

6-16-11  
Mindful prisoner #3  
Father's Day in Prison

- "Sure we were frequently together, but how often was I lost in thought when I could have been engaged with him."

Father's Day is a reminder of my most severe punishment - denial of face to face contact with my son. Sure we can write and phone, but the lack of day to day interaction and presence is a whole that cannot be filled. Father's Day along with Thanksgiving, birthday's and other holidays are moments of family life that are held tenderly.

The Day evokes memories of past closeness, Halloween's, hikes, moves, and games. but as quickly as the pleasant images cycle through, more anxious feelings darken the reflection. Separation, isolation settle in my stomach and emptiness grips my throat, as I remember times of the absence of my presence in M's life. Sure we were frequently physically together, but how often was I lost in thought when I could have been engaged with him. Sitting side by side, but I was miles away in my mind.

Emptiness and regret ground me in the reality of lost moments of mindfulness in the past before prison, in the present during prison, and a future that holds M's life filled with his own family responsibilities.

As I pay attention to my own feelings of loss and emptiness, I hope to connect with the loss and emptiness of M felt and feels. By skillfully using the past and the future I can develop practices now that will build my path to the future that I want: a father-son relationship that is fully attentive and mindful. By looking into the past - seeing when I was fully aware of M, and visualizing a future where mindfulness is the present, I can create a daily practice of aware communication with those around me. Building day by day as my mind seeks presence as much as it sought escape in the past.



