



Inspiration

Hope

Faith

Determination

My Quest

By Daniel Labbe

Current Events - My last Post was a perfect example of the kind of thinking that I struggle against. Such thought patterns used to pull my down into a dark pit where I would languish for days, weeks, and sometimes months. Luckily I now have the skills to get through those difficult times quickly and without as much damage as they once caused. If I was in such a pattern two years ago it may have resulted in a drastic and dangerous (self-harm) melt-down.

This is what it means to have ~~bipolar~~^{bipolar}. Whether it is genetic, neural-chemical, or learned behavior bipolar is amazingly deceptive. How I got myself out of this latest pattern of destructive thinking was I sat down and I challenged my thoughts; this is the CBT work I have written about before. Thoughts like, "Nothing I do matters; it's like I'm invisible." I asked myself, "Is that accurate?" The answer is a resounding, "Of course not!" So if that thought is inaccurate, and it is creating a negative experience for me what is a more accurate thought? I replaced the old thought with, "A lot of guys here enjoy the group I created and I am looked up to as a role model by many people. Also, I mean a lot to my family." This thought is more accurate and creates a more rewarding experience. I ~~had~~ went through this ~~process~~ process with a lot of the thoughts I was

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having. I then reminded myself that I am having this experience because ~~of~~ all the perfect conditions exist for this result, this present moment, to be occurring. The conditions for any other result do not exist. If I want a different result I need to create the conditions that will produce the desired result. No one else is going to create those conditions. It is up to me.

Finally, I ended the work by going over everything I am grateful for and all my goals and values. This gave me new ~~inspiration~~ inspiration and I am excited to say that today I am feeling great!

I hope my struggle didn't throw any of my readers off. I am grateful that I was able to share this challenging experience with you. As you can see, I still have a lot of work ahead of me, but I am so grateful for the progress I have made so far. It feels great to know that I can face these challenges that once would have had disastrous results with an arsenal of effective skills.

I hope this inspires you. The fact is we can make amazing changes within ourselves and learn the skills we need to overcome any challenge. I was once an alcoholic and drug addict, in and out of psych hospitals, countless arrests, leading a completely dysfunctional life. Despite my countless efforts to lead a better life, I kept failing. It wasn't until my mid-thirties, five or six years into my incarceration, that I was able to make a

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Major turn around in how I lead my life.

Today I am the creator and facilitator of the Mindful Living group, I am a member of Toastmaster's, I'm a facilitator for the Alternatives to Violence Program, I maintain this blog, and I'm working on creating a revolutionary personal development organization which I plan on having up and running soon after my release (See my post on LifeQuest - 3-4 posts ago). Not only that, my life is so much better these days. I feel empowered, and I experience a degree of inner freedom that I never dreamed possible - even when I wasn't in prison!

I don't care how negative or dysfunctional your background is or your current circumstances are - you have the power to create the life you want. You can overcome the challenges you face. You can enjoy life and be successful. If I can, anybody can!

I do find it difficult to maintain the level of positive energy required to lead the life of personal empowerment and inner freedom that I lead today. This is an extremely negative environment. Corruption, abuse, and the negativity of the prison population are facts ~~of~~ of life here. An attitude of victimhood reigns supreme over most inmates and outright abusive and corrupt practices are the norm for prison officials. ~~As~~ I've been beaten by C.O.'s for no reason, I've seen C.O.'s Murder

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an inmate (I was locked in my cell, I did report it), I've been and still am being denied proper medical care, and ~~because~~ ~~and~~ I am immersed in a culture of hate, violence, ignorance, insecurity, and narcissism. Every day is a struggle just not to let loose and flip-out on someone. So to work on maintaining the needed level of positive energy to lead the empowered life I lead takes up most of my time. Meditation, visualization, Mantra's and affirmations, deep breathing, and extensive reading of inspirational material are just some ways I stay sane in here. I also maintain a daily routine that includes exercise, writing, and participating in programs. Even all of this is sometimes not enough and the dark energy of this place is able to penetrate the protective shell. This is why I often ask for support. Letters in the mail (including blog comments) offer a great source of outside energy. Receiving mail is a huge energy booster because it shows that there are people - positive people - that care and support me. As of now the only regular visits I get come from my mom - thank god for her! Visits are also a great source of energy and support as are the ability to call someone.

It is amazingly hard to do what I have done in the prison environment. It is harder still to maintain the changes I've made. I believe what I've done and what I am doing is important. People need to know that change, deep, meaningful change, is possible for anybody. Also, the work I do here with the Mindful Living

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group helps a lot of guys (we had 15 guys show-up last week!). If you think what I'm doing is important, let me know! Spread the word; share this blog address with anyone you think would benefit from it. And, yes, I am shamelessly asking for your support. All the happy thoughts in the world do me ~~no~~ good if I am unaware of them. So show your support by writing a letter (yes, snail mail is okay. Promise I won't tell!) or leave a comment. Let me know what you think and share some positive energy with me. I sure could use it!

There are 2.2 million people in prison in the U.S. That's more than any other nation. Most of us are going to be released, some into your community. If you think that it's a good idea to try and help some of us, especially those of us who are working for positive change, then this is one small way you can make a difference. I need as much positive support as I can get to continue to face the challenges of leading an empowered life, and to help those around me to do the same.

I look forward to hearing from you and Happy Questing!

Today's Quote - "If I could wish for my life to be perfect, it would be tempting but I would decline, for life would no longer teach me anything." Allyson Jones

— Daniel Labbe

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