

Pass the Pen Project

Pass the Pen is a ongoing process-oriented collaborative creative writing project designed to encourage solidarity and empowerment among incarcerated individuals through writing.

Updated version of Pass the Pen, 2015

[Pass the pen project 2015 pdf \(https://passthepenproject.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/pass-the-pen-project-2015-pdf1.pdf\)](https://passthepenproject.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/pass-the-pen-project-2015-pdf1.pdf)

MCI Shirley Maximum Security, October 2013

We fight because our lives can only have meaning if we strive to better ourselves and the world. –
Tim M

There is no such thing as Great Men, only great challenges that ordinary people must rise to face.
– Shawn F:

Sometimes it takes great courage to face the inner fears that prevent us from doing great deeds. –
Joe L

Because out of challenges, grow miracles and still we rise, like the tide that raises all boats. – Mike
S

It has been in the low tides, boat grounded, earth with the stench of death, that we are forced to
examine what is. We find self, we find purpose... courage exposed, meaning manifested. – Ken S

The fight for forbearance is the foundation we build on with our tools we like to call perception. –
John L

With faith is a great challenge that can help win most fights and wars of the world. – Frank Q

Time is the fire in which we burn and as the fire burns we become brighter. – Scott B:

Just because you may have failed at times doesn't make you a failure and because you made
mistakes doesn't make you a mistake, but a man God created for greatness. – M.S.

Nature is the most powerful thing on Earth and human nature is the most influential force on
Earth. It is Human to want to succeed as well as natural to use the resources around you to do so.
– E.A.

Miserando atque eligendo: Lowly yet Chosen Fortitude. Vincimus = by endurance we conquer. In Strength and Struggle – Bill the Barber.

God created me very differently, to be very happy and gay, to guide others with the cloud by day and with light from the fire by night! – John M.

The essence of growth is measured through time, in order for one to grow they may first have to embrace the conditions they're in and take the "time". To ACCEPT who they truly are as a man and human being. – Aaron W.

The power in ones abilities relies on the focus of ones skill, based upon ones perceptions of what's real. – H. E.

...And so, collectively, we do our share as individuals as to make the impossible, possible asking each one to do the impossible, to bear... – Tim M.

Billerica House of Corrections, Nov. 19, 2013

I am prepared to meet my maker, although I do not think that my maker is prepared to go through the great ordeal in which it is to meet ME! – J.S

No pain is forever, but the thought of heartache could torture you for an eternity! Blood does not create family, loyalty does! – Tristan S.

Don't make the mistake not to learn, so learn from your mistake. – J.L.

Time is not being wasted, another experience is being gained. The things that come to those who wait, maybe the things left by those who got there first. If you can't see the bright side of life, polish the dull side. – D. P.

They say, "It ain't a hood story, but it's my story." I can't guarantee all Good is gonna come out the Hood, but if you heard my name In the Hood, I can guarantee it's Good. – Manny G.

MCI Norfolk, January 2014

It only gets done when you pass the pen. – B.B.

Who am I to Judge!! – Joe J.

Or who are you to judge me without considering any of the sociological factors that lead to my incarceration? Is the social system so fair between class and race, that you can properly conclude that all my decisions and circumstances were chosen? – "X"

Unchosen courses lead to undesirable circumstances that man the souls of its inhabitants. Who are they? – T.

Looking through cracked window panes,
to events of life gone past
Slipping from your fingertips,
and running life too fast –
You couldn't see in darkness,

demons blocked out all the sun.
 Time had to lock you in its grip,
 to look at what's been done.
 It came so unexpected...
 but it took you from your low.
 You knew you had to change now,
 your old self had to go.
 But can it be behind you,
 is there a clean fresh start?
 Are your eyes widely opened?
 have you a change of heart?

-2005, M.

Know your inner strength; know your own rules and play by them... – V.

Always strive to be your best in sincerity and honesty and the rest will come to you, use your experience in life to foresee when difficulty and dismay come about and try to avoid the frivolous and unfruitful conversation at all cost. – Lonnie W. 2004

A few quotes that I find interesting and thought provoking:

1. Sometimes, ones had to see evil in order to do good.
2. Knowing the consequences to your actions will prevent you from being another statistic.
3. Trust is much easier to destroy than to create.
4. We fell, so we learn how to get up.
5. "Ignorance" is the best means the devil ever considered to keep up the number of his subjects in our world

-William S.

When society as a whole, gives thought to poor and disenfranchised, then we will be better off as a society. – C.B.

The history of prisons and the law speaks for itself. If one is inclined to pick up a book and actually read (unlikeprison guards and ad... truths) – then one can readily see the pattern of stupidity, corruption and abuse. Because the system actually does protect society from a few insidious people, the sad truth of its highly questionable status remains swept under the rug. – S.M.

I would like to see more Parole's for Second degree lifers. I'm a lifer who has done 47 years on second degree life. – William B.

Use your time to better you. Don't let the time use you. Don't give up on hop, because the system wins and you look like a dope! – Russell R. "AKA" Rusty

Why knowledge is power:
 Once you acquire education,
 it can never be taken from you.
 Once you use your education,
 you will never be the same.

-James K.

I believe every man should try to make good changes within him self every day and he best way is to start with self by doing one good and positive thing that moves you toward freeing yourself from your wrong behavior. – Myls M.

I believe that in order to get what most people want, you need to do what most people won't!
-Bro B.

Society's losing its common sense to technology.
-Francisque J.

Life is simple. Simple-ness makes life difficult. –J. B.

Things are never what they appear to be, people are primary altruists. – Wayne G.

