



# THE UNCLASSIFIED

NOVEMBER 2023

INTAKE MANAGER: MICHELLE AXTELL

## WELCOME TO CCIC.

For first timers, please know that we are working hard at making your stay with us as short and safe as possible. There are 10 counselors to help you. There are many moving parts to your intake process, and it might take a while to get if fully done but we want to make sure to get a clear picture of who you are and what your needs are to start you on the right path, thank you for your patience!

For the others, you know the process and we encourage you to be positive role models to the newbies in your community!

Due to staff shortages in medical and mental health services, your stay might be a little bit extended 😊.

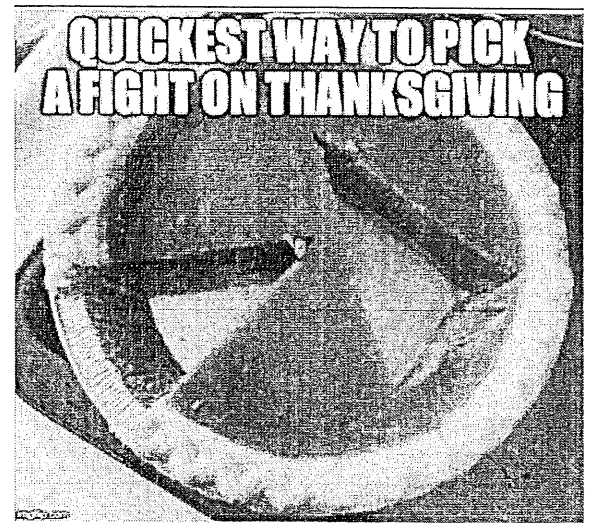
Thank you for your patience!

### Newsletter content:

- Chaplain's corner
  - Prison poetry
  - DOC messages
  - OSCI news
  - Holidays in prison
  - Inspirational reads/stories
  - Turkey jokes 😊
  - Gratitude exercises
  - Tips on meditation and self-reflection from the Human Kindness solution, we could all use some right now!
- 😊 😊

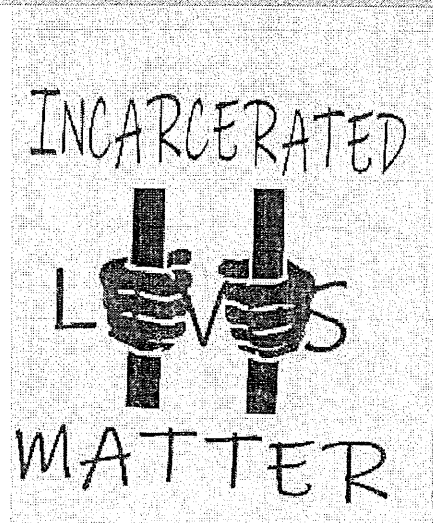
Please, submit your poems, short essays, or drawings to be included in our next newsletter, we welcome your submissions and suggestions, send them to Counselor Andretti !

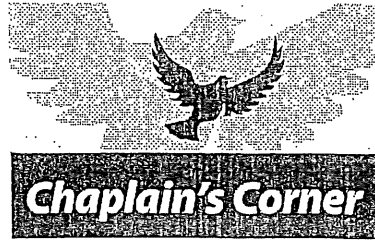
THANKS 😊



All of you matter to the intake team and we are eager to meet with you and listen to your wants, needs and goals. We might not always give you the answers you want to hear however you will be treated with respect and dignity and we thank you for your patience! Until we meet enjoy this reading material and start thinking about what purpose you would like this time in custody to serve in your lifeline. We wish you the best.

YOUR INTAKE TEAM





## Faith-Based Services and Support

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) provides AICs the opportunity to explore and practice their faith or spirituality, either individually or in a group setting. The department's Religious Services unit actively strives to present itself as open and welcoming to community faith-based groups, to establish a streamlined and consistent system, and to provide AICs with many accessible programs both inside and outside of prison.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**WEDDING RINGS:** Wedding bands are authorized through a facility's chaplain office. The ring should be mailed directly to the chaplain along with a copy of the marriage certificate or domestic partnership paperwork. Please be sure to include the name and SID of the AIC inside the package. Rings must be plain (no stones, special cuts or engravings). If the ring meets department standards, the chaplain will authorize the ring to the AIC. A record of receipt will be forwarded to the AIC's property list.

**WEDDINGS:** The Oregon Department of Corrections permits individuals to be married or have a domestic partnership ceremony within its correctional facilities, and AICs may request information about the ceremony from the chaplain at their facility. Officiators and witnesses cannot be Oregon Department of Corrections' chaplains or staff. All guests must be approved for privileged visiting. No food, cameras or special clothing may be brought into the facility for the ceremony.

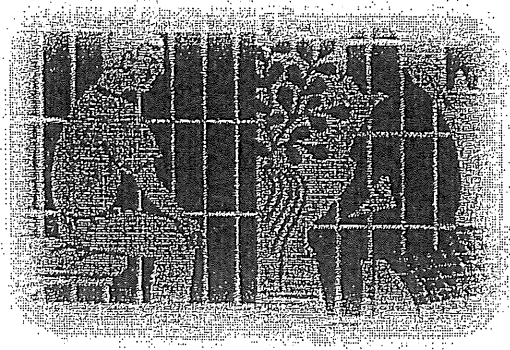
### Book Requests at CCIC

Holy scriptures and other spiritual books are available by request. Once you get to your next institution, you can ask the chaplains there to authorize holy scriptures and/or other religious books for your personal property. If you need something other than books or have general questions about Religious Services in the ODOC while you are here, you can send a kyte Chaplain Betts.

### Chapel Services

Depending on which institution you transfer to, there may or may not be religious services and activities happening based on current COVID restrictions. If you are interested in attending services, please send a kyte to the chaplains once you arrive and ask what is currently available. No services are held at Intake.

# *Prison Poetry*



*A little bit here*

*And a little bit there*

*Slowly being overtaken*

*By more and more grey hair*

*Maturity disappears; and nature disappears*

*My muscles are shrinking*

*My bones ache with the coming of old*

*And I feel myself by midafternoon*

*Feeling a touch of the cold.*

*Oh! And my memory...*

*Who will tell me what I forgot?*

*Who tries to count what is already lost?*

*The days they add up*

*And become so many years.*

*I hope I have accomplished*

*The reason I was here, Amen.*

*By AJC Freede at CEJC, 10/2022*

### Tips for Getting Through the Holidays from your peers at EOCI

Great food, thoughtful gifts, and even that one person that brings up politics at the dinner table - all of these encompass only a small portion of what makes the holidays special each year. Although we might not make it for goofy group photos, because of our incarceration, there are still many things that can be done to make the holidays easier and memorable.

**Stay in Contact with Loved Ones:** First off, keep in touch with your support group whether that is family or friends. Many individuals tend to be busier during the holiday season; so don't be discouraged if someone doesn't answer right away. Anytime you're able to speak with your friends and family is special. Scheduling specific times to call others is a great way to avoid the disappointment of a missed call. Video visits are another great avenue for scheduling meaningful time with your loved ones.

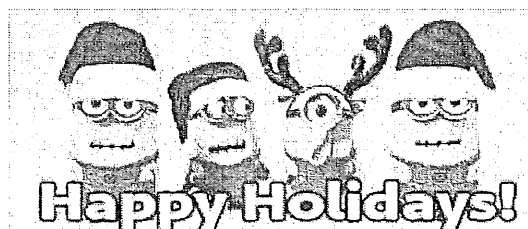
**Create a Personalized Card:** Unable to connect over the phone? Consider sending some personalized letters or cards, which may also be a more affordable option for you. Making your own holiday cards is a great way to pass the time and utilize your creative side. Whether you are experienced with drawing or a beginner who is just learning about drawing, a handmade card shows you've taken your valuable time to create something with someone specific in mind.

**Create a Holiday Recipe:** Be creative with canteen recipes! Holiday and promotional items can drastically expand what can be cooked up for your own holiday treat. Tried and true recipes are good too; however, consider spicing it up with something only available for a limited time. Who knows, it could be something you would like to do again in the future.

**Attend Institution Events:** Take advantage of the unique events scheduled at your institution. These activities can vary but each offers a small change in routine that won't always be available. This may be your only opportunity to participate in certain activities, as they might not be offered again in the future.

