



“Do
unto
others
as you
would
have
them
do
unto
you”...

The
Golden
Rule

Prisoner's Thoughts in an Endless Day

My life in prison is oftentimes a tedious life which one day blends with another, one week merges with the next, month after month, year after year, until it's all just one long, endless existence. And occasionally, I am compelled to ask what meaning can be derived from this perpetual state of being- what's the essence of this continuous stream of diverse thought that courses through my mind each wakeful moment.

Throughout my first year as a prisoner, my mind was preoccupied with thoughts about the heartbreaking tragedy that had occurred in my life- a tragedy in which a friend, whom I had dearly loved, had died, a tragedy that was compounded by the thirty-year sentence I received for a crime I did not commit.

In the throws of depression, I frequently thought about the travesty of justice to which I had fallen victim. I mused on how my public defenders, after gaining my trust by asserting their belief in my innocence, had used deceit and betrayal to dispose of my case. I also reflected on the prosecutors and their investigators, who had buried the truth of what happened beneath a pile of slanderous, discrediting propaganda and had misconstrued witnesses' statements and shaped evidence to conform to their own objectives. They focused only on attaining a conviction. It appeared that no one cared about justice.

Even God, it seemed, had abandoned me, ignoring my pleas for Him to let the truth be known.

I would burst into tears whenever I was alone, grieving for my friend who I missed so very much. I saw no reason to go on living, so I constantly contemplated methods I might use to end my life. My thoughts in those days were despairing ones.

But as time passed, many of my fellow prisoners went out of their way to offer kindness and compassion by cheerfully comforting me and lifting my spirits. I also heard personal accounts of prisoners who had suffered similar tragedies and injustices. And through various books, I learned of people who had persevered through much worse situations than mine- people such as Ruben (Hurricane) Carter, Anne Frank, Victor Frankie and others. Each inspirational story gave me new insight, meaning and purpose. My negative thinking began to change.

Now after more than six years of incarceration, I choose to focus my thoughts on the positive- envisioning the good in all things and in all people. It would be easy to “buy into” the enormous amount of oppressive negativity that permeates this prison environment, such as the separation from our loved ones, the “overkill” sentences that most of us are serving, the noise, commotion and lack of privacy, the the malevolent attitudes of both prisoners and guards alike, the lack of education or training programs or constructive activities and the sad prospect of living under these conditions for most, if not the entirety of our lives.

But I've come to realize that I can make the best of this bad situation. I envision my future as one in which I am