Really could come true,
Then I'd spend all my nights outside
Searching the skies...wishing for you.

I'd wish that pain would go away
and all the things we love would stay.

I'd wish that failure would digress;
that we would all enjoy success.

I'd wish that hate would cease to be;
that we'd all live in harmony.

I'd wish all good wishes would come true
for all mankind
...for me
...for you.

Abuse, Anger, Self-Control & Freedom

ABUSE

Abuse's definitions vary from person to person
Abuse can be active or passive
Active abuse has many forms...
verbal, mental, emotional, physical, financial, etc.
Passive abuse includes apathy, neglect, complacency, etc.
Abuse's effects can live on for generations
The attitudes & behaviors become patterns thought to be "normal"

ANGER

They say put anger to good use? Direct its energies well?
And just how does society suggest abused people do this?

PARENTAL INSTINCTS

Loving...Nurturing...Strong...Protect your children from harm

MANKIND

We humans have instinctual similarities to the lesser animals
Additionally, we possess superior intelligence
We have the ability to think and behave in ways outside our instincts
We have the ability to ACT with thought, rather than simply REACT
We have the capacity of foresight
and the ability to weigh consequences of our actions
There are times though, when there is not time to think
or things are so intense we're not thinking clearly
This is when things such as religious, parental or military training take over

SELF-CONTROL

My self-control during this incredible intensity of anger is for my children
Children need their mother (& father) to be with them...
To raise them...to read to them...to love and nurture them
Experience helps determine how to deal with anger
Had I not learned from the mistakes of others -
Inmates, as well as parents - and exercised self-control
I might be in prison at this time
My instincts wanted to do things not socially appropriate

FREEDOM

Because I am a devoted and responsible mother
And was blessed with control beyond my own while experiencing *RAGE*
He lives
Indeed, the male specimen is lucky I let him keep and live his hypocritical life
He can continue his behaviors of lying, denying, running, blaming, hiding

As for me...remember what I learned in prison:
Follow my instincts.

Just be careful which ones I follow; sometimes my head is wiser than my heart.

Who is Corrupt?

Who is corrupt; who is not?

How do we know?

How can we tell?

I have been trying to figure this out for a loooong time.

I don't have the answer yet.

Will I have the answer in this lifetime?

Time will tell.

Believing, Trusting, Loving

How do we know what to believe?

How do we know who to trust?

Who should we love?

How do we learn to love and trust again when we don't want to take the chance of experiencing more pain and heartache?

I don't understand why some people hurt each other so badly
why they don't care what impact their words or actions have on others
why they don't care how devastating their behaviors
can be in the lives of others

Where does such meanness and cruelty come from?
Why does it continue to exist and at times flourish?

meanness, selfishness, anger, bitterness
hate, pain, fear

What will it take to stop it from happening?

???

4 letter words...
Some are terrible
Others are wonderful

The answer.....LOVE

Though it may appear that hate, pain & fear are stronger,
If people feeling love can healthily endure the behaviors of those feeling hate or inflicting pain

In the end
Love will win!

Mothers, Moms, Motherhood

by Linary Kingdon

What is a mother?

A woman who bears or raises a child or children

Why do some people call their mother “Mom”?

A mom is the informal version of a mother

She’s the one who works with you day by day

Who sacrifices, gives selflessly and often becomes exhausted

Because she loves her children and wants to be a good mother

The one who hurts when her children hurt

And suffers heartache or frustration

When there are problems she cannot solve

What are you if you are female but are not a mother?

You are a daughter; You may be an aunt

You are a woman your friends’ children look up to

You may be a woman who longs to be a mother

Yet who suffers silently as you watch

And help other mothers

What is it like to be a Mom?

It is often like heaven

Sometimes like hell

But generally something in between

What qualities should one possess to be a good mom/mother?

Faith

Hope

Charity

The willingness to perform many labors

Are mothers who bear children

better or more valuable

than mothers who are mothers to children not born to them?

No.

Neither is more or less of a mother than the other

However, had biological mothers not borne their children

adoptive mothers would not have had the opportunity to be mothers.