**Make Goals for The New Year:** Start early on your New Year's Resolution. Instead of waiting, make it a goal to establish a good habit by New Year's Day. If you're anything like I am, having an attainable goal laid out helps accomplish the task. Not to mention having something to focus on makes time seem to fly.

No matter how you spend your holiday, positive thinking, and good health and sleep habits will make time go easier. If you can learn a thing or two or make some great memories during this time all the better.





# Financial Services

## Informational Briefing

### Adult in Custody (AIC) Trust Accounts

<p>General Spending Account</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary spending account for AICs Eligible deposits are received into this account ○ <i>Examples:</i></li> <li>• <i>Deposits received from friends/family, and PRAS</i> AICs use the Request for Withdrawal of Funds form (CD28) to facilitate financial transactions from the General Spending Trust Account</li> <li>• Funds in this account are not protected from debt/obligation collection or garnishment</li> </ul>
<p>Protected Spending Reserve Account</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a spending account established for AICs who receive protected money ○ <i>Examples: disability benefits for veterans, moneys received from Native American or tribal government, railroad retirement benefits, OCE Prison Industry Enhancement (PIE) Awards</i></li> <li>• AICs use the green Request for Withdrawal of Funds from Protected Reserve form (CD28P) to facilitate financial transactions from the Protected Reserve Trust Account</li> <li>• Funds in the Protected Reserve Trust Account are protected from debt/obligation collection or garnishment</li> </ul>
<p>Transitional Savings Account</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established per SB844/ORS 423.105 as a means for AICs to save funds for release from ODOC custody</li> <li>• 5% of each eligible deposit is received into the AICs Transitional Savings Trust Account until the account reaches \$500</li> <li>• AICs may elect to transfer funds into this account by submitting a transfer request form (CD1832, <i>available electronically and in paper</i>) up to \$500</li> <li>• AICs may continue a 5% deduction of their eligible deposits beyond \$500 if court-ordered financial obligations (COFOs) are satisfied</li> <li>• Funds in the Transitional Savings Trust Account are protected from debt/obligation collection or garnishment, but this is not the same thing as the Protected Spending Reserve Account</li> </ul>
<p>General Savings Account</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established as a means for AICs to save funds outside of the Transitional Savings Trust Account AICs may elect to transfer funds into the General Savings Trust Account by submitting a transfer request form (CF1832, <i>available electronically and in paper</i>)</li> <li>• Funds in this account are not available until the AIC releases from ODOC custody; an exception may be granted by the CFO or designee per OAR 291 Div. 158</li> <li>• Funds in the General Savings Trust Account are not protected from debt/obligation collection or garnishment</li> </ul>
<p>Obligated Reserve Accounts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical, Optical, Dental, Trip, Education, Religious, and Programming are accounts AICs use when there is a need to reserve funds for a good or service that meets specific criteria</li> <li>• AICs may receive deposits directly to one of these accounts from an external source</li> <li>• AICs must be approved to place funds into an Obligated Reserve Account</li> <li>• Funds in Obligated Reserve Accounts are deemed spent and therefore are not subject to debt/obligation collection or garnishment</li> </ul>

### Questions?

AICs may submit an AIC Communication form to Business Services (electronic communication option preferred & available on the tablet). Friends and Family may submit questions to [dldoctrustinfo@doc.state.or.us](mailto:dldoctrustinfo@doc.state.or.us).



# Financial Services

## Informational Briefing

### AIC Debt and Obligation Information

Debt / Obligation Type	Collection Schedule	Additional Information
Court Ordered Financial Obligation (COFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collected from eligible deposits per ORS 423.105</li> <li>10% collected for COFO(s) from eligible deposits until the transitional savings trust account reaches \$500</li> <li>Then, 15% collected for COFO(s) from eligible deposits until obligation(s) are satisfied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The department does not have case-specific information regarding COFOs; AICs are encouraged to contact the court of record regarding their COFO details</li> <li>COFOs are not the same as County and US Court filing fees. Examples of COFOs are restitution, fines, fees, &amp; child support</li> <li>COFOs will continue to collect during the Holiday Buying Period</li> </ul>
<p><i>Note: Although the transitional savings trust account is considered an obligation, funds collected are owned by the AIC. Per ORS 423.105, 5% will be collected from eligible deposits and placed into the transitional savings trust account. Funds in the transitional savings trust account are <u>not available until the AIC releases from ODOC custody.</u></i></p>		
DOC Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collected from eligible deposits</li> <li>Additionally, collections shall occur the last business day of the month per OAR 291 Div. 158 if funds are available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DOC debt includes but is not limited to debt incurred from various disciplinary fines, copy, and postage advances</li> <li>DOC debt is due upon receipt; if/when funds are not available; funds are advanced and set-up as debt</li> <li>Monthly, AICs may spend up to \$40 of the first \$80 deposited into general spending</li> <li>DOC Debt may be suspended during the Holiday Buying Period unless a new disciplinary fee is applied</li> </ul>
County Court Deferred Filing Fee Obligation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collected as funds become available</li> <li>Multiple collections may occur throughout the month</li> <li>Additionally, collections shall occur the last business day of the month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County obligations refer to deferred county filing fees</li> <li>These obligations are incurred when an AIC elects to file with the court and the court approves a deferred filing fee</li> <li>County Court fees will continue to collect during the Holiday Buying Period</li> </ul>
Initial Federal / US Court Filing Fee Obligation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collected as funds become available</li> <li>Multiple collections may occur throughout the month</li> <li>Additionally, collections shall occur the last business day of the month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial Filing fees can be collected in total and are due upon receipt</li> <li>These obligations are incurred when an AIC elects to file with the court and the court approves a deferred filing fee</li> <li>Initial Federal/US Court filing fees will continue to collect during the Holiday Buying Period</li> </ul>
Federal / US Court Deferred Filing Fee Obligation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collected around the beginning of the month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General filing fee collection amount determined by the previous month's deposit(s)</li> <li>20% of previous months deposits multiplied by the number of cases is deemed collectable</li> <li>Federal/US Court Deferred filing fees will continue to collect during the Holiday Buying Period</li> </ul>

*Note: Debt / Obligation types appear in order of collection priority. ODOC will comply with garnishment orders upon receipt.*

# Eggs to Fry: A Journey of Education and Hope at

October 13, 2023

In a remarkable collaboration, the Oregon State Correctional Institution (OSCI) has partnered with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to bring the “Eggs to Fry” program to life. This initiative marks a unique opportunity for both adults in custody (AIC) and staff to engage with nature, learn about the fascinating life cycle of salmon, and contribute to a meaningful cause.

## Setting the Stage

The buzz of excitement filled the air as the ODFW delivered essential equipment for the program. An aquarium, filter, and cooler were carefully set up in a designated area within OSCI. These would soon be the new home for approximately 130 salmon eggs, eagerly awaited to arrive later in the week.

## Understanding the Miracle of Life

At the heart of the “Eggs to Fry” program lies the miracle of life—the awe-inspiring journey of salmon from eggs to fry. Young free-swimming salmon that recently left the gravel are known as fry. Fry are typically 1-2 inches in length. In the visiting room, interactive activities are being prepared to engage and educate visitors and AICs alike. From coloring pages to informational pictures detailing salmon eggs’ development and lessons on Temperature Units (TU’s) and water temperature, the educational experience promises to be both fun and enlightening.

## A Symbol of Hope and Restoration

Salmon, with their incredible journey from humble eggs to vibrant fry, embody hope and restoration. The “Eggs to Fry” program is not only about understanding the life cycle of salmon but also about instilling a sense of responsibility towards our environment. This initiative highlights the potential for transformation and rebirth, echoing the themes of growth and change that resonate within the walls of OSCI.

## Expressing Gratitude

The success of this venture owes much to the dedication and enthusiasm of the visiting staff at OSCI. Their commitment to bringing this program to fruition and their eagerness to be actively involved, from facilitating logistics to participating in the release party, is commendable. Their dedication deserves a resounding thank you, for they are truly making a difference.