If Gays and Lesbians can co-habitate in prison, why are heterosexuals denied the companionship (access) to those they prefer? – M. R.

We need to get back to treating others as family, not as enemies, as politicians have led us to believe, when we are guilty of committing wrongs. – M.P M.

Who's the animal here? They are quick to impose but won't follow their own laws. The hurry to cuff me with no probable cause. Then they want to hold me on an excessive bail. I'm just another ghetto youth the system failed. From 013-72-7296, to W86445 to them I've always been just a number.
-Zawade K.

The totality of life matters not just this moment in time. Too many get locked up and thrown away: story of my life untold. – B. C.

If women were allowed weekend visits with their children, then why can't men be allowed weekend visits? I was a witness to this fact and I was always confused/well let's say curious about why?
-Richard E.

Even though my negligence caused me to take a life my life is still of great value, therefore I now live my life in honor of the one taken. – One Love Brian A.

Judge not all equally.
-Dweed

Why is Doug weed giving his thoughts – D. L.

You can only correct what you are willing to truthfully confront. – Jamal H. S.

Do you have any idea what corrections is? What they are supposed to do? What they really do? – John S.

Why is more money spent in Mass on Corrections instead of education for our children. – John S.

Why does the DOC Union dictate to the Commissioner's Office and the Governor, instead of the Governor and Commissioners Office dictating to them. – John S.

Why do PA with 40 thousand inmates and MA with 10 thousand inmates have the same billion dollar budget? Starting salary for MA DOC C.O's 70K; PA starting salary 40-45K. – John S.

I was once told by a corrections employee that after a judge drops the gavel and pronounces the sentence, that is when the punishment should end and rehabilitation should begin. Sadly most of D.O.C. personnel tend to deal with prisoners as though they have been sent to prison not as punishment but to be punished. – J. Louie J.

A DOC employee is someone who sold their morality for a steady paycheck and pension. – Carnell H. Senior

To love is not a choice,
to not love is!
-Shield W.

When a child misbehaves, it is the behavior we abhor. We still love the child. It is what was done that we don't like. Why does this change when we achieve adulthood? Why all the hate? – Lee A.

Believe it or not, resolution is not defined by restitution. –Quota M.

Saints have a past and sinners desire a future. – Larry L.

Nothing changes if nothing changes. – P.G.

MCI Framingham, November 2014

Waking up is sometimes hard, but I don't do it alone anymore. – Robin Cook

My family here has blessed me with love unconditionally. – Robin Perry

I am so grateful to go to sleep in a bed compared to sleeping under a bridge. – Shine

Being part of Pass the Pen is great! – Rita

It doesn't rain forever, even Alaska has a summer. – Robin Lopes

No matter what the circumstances, take it to the hoop. – Leezie N.

We are strong together. – Elizabeth H.

Always wonder who you are. – Nancy

Even when I shower, I never feel clean. – D.D.

We are so blessed and sometimes we take it for granted. – Hazel W.

If it wasn't for prison, I wouldn't be alive. – Paula S.

The moon tonight is beautiful, God is good! – Pat L.

“Fully Alive” is a program here that makes me alive. – Nikky S.

My name is Kerrin M. and I am thankful for friends like R.C. – K.M.

I met the love of my life in prison, we married. It's been 10 years and I finally leave in 42 days. – Nancy A.

In 32 yrs I haven't and won't let this place steal my heart. – Debbie M.

Does anyone realize what life without parole means? How do you hold it down? – Sheila B.

Wow! I've earned my G.E.D. and I am now a first year Boston University student. Yeah! – Alegra C.

Can you believe I made it back? I didn't think I had another chance. – Julie

I have seen some of the most beautiful sunsets here at MCI Framingham. – Nicole L.

I just want to go home! – Lucille

My Bunkie makes my life so comfortable. – Peggie Lou

The N.E.E.D. Program is my inspiration. (training medical assistance dogs) – N.M.

We are very lucky to have the most beautiful grounds – the flowers, the trees – it is amazing! – Anne W.

Today an officer asked me how I was. – Pam

Believe it or not, MCI Framingham is my home. It has been for the last 19 years. I'm afraid of what's out there. – Joey D.

I stood up for myself today! – Mary A.

It takes all kinds to make the world go around. – M.M.

The people out there don't have a clue. – Franky

Tonight is my last night in prison after four long years. – Sue

Our foliage here is priceless! – L. Shwartz

Expectations are premeditated resentments. – E.T.

That which manifests is before us. – Tif. T.

No man is angry who feels not himself hurt. (Francis Bacon) – E.T.

Everything can be perceived positively: Although this has been a loss of time, freedom and respect, among other things, I have gained a chance to change my life, with a real understanding of the value of time, freedom and self-respect. – E.T.

A background of wrath, which can be stirred up to the murderous infernal pitch, does lie in every man. – T. Carlille

All of sudden, 10 years have gone by. –K.M.

Music is my salvation. – Helen B.

Bible Study is what gives me energy all week. – C.S.

Hearing my child's voice can compare to nothing and nothing can change or take that away. – R/

I feel like ruin is reining me. – D.D.

Sometimes "Sorry" isn't enough. Sometimes you have to actually change. – Fern

Be someone that you wouldn't mind a close member of your family marrying – R.L.

Help people the way you want to be helped. – M.Z.

Be part of the solution, not the problem. – L.N.

Are you living the kind of life you want your child to live? – O.P.

You can resolve anything by talking. – Kat.

If you and I dispute the color of the sky, would violence make either of us see it differently? – Anita

Don't let your current situation define who you are. – R.L.

The sun shines on us all at one point or another. – J.T.

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