In essence, there exists an eternal indebtedness of each mother to the other

for the part each played in the lives of *their* children

leg leg

leg leg

leg leg

leg leg

leg leg

leg leg

rightfoot leftfoot

The Pain of Strength

They say a loving and willing heart is a virtue
Yet to have and use that heart often brings pain

They say sacrificing and serving are godly traits
Yet the returns from ungrateful souls stir less than godly feelings

They say be patient and long-suffering
Yet some take that as room to continue their self-serving behaviors

They say forgive seventy times seven
Yet pain and depletion of self happens with each act that needs forgiveness

Having the strength to give is one thing
Having nothing left to give is another

How much are we to give? How selfless are we to be?
How do we replenish when there's no one feeding *our* soul?

* * * * *

Search, ponder and pray
God will show us the way
With His Son He did pay
The price to turn heartache away

While stuck in this forest it's hard to see
The more complete picture – *full reality*
But when with God's eyes we shall see
We'll realize our position was the better place to be

In this world injustice will abound
But if in the service of others we're found
Our sorrows will eventually be unwound
And with eternal glory we'll be crowned

For now we're storing up blessings
Investing in the future to come
True, it's a high price we're paying
But the returns will be a hundred to one

Who Cares?

I do

You do

I honor you for your kindness

Your caring, helping nature blesses me

Your efforts and service will have generational consequence

Now it's only me

But it will ripple to my children

From each of us it will ripple to others

Those ripples will then generate other ripples

Do you understand the immensity of your kindness and service?

In essence...

Your service to one will impact millions!

What can I give? How can I repay?

There is nothing equivalent for what you have done for me

What I can and will give:

Honor

Gratitude

Friendship

These will remain eternally

If ever you have a need that I can fill

I will

THANK YOU !!!

Love, Accept and Help Others

Perhaps I am not so odd as others oft have thought
I appear strange to them simply because they cannot relate
Is it MY problem we are so different?
No. Nor does it have to be theirs

Differences can be difficult, yet if tolerable, can be supreme
Variety is indeed the spice of life!
The God who created us, He knew that well
Hence, the different colors...the different melodies...the different
fragrances...tastes...textures...genders...races...species, etc.

When will we learn to accept and appreciate the differences amongst ourselves?

When will we no longer feel the need to appear superior
Simply because in our puny minds
We judge ourselves to be better than others?

How long will we continue to hurt or try to dominate others,
so we,
in our ignorance,
can think we're supreme?

I speak to all mankind – men, women and children:
Cease your selfish and foolish behaviors!
Open your minds, hearts and hands
To accept, love and help others

No one is superior to another
Regardless of race, gender, mind, body, money or anything else
Each and every person is valuable and worthy
of the acceptance, love and assistance of others

So You're OK Living in Hell?

It seems society's evolved to hell
Is that where you want to be?
Unless we start taking action
We'll drown in this terrible sea

Stand up for truth and honor!
Hold firm to that which is right!
No longer shrink in battle!
Let no fear win this fight!

Go forward with faith as your leader!
When you're weak look to the strong!
Fear and discouragement lose their hold
As we stay on the path we belong

That path is spirit over body
Divine over the weak
Our God, He will help us
If our promises we keep

If with heart, might, mind and strength
We honestly seek His will
Our hearts and minds He'll enter
And with power, us, He'll fill

He'll replace weakness with strength
Low places will be made high
Where crawling and groveling existed
Now with His strength we'll fly

We'll become like angels of heaven
Full of purpose, power and light
No evil influence will sway us
By day or by night

Our questions will be answered
Confusion will be gone
Christ will be our leader
And we will live as one

Different Religions, UNITE !

Why the different factions
Why the different ways
Why the different thoughts of truth
Different directions on different days

Truth itself is constant
Has always been that way
There's past, present and future
Yet it's stayed the same each day

God has no confusion
That state exists with man
Thanks to that wicked serpent
Who confuses all he can

All the thoughts and philosophies
That have evolved over time
Surely can't be accurate
Can't all be sublime

Baptist, Mormon, Lutheran
Moslem, Buddhist, Jew
Drop the boundaries between us
Forget who is who

If it's the same thing we're seeking
Let our differences not be the fight

But rather...

In the pursuit of truth
Brothers and Sisters, UNITE !