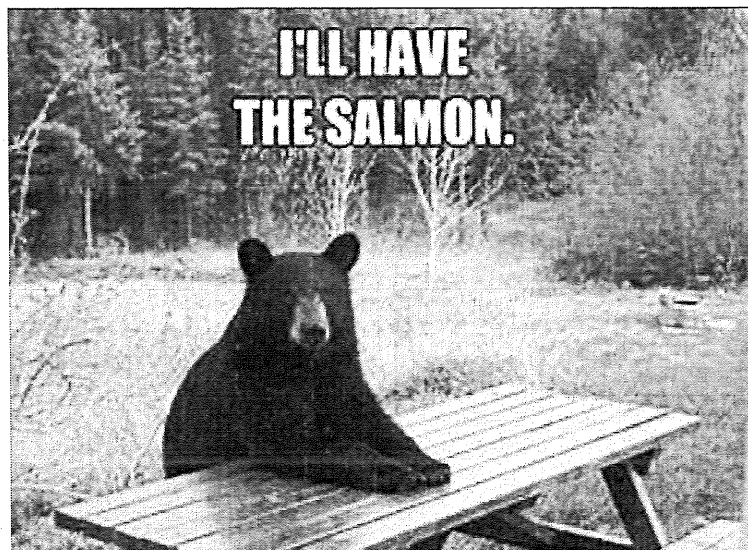
## A Collaborative Journey

The collaboration between OSCI and ODFW for the “Eggs to Fry” program is a testament to the power of partnership. It is an endeavor to create an environment where education and rehabilitation intersect. By bringing nature and education into the facility, this program offers AICs a unique opportunity for growth and reflection.

## Looking Towards the Future

OSCI eagerly awaits the arrival of the salmon eggs, marking the start of an enriching and enlightening experience. The journey from eggs to fry is not only about the salmon’s life cycle; it’s a metaphor for growth, transformation, and hope. It’s a journey that resonates with everyone involved, fostering a sense of empathy and understanding.

The “Eggs to Fry” program at OSCI is a beacon of hope, illuminating the possibilities of positive change, even within the confines of a correctional facility. Stay tuned as we follow the progress of this incredible journey and celebrate the release of these salmon fry back into the wild, marking a symbolic reintegration and a newfound sense of purpose.





# My First Thanksgiving in the State Penitentiary by Joseph Beer

An unexpected lesson in the power of generosity



**I**t might not be the Plymouth Colony pilgrims and the Wampanoag tribe, wildfowl and popcorn, but my first Thanksgiving in a state prison had a few echoes of that famous feast.

Seven years ago, I was 19, fresh upstate, and didn't know nothing about anything. My commissary account — the money I'd use to purchase approved food and cosmetic items biweekly — was virtually nonexistent. Every money order my family sent was diverted towards “surcharges,” or various administrative fees connected to my conviction. My monthly 35-pound food package from home was long gone. Bottom line: I was broke. With Thanksgiving just a few days away, my holiday plan was to walk through the frigid mountain air from my cell to the mess hall to choke down whatever provisions New York State would provide for lunch and bring back a few bologna sandwiches for dinner.

I was more fortunate than some in that I worked in the mess hall. Oftentimes when we were finished serving the other inmates (approximately 800 people), the workers were allowed to split up the leftovers. One day, with the holiday approaching, I returned to my dorm with a few spare slices of pizza in my possession. As I walked into the dorm, an older dude, known as KB, waved me over to where he was sitting. The Patriots were destroying the Jets as we spoke.

“That pizza would sure be good with some pepperoni and extra cheese,” KB said casually to his friend sitting next to him. Then he turned to me. “Check it,” he said. “I’m doing a little meal for Thanksgiving. I’ll throw you a bowl of food for two slices of pizza.”

I stood there contemplating the offer. Should I give up guaranteed food for a vague promise that might or might not pan out? Then again, while the pizza was one of the better prison offerings, it was still just mess hall food. The real risk was that KB might front — in other words, fail to keep his word. That would be a clear sign of disrespect, with negative consequences for my standing among my peers.

I hesitantly took the deal and handed over the pizza.

A few days later, turkey day finally arrived. My family’s kitchen is always a hectic place on Thanksgiving, but it’s nothing compared to what I encountered in the prison kitchen that morning, where 60 people shared a single stove. It looked like complete chaos, but there was a method to the madness. Everyone who was fortunate enough to have a package from home, or commissary food, pooled their items. People started cooking at 6 a.m., working in self-organized teams. Some groups consisted of up to 10 people. Two guys manned the stove, while two others prepped whatever ingredients would be cooked next.

By lunchtime, the feast was taking shape. Already, tables were lined with buckets of rice, some perfuming the room with a coconut aroma, others just as enticing with the addition of frijoles. One table was adorned with a garbage bag filled with macaroni salad and a giant spherical Boar's Head turkey breast. Another was piled with rows of crab sticks and fish cakes. With nothing to contribute, I took in the scene — no KB in sight — and kept walking. I tramped down that hill, ate what was in the mess hall, and got my four slices of bread and bologna, as planned.

After I returned from chow, a few fellow inmates took pity on me. Into my bowl went a big slice of mac and cheese, a mound of fried rice, some stuffing and collard greens, and several slices of turkey. I took my chair into the small TV room and sat down to watch a movie. Hours passed, and suddenly I heard a loud knock on the window. KB motioned for me to come over to the cooking area. "Where your bowl at?" he asked. Uh oh.

My third meal of the day consisted of steamed cabbage, coconut rice, and yams, along with fish cakes and fried chicken.

"I threw in some crabby patties," he said. "Let me know how it came out."

Speechless, I took a bite. It was amazing.

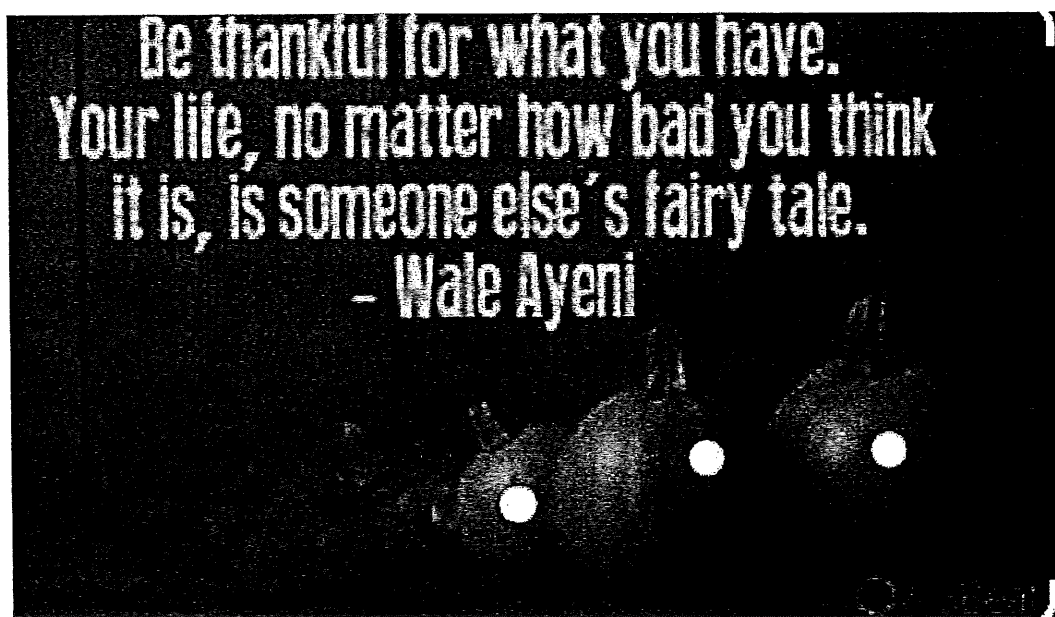
I went to sleep that night with a full belly — a rare feeling in a place where I routinely went 14 hours with just four slices of bread to hold me over.

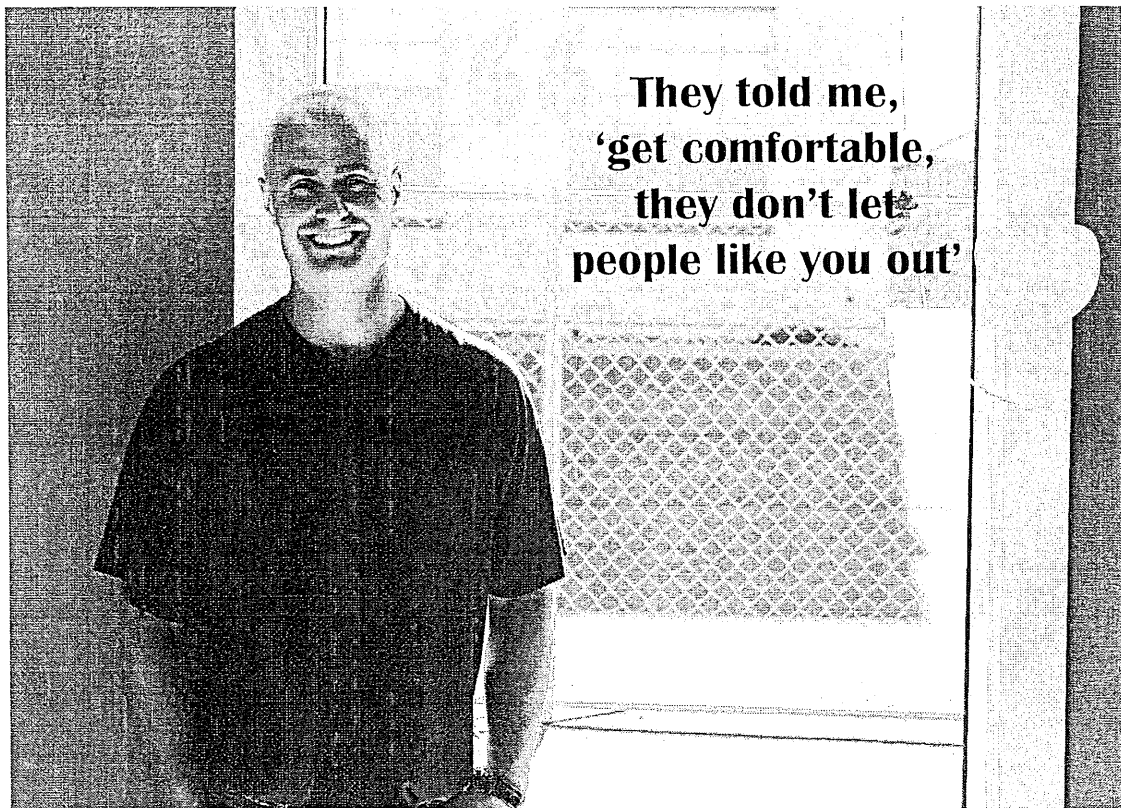
Thanksgiving really changed for me that night. It was the first time I really understood, on a personal level, how powerful generosity could be.

I eventually learned how to cook and began organizing my own Thanksgiving meals in prison, whenever I was able to, pooling resources with my fellow inmates and spreading out the good fortune like others had taught me. “Thanksgiving is big for me in the streets,” another inmate, Dondre Riddick, told me as we cooked up our plans for 2018. “My whole family gets together. But they ain’t here right now, so we got to *make* a family and do it big.”

That’s exactly what we did: BBQ chicken, mac and cheese, coconut rice, turkey, yams, seafood salad, collard greens and cranberry sauce. It took hours to prepare, but it was well worth the effort. And everyone was eager to share — especially with guys who, like me seven years before, had nothing to give. In the end, we fed at least 20 people. As we sat and watched football, a fellow NYU student and good pal, Aunray Stanford looked towards me. “Yo, that BBQ chicken was fire,” he said.

I flashed him a grin. “I ain’t gon lie,” he added, voicing a sentiment that would have been familiar to the participants in that first Thanksgiving feast. “I feel mad good inside giving away all that food.”





THE ECHO INTERVIEWS

## Get Uncomfortable

What it is Like to be Denied by the Parole Board:  
An Interview with Brian “Grimace” Hardegger

Written by Phillip Luna

**W**hen I came to prison I thought, 'I'm going to die here.' The old timers told me, 'get comfortable they don't let people like you out.' And the cops would tell me, 'get comfortable they don't let people like you out.' Everyone told me I would never leave." This is one of the first things Brian "Grimace" Hardegger tells me when I interview him, and it's what resonates most. Brian is a lifer, sentenced when he was barely 17 years old – nearly 23 years ago. He was one of 73 juvenile lifers contacted for early parole review as part of Senate Bill 1008 – an opportunity that Brian was ill-prepared for and the result of which was a denial by the Parole Board earlier this year.

But the seed of this article begins months before. It's a Thursday afternoon early in the summer. We've just finished another session of the National Career Readiness (NCRC) Prep Course – a class in which Brian is a student and I am the facilitator. He stays after to speak with the Work Programs Coordinator, Ray Peters. I didn't know Brian well prior to the start of the NCRC class – although like most people I knew of him. Brian is one of the most well-known AICs in the institution. In fact, I'd be hard-pressed to find a person, staff or AIC, that doesn't know the ashen-haired, burpee-machine that goes by Grimace. I wasn't sure what to expect of Brian the student. He's a social person, full of energy – perpetually and infectiously positive. He's what I would call *the life of the party* and what others might call a *class clown*. But a question lingered

with me – does he take this seriously? Does he want to be in the class or is this just another certificate in a folder somewhere? He struggled in the math section, which should be expected from someone who has been incarcerated since age 17. But he stuck with it and I respect that.

The subject of today's meeting, the reason Brian stayed after class, is not the NCRC program – rather that Ray has the novel idea to feature him in a newsletter article about being denied by the Parole Board. The conversation is jovial, playful banter and humor masking what is probably a painful and open wound. They joke about Brian's picture with a red "DENIED" stamp on its face as the lead-in photograph. For an outsider this may seem like some off-brand attempt at humor, but I've known my boss long enough to know when he's latched on to an idea.

Initially I decline to write the article. I've never been asked to write an article like this before. Normally for *The Echo*, we highlight success. You graduated college? You were granted early parole? Wrote a book while incarcerated? Let's interview you for the newsletter. Stories of the little man rising up against insurmountable odds and overcoming barriers to achieve the impossible are the bread and butter of a human interest piece. Everyone loves an underdog. Everyone loves a happy ending. But here, Grimace has essentially told me, *Hey, I failed at this. Do you want to interview me?* And I can't

shake some questions – *does he take this seriously? Is he sincere?* I've made a categorization of this person and it's hard to break.

Later, in one of several interviews with Brian, he'll tell me how he got his last DR nearly two and half years ago by stealing from the kitchen. *"When I got stressed, I stopped caring. I self-destructed. I didn't care about losing a job. I'll just go be a yard orderly. It's then that I realized how institutionalized I'd become. It's not normal to steal. It's not normal to not care about a job."* In this moment he describes the person I have preconceived – someone who doesn't care or take much seriously. And it's also in this moment and his incredible display of self-awareness that I realize my categorization of Brian was wrong. This is a person who cares a great deal, but perhaps lacks the means of expression.

But currently, and months prior to any interview, I hold on to my reservation. It is two months before we broach the subject of an article again.

Brian and I live on the same unit and after a few conversations he has convinced me of the value the article. It's not highlighting a failure; it's sharing an experience in hopes to better inform other AICs. He tells me, *"I just want people to learn from my mistakes."* I tell him I'll prepare some interview questions and he asks for them in writing ahead of time, so he can think about his responses. Smart.

*Continued on next page...*



We approach the subject of topics and what may be off limits. *"Honest questions get honest answers,"* he declares. My first batch of questions feels like a hostile profile – very pointed and direct. I scrap them. I come up with about ten questions that are deliberate but still open enough to invite longer responses. I write out most of them, but keep a couple to myself. I've done enough interviews to know a few well placed and unexpected questions produce a more relatable article.