God Bless You, Former Students

Though our paths have parted
Memories remain
Though we may never meet again
Hopes are maintained

Hopes that you'll remember
The things that you learned
Hopes that you'll know
I will always be concerned

Concerned for your welfare
Wishing you the best
Hoping you'll do better
On the rest of life's tests

Though your past has been rough
With sin, sorrow and pain
Though there may still be dark clouds,
Thunder, lightning and rain

Go forward with faith
In yourself and mankind
Let the past go
Let it fade from your mind

Develop new dreams
Believe and nurture them well
Then watch what will happen
Listen...I'll tell:

If your heart is set straight
And your mind focused too
In spite of your weaknesses
God will bless you!

Closing Remarks

It's done. Now for the next step. Then the next and the next and the next and the next. Hopefully my steps will prove successful and I can get this to them for Christmas.

How do we stop it from happening? How do we prevent people from doing the things they do that get them locked up...removed from society...removed from their loved ones...isolated in that most unnatural environment?

I want to break the cycle; the cycle of violence, of crime, of evil, abuse, deception, dishonesty and all the other wiles Satan has introduced into this world. I want to help people be able to experience the joy that comes from focusing their energies on positive things rather than all the junk that's out there.

I want to help them understand the importance of treating others with kindness and respect; to understand and learn how to love themselves in spite of what others may have done or said that makes them feel like they're not worth loving.

I want to help them understand that in spite of the past there's hope for a brighter future; that though it may be difficult to establish and maintain a brighter future given their past, if they will focus, work hard and choose their friends and support systems wisely, they CAN and WILL achieve it.

It is my hope and confidence in a brighter future, for others, as well as myself and family, that prompts my efforts. Should my efforts have a positive impact on even one soul, I will count them as successful and be happy.

Thank you for reading,

Ms. Linary Kingdon

Chapter 4

2013-14

Women – Great Workers!

**Whitworth Women's Facility
Hartwell, Georgia**

Finally! The chapter I have been most looking forward to writing!! I could write forever, given the never-ending thoughts and ideas my experience at Whitworth Women's Facility, coupled with the prison reform and reentry efforts I have learned that Georgia is involved in since leaving Whitworth, stimulate. Amazing and life-altering things have happened and will continue happening for many in Georgia because of the efforts of many in leadership and because of many more who support and are serving those efforts in Georgia!

It's funny how things work. After leaving my last experience of teaching in prison I didn't intend to ever return. I had a very interesting experience, though, in the early 2000s – probably 2002 or so.

My daughters and I were living in the small town of Darien, Georgia. I was teaching elementary school, one daughter was in middle school, and the other in high school. I was not completely at peace, but for the most part, life was calmer than it had been for years.

It was a Sunday – the first Sunday of whatever month it was. We held a typical fast and testimony meeting. (to non-LDS readers: Every first Sunday of the month people are encouraged to fast for two meals and donate that money to be used for those in need. Also, each ward, or congregation, holds a testimony meeting where those who desire can stand and share their testimony about spiritual things with the congregation.)

Being a very small congregation, you know everyone, so when someone visits, they definitely stand out. Such was the case this day. A man who shared his testimony included that he was from Oregon. Having returned to south Georgia after living in Oregon for 5 years, that definitely caught my attention. I talked to him afterwards and found that he and his wife had taken a cross country trip in their RV and the reason they were in church with us that morning is because they had stopped overnight at Fort King George, which was less than a mile down the road.

Things felt almost surreal as we were talking . . . like, what are the chances of these people showing up in my little branch (the word used that means a congregation when the group is very small) in Darien, GA? Why it was such a big thing is that I learned that this couple's son was not only LDS (You know – we all like commonalities with others.), but he had just been made the new director of Oregon's Department of Corrections.

UGH!!! Why am I writing a book when I don't even like to write????!!!! I'm going to just save the rest of this story until I tell more info on a video or something. This is taking waaaay too long and I want to finish this thing. I will go ahead and say, though, that I met with the guy a few months later when I traveled out west. My visit with him was very good and There were some good things, but overall, when I think of that trip, it was my "Trip to Hell". Many more stories for another time.