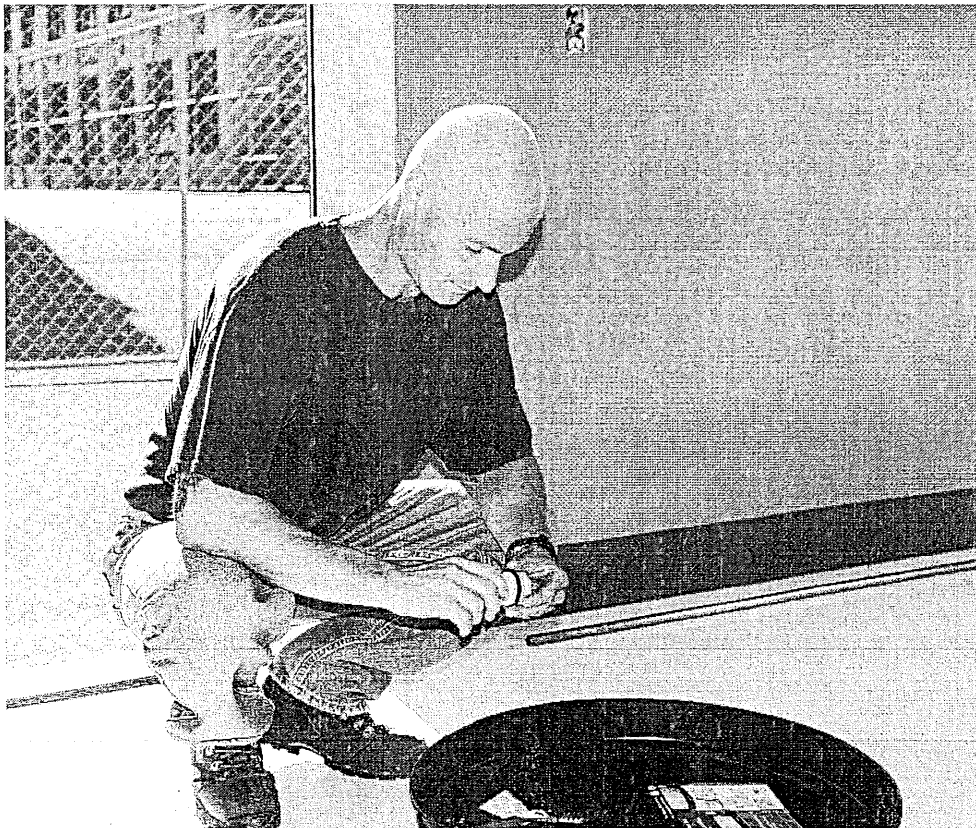
We meet at a small table in our dayroom one evening. I am expecting Grimace to take my written questions, review them, and schedule another time to discuss. Instead he sits down, reads the first question and starts answering. I'm fortunate I have a pen and paper handy.

*"When I started, I saw people down for 30 years flopped [denied parole]. Nothing mattered. No matter what programs they did. Nothing mattered."* He explains that parole was not something he considered early into his sentence and he further recounts having the perspective that the Parole

Board offered no chance for lifers. He states, *"Parole wasn't even a consideration. You're not thinking about 5, 10, 15 years away. Just right now."* But over the past few years, Oregon lawmakers have pivoted, creating opportunities for people like Brian. Opportunities he wasn't prepared for.

A central theme begins to emerge – Brian wants to share his story in the hope that his experience might influence other AICs. *"Clear conduct is huge when seeing the Parole Board,"* he says. *"When I was younger I didn't care about anything. I understand the anger. If you don't have a positive outlet, what you do early on can affect you for a long time. Find a way to accept your time and make peace with it."*

Brian's record reflects a fatalistic view of incarceration; he amassed 22 Disciplinary Reviews (DRs) in less than 23 years. And while that is significant on its own, it does not account for the numerous times he was placed in segregation under investigation. He explains, *"I was never a gang member, but affiliated. I was always getting investigated. Three to*



Hardegger preps water heater parts for Westgate.



The Hardy Boys.

68 **I've been incarcerated over half my life. That's pathetic. It's not the life I want for myself. It's not the life I want for anyone else. If I can change that for even just one person...** 99

*seven days in seg here and there. It was a hard way to do time."*

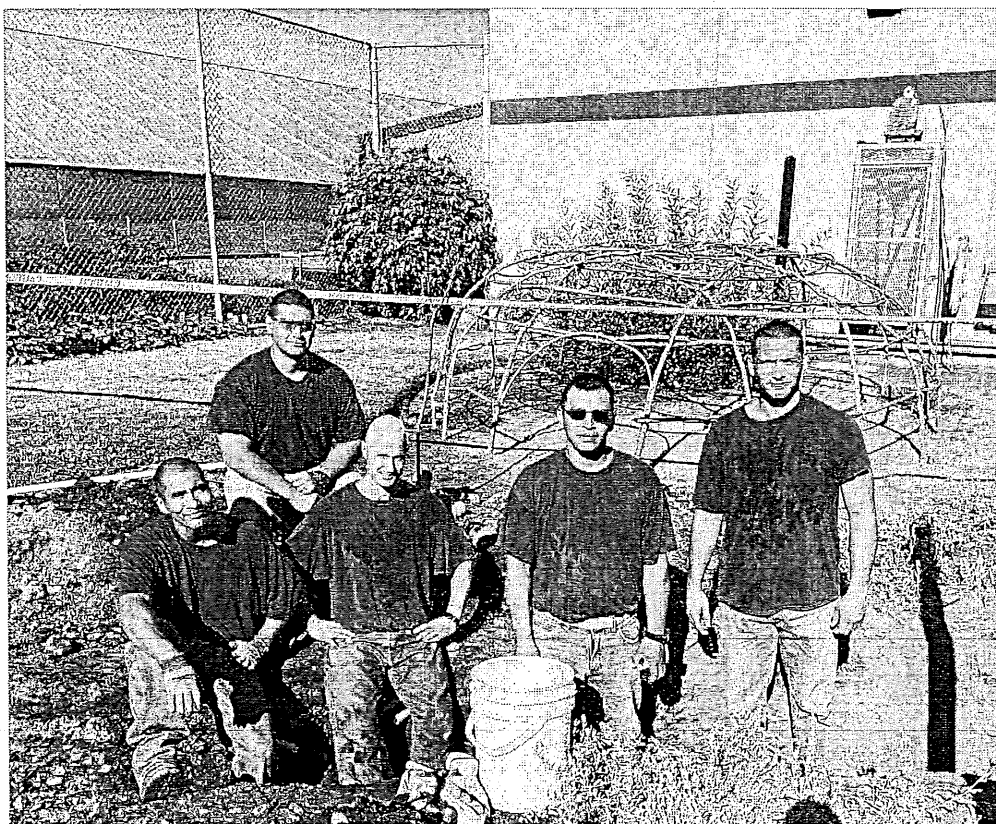
It's like a flood gate has opened. He's reading the written questions aloud and answering them while I scribble in short-hand as quickly as possible. It's loud in the dayroom and hard to keep up, but the cardinal rule of interviewing is – when the subject is talking, let them.

*"I was sitting in IMU [Intensive Management Unit] after the 2011 riot at Snake River. I was left hanging. I didn't want to do that anymore... I was tired of beating my head against the wall."* He further emphasizes, *"...there is no benefit in going to the hole. None."* Brian recognizes how difficult changing one's mindset can be and that it sometimes takes a catalyst. He believes sharing his experience

can be that catalyst for another AIC – perhaps shortening for others what was a long road for him. *"I've been incarcerated for over half my life. That's pathetic. It's not the life I want for myself. It's not what I want for anyone else. If I can change that even for just one person..."*

In Brian's view, it has been challenging to maintain social and family relationships while in prison. While these relationships play a role in Parole Board reviews, the nature and structure of incarceration creates barriers in maintaining those relationships. *"When I fell my family was there – aunt, grandma, cousins. Then they fell off after about five years. An old timer told me, 'Youngster, the first five years people will be there then start to fall off after that.' And that's what happened."* Feelings of isolation played a considerable role for Brian.

*Continued on next page...*



From left to right: Rodriguez, Molina, Hardegger, Patino, and Bell.



*One of the hardest things I've had to deal with is my grandma passing while I was in IMU. I would write her often. I sent her a Mother's Day card with a letter and got a return to sender. That was hard, knowing that she probably died alone. That was hard. I think a lot of my actions came from immaturity, loneliness, and anger."*

He shares that being incarcerated for a longer sentence can make it difficult to connect with anyone, even other incarcerated people. *"People come and go. Sometimes it's like you are just a piece in other people's time. When they leave, you feel forgotten."* It's a relatable sentiment that any AIC with a longer sentence has experienced.