YAY!!! I'm almost done with this chapter for now!!!

What I view as the most important thing that happened for me personally during and after my time of teaching at Whitworth Women's Facility is that my faith in God was strengthened tremendously. Thankfully, things do not always turn out as we plan. For example, I did not even plan to apply for the teaching job at Whitworth. Here's what happened:

In 2012 I finally obtained a master's degree!!!!....something I always had a feeling would happen since a teenager. This was my third start on a program, but at least this time I finished.

Soooo....I graduated from the University of Georgia in August 2012 with a masters in Nonprofit Management. What next? I did not want to work for just *any* nonprofit. I wanted to make *mine* work. I had my bills such that I only needed to work part-time, so that was my plan – part of my time would be spend at a part-time job and the other part of my work week would be

spent continuing to develop Achieve Greater Success, a nonprofit organization I had founded in 2010, but shortly thereafter learned I had no idea of how to run.

I relaxed a bit after graduation. Though I thoroughly enjoyed graduate school, it was also quite taxing. I guess that's because I'm older. The ole brain just doesn't work like it used to. And another major issue that turned up certainly didn't help either. Another story for another day.

Switching gears:

One day Dr. Michelle Carney, former director of UGA's Institute for Nonprofit Organizations, and someone I highly revered, asked if I had considered returning to teach in prison. I told her I had, but wasn't sure if I was going to – that it could be very mentally challenging. After that talk I started considering it more and then in October/November 2012 inquired regarding teaching positions at four prisons – 2 women's and 2 men's...or so I thought.

The mortgage for my house in Alpharetta was being covered by renters and I was in a roommate situation with a 20 something year old in Watkinsville. I chose to live in Watkinsville rather than Athens for the majority of my time in graduate school because it's smaller, quieter and more country than Athens and the country helps me feel more peaceful. There is always so much going on in my head that I need as much help finding peace as possible!!! So, first step: I called the closest prison – Whitworth Men's Probation Detention Center in Hartwell. Found out from a very sweet male voice over the phone that the job would be 9 hours a week, split into 2 days. Nope. Not enough hours to justify traveling an hour each way 2 days a week. Plus, I preferred to work at a women's prison due to feeling so strongly about women being good mothers. No problem; there were 3 other available prisons. I shut that door.

I applied and interviewed at the others – for a beginning literacy position at Lee Arrendale State Prison (This was my top choice of where I wanted to work.) and for a GED position at Pulaski State Prison and Washington State Prison. Were I to work at Pulaski or Washington I figured I could live with my brother and sister-in-law for a few weeks until getting my own place. Were I to work at Arrendale, they were offering enough hours that I could justify the drive. I had very pleasant interview experiences at each place.

Then I received a phone call that changed my life forever. Mark Martin, Deputy Warden over Care and Treatment at Whitworth, said he had a message that I wanted him to call me. No, I thought. I didn't want him to call me. I already knew their situation and wasn't interested. We talked, nonetheless, and he said they could possibly offer me more hours and encouraged me to apply. Knowing I had very limited time left that day and that the application was a long, tedious process, I was not very motivated. Completing and submitting a Dept of Corrections application was NOT how I wanted to spend the rest of my day. He informed me that sending my resume would suffice. Ok, a relief. I could do that. So I did...and eventually interviewed...and took a test...and had a nice talk with the current teacher, Brenda Rouse...and LEARNED THAT THEIR FACILITY WAS BEING TRANSITIONED INTO A WOMEN'S FACILITY!!! It became more appealing to me.

I really do want to end this chapter for now but have so much more neat stuff to tell about related to this job and will do so in the future. Just know that I see it as extremely fascinating how the Lord orchestrates things!!!! Also know that Ms. Rouse and I made an excellent partnership and that we had some fabulous students and aides!!!

Chapter 5

2016

The Faith & Character Based Aspect is What Drew Me

**NWRSAT Center
Rock Spring, Georgia**

(NWRSAT=Northwest Residential Substance Abuse Treatment)

NWRSAT is next to Walker State Prison. It was this time last year (Dec 2015) that I inquired about a position at Walker because I'd heard about it being a faith and character based prison. It's going to take faaaaar too long to tell everything about this experience, including why I even considered taking a job 2 hours from my house, and I am tired of writing and want to get this done so I will only write a little more later today and then BE DONE for now!!!!