Brian will have more opportunities to see the Parole Board in the future, but his past activities while incarcerated will continue to be a subject of discussion during these reviews. *"I wish earlier in my time I would've found a more positive outlet for the anger and isolation. I've found working out helps me break down and analyze situations. Working in the Physical Plant, being trusted with tools, those are good feelings. Everything is less stressful now. When you have a long set it is easy to feel left behind. Seeing people go is hard. You develop friendships. But over the past 5 to 8 years there have been a lot of people who've been positive people in my life – Cuddie, Ben, Cam, Gordo, Dougie, Seth, Cal, Timbo and others. There have also been a lot of staff also – people that saw the change and encouraged it. I really saw it when I went to the Board, how many were willing to help."*

I ask what he thinks about how many staff members were willing to help him. Often times younger AICs have an adversarial view of officers and staff members. He says, *"Yeah, I was that guy. Everything was a problem. Everything was an argument."*

He describes that having support from many sources – staff, supervisors, other AICs – only helps him achieve his goals.

I raise the topic of his recent denial by the Parole Board. He tells me the parole review process required a psychiatric evaluation, a review of his conduct history, vocational training, programs completed, and parole plan. *"They really hammer you in the psych eval. Mine took four hours, but some guys took six or seven hours,"* he states. *"They ask about everything, even from way back when you were a kid. It's very intense."* He further affirms

that his conduct over the years played the most significant role in his denial. *"When I went in front of the Board I was denied due to my past conduct and lack of programming. The way the deferral papers read are harsh, like being sentenced all over again. But they do give you feedback – they wanted me to do more programs like Pathfinders, DBT, drug and alcohol programming, and show more empathy."*

Brian talks about the steps he has taken, and will take based on the Parole Board's feedback. He's optimistic and I make a note to follow

up on this subject. Weeks later, I'll meet with Brian's Plumbing Shop Supervisor, Allen Iverson. Iverson says, *"When he was denied parole, he came back and said, 'this is what they asked me to do.' He was just as positive as ever. He always has a positive outlook."*

After the initial interview I have several pages of notes. We decide it would be best if I came out to his work and took a few photographs for the article.

Brian started an apprenticeship in the Plumbing Shop three months ago and has been working in the shop since April of 2022. He is working towards a license, which Shop Supervisor Iverson estimates will take five years to complete. In total the certification takes 7700 hours of on-the-job experience and 517 hours of class time.

**I wish earlier  
in my time I  
would've found  
a more positive  
outlet...**

On the morning of Wednesday September 7, I join Brian, his co-worker Carter Bell, and one of their Shop Supervisors, Shawn Hardiman, as they work on the new Westgate building. I've met with Brian several more times over the last month, following up on lines of questioning. We walk down the breezeway towards the Westside and I ask him if he enjoys this line of work. *"I've found my sense of purpose,"* he says. *"Everyone should find something positive to devote yourself to."*

At the worksite, the first thing I notice is Hardiman calls him by his first name - not Brian, but Grimace (a moniker he picked up in 2003 on account of being heavier-set at the time). And he calls his boss Shawn, not Mr. Hardiman. They have inside jokes. They call themselves the Hardy Boys in reference to their similar last names. They look like a couple of guys just working a job, and if they were wearing different clothes it would be difficult to know who was whom. I'm surprised most by the investment, the genuine interest Hardiman seems to have in Brian's success.

The following week I speak with Brian one last time and introduce the subject of why he is incarcerated in the first place. I know he is here for taking a life, but it's not something we have covered so far. When I bring up the subject he answers before I can finish the question. *"Not a day goes by that I don't regret it. That I don't think about the people I've affected. When the board denied me they said I don't have enough empathy for others. It made me sit back and reflect on what I've done and how it affects people."* Brian says, "In

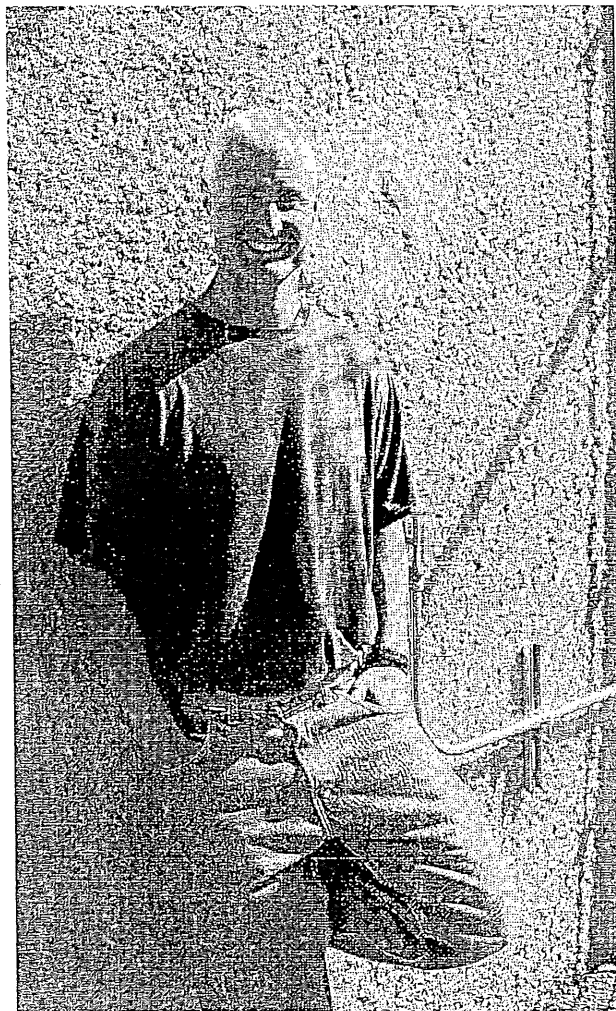
*prison we are taught to suppress emotions - to stuff them down, bottle them up. I don't always know how to express my emotions. I know I have it in me to get out and do well, but you can't untake a life."*

As the final step I meet with one of Brian's other Supervisor in the Plumbing Shop, Allen Iverson.

*"The amount of time he has been in prison from how old he was when he came to prison is astronomical,"* says Iverson. He further describes Brian as being energetic and always positive and someone who does take his work seriously. But mostly I want to know motive - why do Iverson and Hardiman take such a vested interest in their worker? Iverson answers, *"That's part of my job, to make him uncomfortable. To push him out of his comfort zone. That's how people grow. If we don't challenge them they won't be prepared for experiences that life has to throw at them. They won't know what to do with challenges."* It's a full circle moment and makes me wonder, what would an impressionable 17 year old Brian Hardegger be like now, at age 39, if he had someone like Iverson or Hardiman to push him out of his comfort zone? Instead he

had influences that told him the opposite, to *get comfortable*. From my perspective the only certain thing is - telling someone to get comfortable in prison is bad advice. Be uncomfortable. Change your mindset. Learn a trade. Educate yourself. As Grimace says, *find your sense of purpose*. Do the things that are hard to do because becoming institutionalized is easy. Too easy.

Grimace is due for another parole review in 2026.



# Gratitude Exercises

**Gratitude** means appreciating the good things in life, no matter how big or small. Making the practice of gratitude a regular part of your day can build happiness, self-esteem, and provide other health benefits.

## Gratitude Journal

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Every evening, spend a few minutes writing down some good things about your day. This isn't limited to major events. You might be grateful for simple things, such as a good meal, talking to a friend, or overcoming an obstacle.

## Give Thanks

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Keep your eyes open throughout the day for reasons to say "thank you." Make a conscious effort to notice when people do good things, whether for you or others. Tell the person you recognize their good deed, and give a sincere "thank you."

## Mindfulness Walk

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Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings. You can do this by focusing on each of your senses, one at a time. Spend a minute just listening, a minute looking at your surroundings, and so on. Try to notice the sights, sounds, smells, and sensations you would usually miss, such as a cool breeze on your skin, or the clouds in the sky.

## Gratitude Letter

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Think about someone who you appreciate. This could be a person who has had a major impact on your life, or someone who you would like to thank. Write a letter that describes why you appreciate them, including specific examples and details. It's up to you if you'd like to share the letter or not.

## Grateful Contemplation

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Remove yourself from distractions such as phones or TV and spend 5-10 minutes mentally reviewing the good things from your day. The key to this technique is *consistency*. Think of it like brushing your teeth or exercise—it should be a normal part of daily self-care. This technique can be practiced as part of prayer, meditation, or on its own.