Below are a few paragraphs I had written in the past. I'll keep them here for now, then add more later.

You know how certain people, sayings, etc. sometimes really, really, REALLY stand out to you? Well, it's happened with me re a few people and a few scriptures and quotes here and there. I will tell about the people another time. For now, let's look at two particular scriptures that have stood out for a few years now – both directly related to prison work.

Alma 26:22 – Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing – unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed; yea, and it shall be given unto such to **bring thousands of souls to repentance**, even as it has been given unto us to bring these our brethren to repentance.

Ether 8:26 – Wherefore, I, Moroni, am commanded to write these things that **evil may be done away**, and that the time may come that **Satan may have no power upon the hearts of the children of men**, but that **they may be persuaded to do good continually**, that they may come unto the fountain of all righteousness and be saved.

(Finish this section in the future.)

.....

We ALL have problems – some deeper than others. Unsettled issues exist in many because of things that happened to them that were completely beyond their control. Different types of abuses can damage our perspectives, confidence and other things. Many experience abuse in childhood, while others do not experience abuse until teenage or even adulthood. Many suffer because of issues that exist because of poor choices we make, sometimes intentionally, and other times out of innocence and/or ignorance.

Whatever the case, teaching in prison, as well as living in prison, definitely stimulates deep reflective thinking. Deep reflection, though challenging and painful at times, can be a very valuable, therapeutic and liberating experience.

Sadly, the needs of inmates often surpass the availability of funds to meet all their needs. Suggestions:

- 1) Create opportunities and provide materials for inmates to participate in guided discussions and free writing. This designated time and safe environment would provide the opportunity for quiet time, deep reflection and mental and emotional processing that could help individuals work through some of their inner turmoil.

- 2) Create groups of hand-picked inmates to meet specifically for the purpose of exploring, discussing and providing suggestions of other activities inmates can participate in that would provide not only immediate relief, such as recurring opportunities to listen to soothing music, but additional activities that would provide opportunities for emotional processing and healing. Inmates are living in their “hells”

daily. Who better would have insight into what could help relieve some of their stresses than they, themselves?

My final insertion Dec 31, 2016 before making this available online:

A few minutes ago I awoke from a dream where 2 schools were looking to hire guidance counselors. That is a MAJOR piece of the puzzle for further education/prison reform in Georgia. Notes to self: Remember Jimmi Symonds and my year of teaching 5th grade in Sandy Springs to further develop this concept.

I finished this next page last night about Achieve Greater Success's work at NWRSAT.

To NWRSAT Leadership
From Linary Kingdon
Date Dec 30, 2016
Re Status of program, Continuing Education After NWRSAT, as of today

Purpose: To guide men toward further education after release so they can obtain better employment and better contribute to their families and communities in healthy, productive ways.

Target population: Men in the Education Program

Active participants: 6

Release month: Nov: 1
Dec: 2
Jan - 3

Ages: 19, 21, 25, 27, 29, 33

Education status: GED graduates: 2
Need one test to finish GED: 2
ABE students: 2

Counties returning to: Barrow, Fannin, Forsyth, Gordon, Hart, Walker

Towns returning to: Adairsville, Blue Ridge, Cumming, Lafayette, Royston, Winder

Technical colleges: Athens Tech, Lanier Tech, GA Northwestern Tech, North GA Tech

Chapter 6

2017

**Put Your Seatbelts On!
Major Education & Prison Reform Are
Happening in Georgia!!!**

It's not quite 2017 yet, but groundwork has been being laid for generations and you are going to be amazed at what you see!!!! Sit back and watch, or better yet, step up and help.

Done for now,
8:00 am, December 31, 2016
Linary Kingdon

You are welcome to have this for free . . . or feel free to make a donation to Achieve Greater Success. Achieve Greater Success is a 501(c)3 organization. Your donation is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

There is a DONATE button on Achieve Greater Success's facebook page, but it won't work until we reopen our bank account and again put a DONATE button on our website. That will hopefully all be done the first week of January 2017.