## Gratitude Conversation

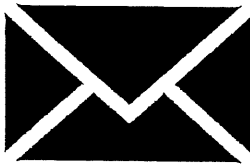
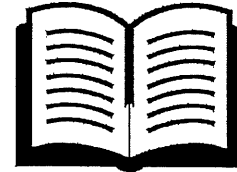
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With another person, take turns listing 3 things you were grateful for throughout the day. Spend a moment discussing and contemplating each point, rather than hurrying through the list. Make this part of your routine by practicing before a meal, before bed, or at another regular time.

# Ejercicios de Gratitud

## Diario de Gratitud

Cada noche, escribe cinco cosas buenas del día. Las cosas no tienen que ser profundas; pueden ser tan sencillas como “un buen almuerzo,” “hablar con un amigo,” o “superar algo difícil.”

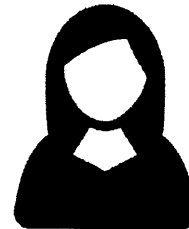


## Escribe una Carta

Piensa en alguien quien ha tenido un gran impacto en tu vida, alguien a quien le agradeces, o alguien quien te gusta tener en tu vida. Escribe una carta con las razones para que le agradeces, y enviásela.

## Visita a Alguien quien te Agradeces

Visita a la persona quien te agradeces. Puedes leer la carta o simplemente decirle porque le agradeces.

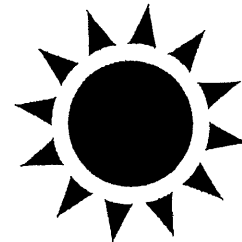


## Diga “Gracias”

Durante el día, date cuenta de razones para decir “gracias.” Trata de reconocer las cosas normales que alguien hace que no notas normalmente, como un compañero quien trabaja bien, o un amigo que te apoya.

## Toma un Paseo de Gratitud

Toma un paseo y date cuenta de los alrededores. Puedes darte cuenta del olor de las flores, de un edificio lindo, o de una brisa calmante. Toma unos minutos para enfocarte en cada una de tus sentidos para sentirte cosas nuevas.



**“You always have a choice. Even when it doesn’t seem like there is a choice.”**

Sunny, 2016



**Reflection**

Take a moment to check in with your body. Try to locate your seat of power - the part of you where goodness, light, and dignity are stored. Place your hand on top of it.

Remember, your seat of power belongs to you and only you. It will always be yours, and no one can ever take it away. It’s up to you to use it.

**Questions**

What is a choice you made that you are proud of?

What can make it difficult to make the right choice? Why?

Reflect on your seat of power. Where does it come from and how can you use it to help yourself and others?

**“The best thing is to show them and prove it, instead of trying to tell them, and that takes time... maybe years. You do that by how you live your life from here.”**

Gabe, 2017

**Reflection**

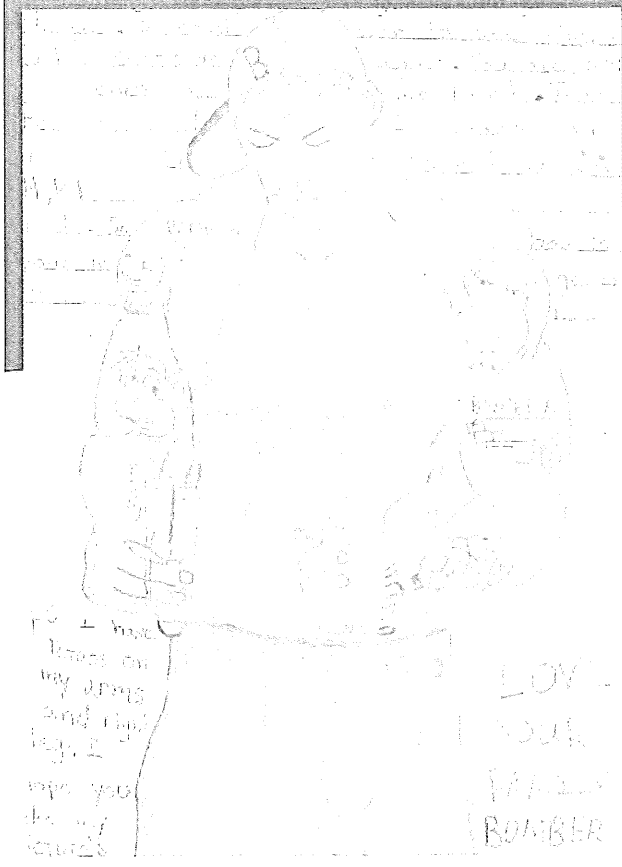
Take a moment to stretch. Extend your arms or legs, however this looks for you. Picture yourself preparing for a marathon. The hard work you put in doesn’t show results overnight. It takes time. Trust in what you’ve already accomplished. As you move forward this week, think about how you want to run the marathon of your life. Don’t be discouraged. Keep stretching...

**Questions**

What have you worked the hardest in your life to achieve? How did you get there?

What changed in your life once you reached this goal?

Reflect on a future goal and how you can make it happen.

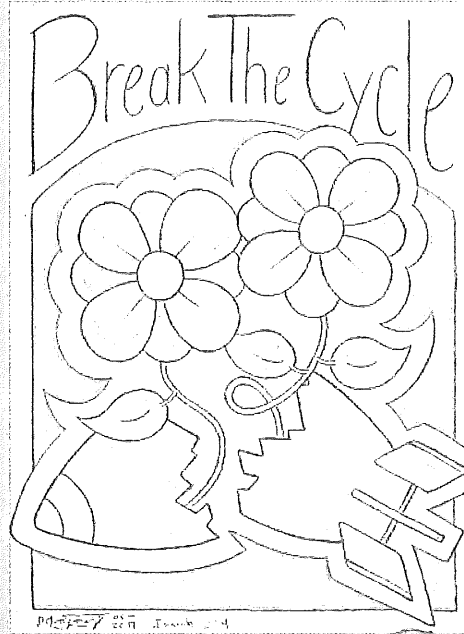


“Each person can find enlightenment within himself - but like the fortune cookie, you can't get the message until you are willing to break the shell.”

JM, 1981

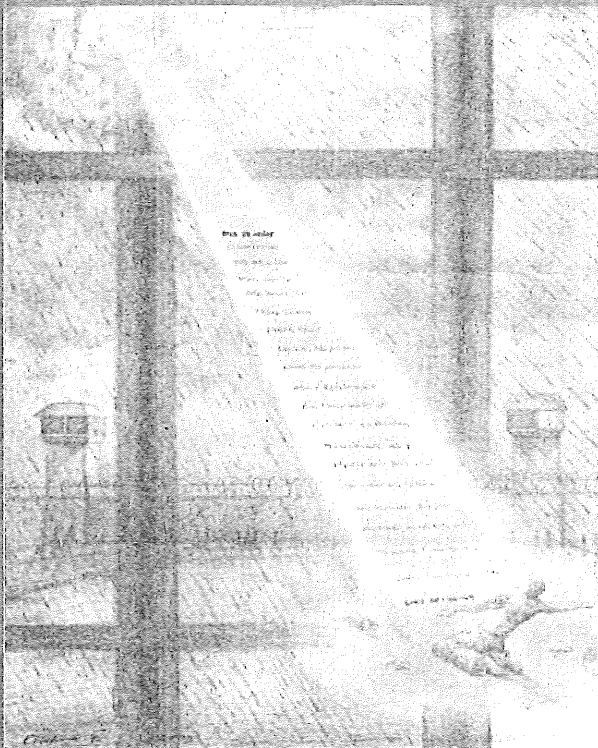
**A Reflection on a Seed**

Picture yourself planting a small seed in a harsh environment, such as a desert or a crack in the sidewalk. Think about the inner strength this seed must draw upon for it to bloom into a beautiful flower, plant, or tree. As you continue to grow this week, remember the same potential that lies within each seed lies within you.



**Questions to Consider**

- How have you grown despite harsh conditions?
- What wisdom have you gained from difficult experiences?
- How can you share that wisdom with others? How have you already?



**Questions**

- What is your favorite memory of being outside in the sunshine?
- What helps you move forward in hard times?
- Reflect on a hard time in your life when you unexpectedly found moments of light. What did you learn?

**Reflection**

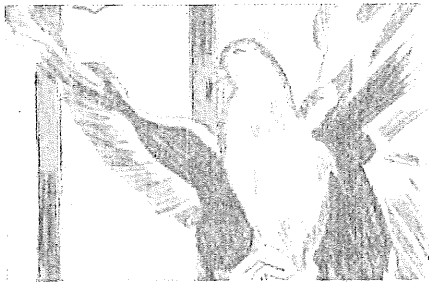
Close your eyes and imagine your body washed in warm light. As you feel the warmth on your back, picture your shadow at your feet. Welcome the shadow as part of you. Don't let it cloud your vision. Shadows only exist because of light. This light also exists within you and will always be part of you.

“Get mad and cry and all that, and then pick yourself up and keep stumbling toward the light.”

Gabe, 2016

**Practice**

Imagine your body as a strong oak tree. Your feet are its roots, your torso is its trunk, and your thoughts are branches touching the sky. Think of the strength and stability a tree must have to weather even the worst storms. Remember that you, like a mighty oak, are powerful. As a tree's power comes from its roots, your power comes from within.



**“They claim that they have taken your power, but it’s not true. No one can take that power away unless you give it away.”**

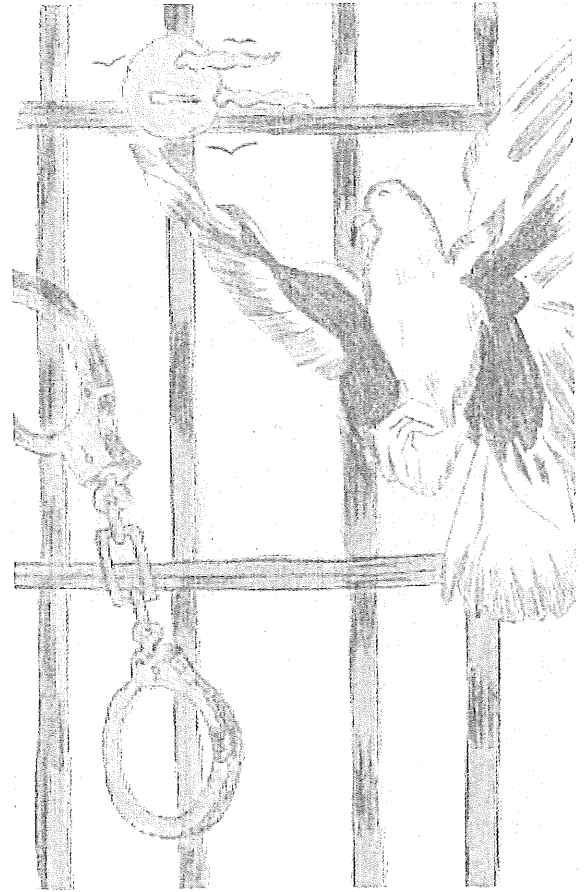
Sunny, 2022

**Questions**

Have you ever been surprised by your inner power? Why?

How have you used your power for good?

Reflect on the meaning of inner power. How is it different from other forms of power?



**“Just when you need it most, something you had all along makes itself known and reinstates that flicker of hope.”**

Z, 2019

**Reflection**

Imagine yourself walking in a cave. You begin to worry because it is dark and you cannot see. You stand still because you are scared, but something within you pushes you forward. As you walk in the dark, you see a flicker of light. Aha! Feeling a mix of fear and hope, you keep walking. As you walk out of the cave, you see a waterfall. You notice different colors reflecting on the waterfall. Suddenly, you are calm. You are not afraid anymore.

**Questions**

What role has fear played in your life?

What fears do you hope to overcome?

Reflect on a time when listening to yourself helped you overcome a fear or challenge.

**“The lunatic committee (those internal voices of criticism of myself and others) is alive and well, yet it doesn’t need to get a vote in my choices.”**

Tall Tom, 2019



**Reflection**

Close your eyes and imagine you are walking down a spiral staircase. At the bottom, you find a box filled with negative labels about yourself. Look through these labels and discard them one by one. Then, turn around and walk up the stairs. Look around. You are now surrounded by positive labels about yourself.

Jimmy, 2023

**Questions**

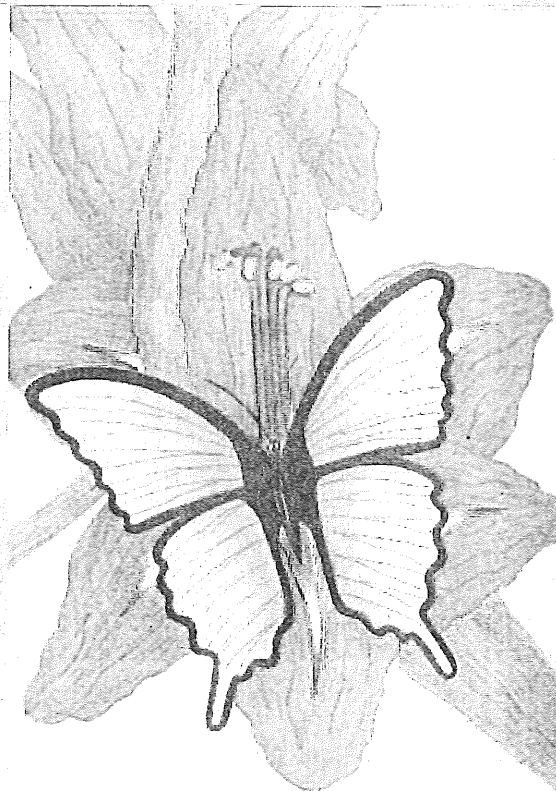
What makes it easy to be kind to yourself? What makes it hard to be kind to yourself?

Reflect on a time when you were brave enough to choose kindness despite being hurt or afraid.

**“As my understanding of the self grows, my love for others, as well as myself has also blossomed.” E, 2018**

**Reflection**

Take a moment to look at yourself in the mirror. Remember no one is born with deep self-love—it must be nurtured. Say “I love you” as if you were saying it to the person you love most. Now say it again, addressing it to you, and only you. Know that nourishing your relationship with yourself also strengthens your bonds with others. You deserve to love yourself and to share that love with others.



**Questions**

What is a strength of yours that you were surprised to discover?

What is something you’ve learned about yourself that you want to share with others? Why?

Reflect on a time when you showed yourself love. How did you feel?



## ORIGIN OF THANKSGIVING IN THE US

- In 1578, explorer Martin Frobisher was believed to be the first to celebrate Thanksgiving in Canada for surviving his journey from England. Some believed that explorer Samuel Champlain held Thanksgiving celebrations with the Natives Americans in New France during the 1600s.
- By the fall of 1621, only half of the Pilgrims, who had sailed on the Mayflower, survived. The survivors, thankful to be alive, decided to have a Thanksgiving feast. The Plymouth Pilgrims were the first to celebrate Thanksgiving.
- The Pilgrim leader, Governor William Bradford, organized the first Thanksgiving feast in the year 1621 and invited the neighboring Wampanoag Indians to the feast.
- The first Thanksgiving feast was held in the presence of around ninety Wampanoag Indians and it lasted three days.
- President George Washington issued the first national Thanksgiving Day Proclamation in the year 1789 and again in 1795.
- Sarah Josepha Hale, an editor with Ladies' Magazine, started a Thanksgiving campaign in 1827. Due to her efforts, in 1863 Thanksgiving was observed as a day for national thanksgiving and prayer.
- Abraham Lincoln issued a 'Thanksgiving Proclamation' on October 3, 1863, and officially set aside the last Thursday of November as the national day for Thanksgiving. Before President Lincoln made this happen, each president used to make an annual proclamation to specify the day when Thanksgiving would be held.
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt restored the last Thursday of November as Thanksgiving Day in the year 1939. He did so to make the Christmas shopping season longer, which would stimulate the economy.
- Congress passed an official proclamation in 1941 and declared that Thanksgiving would be observed as a legal holiday on the fourth Thursday of November every year.

## Turkey jokes

- Who doesn't eat on Thanksgiving? A turkey — it's always stuffed.
- Why did the turkey start a band? He had drumsticks!
- What sound does a space turkey make? Hubble, hubble, hubble.



- What do you call a running turkey? Fast food.
- What happened when the turkey got into a fight? He got the stuffing knocked out of him.
- Why do turkeys lay eggs? Well, if they threw them, they would break!

