

Dear Blog,

3-20-12

Hello out there and welcome to spring. I hope your day was as inspiring as mine.

I must admit to having been caught up in "spring fever" and spending the past few days out in the sun and so have neglected to post and as such this may be a bit long as I have lots to talk about today. ☺

I love mornings in spring and summer, listening to the birds as they wake and seem to rejoice in the coming of the sun. The warm breeze blowing in my window, the sound of the morning train blowing its mournful horn for the traffic all going on somewhere outside these walls. These are beautiful sounds to me that are lost in the cacophony of prison noise once the main population wakes and fills the air with clanging doors, keys and conversations each trying to overcome the sound of the other.

I love the peace I feel early in the morning as I listen to the world begin to stir. This is how I set my mood for the day, I let the natural flow of the world as if yawns fill me, I stretch my wings, send my love out to those I care for and smile as I realize I am opening another gift - a new day.

Prison life is all about routine, everything in its place at its appropriate time. As a result those of us who have already served lengthy sentences have adapted ourselves so rigorously to these schedules that even the slightest alteration can cause major upheaval.

A good example of this is what's going on with our water right now. This facility was originally set to house between 6 and 8 hundred but we have exceeded 15 hundred and it's very crowded. This winter we saw almost no snow and as a result our well is not

full enough to keep up with the demands of 1500 people. So the administration is imposing water usage restrictions and enforcing their new policies with luggings - which means putting inmates in the hole or the orientation unit as punishment.

This is where that routine comes into play, my day is so well structured that I have yard at specific times, so I go out to exercise and get sweaty, for me it's the morning yard time that's perfect for this, so it's been my practice every day for more than 20 years to go out, exercise, then come in and shower before lunch.

But now the showers are off limits till 1:30 in the afternoon, and even washing in my sick is forbidden. That might not seem like too big a deal, but remember I share a very small cell with another man, and if I stink

I'm sharing it.

This is already creating problems for some of the less flexible inmates, and it's not even summer yet. ☺

Yeah, it's a bad situation but to be fair I don't blame the administration for the lack of snow. I do think they need to reconsider housing so many inmates in a facility that clearly is unable to safely or adequately do that job. But for the short term we inmates have to bite the bullet and find ways to keep the routine working while also being flexible enough to adapt to these inconveniences that will come into play.

Hey Chinchillas roll in the sand to keep clean - might work. 🐹

I make light of it because humor has kept me grounded in here, but it is a fairly serious situation. We are restricted to specific shower times, no hand washing clothes or personal dishware, no bird baths in the sink, we have been eating

meals on styrofoam plates (which leads to much smaller portions) because they (admin) do not want to use water washing dishes.

Even the menu has been altered to serve foods that need less water to prepare. This will definitely be a hard summer for those of us stuck in our routine.

But I also think it will be good for a lot of us as well, Shaking up my routine will require more flexible thinking, more creativity and it definitely makes me more aware of the psychology of prison.

It's very easy to get caught up in how difficult my day is but the reality is that I am still able to get through the day with only minor inconveniences. I am not in jeopardy of being evicted, (I only wish) I will be fed and if I have a medical emergency I will be seen.

When I compare that to the thousands in Japan still trying to

recollect their lives after the recent disaster they suffered and I see their resolve and resilience I am reminded of people all over who have overcome so much. The human spirit is amazing. When each of us is faced with a hardship it feels as though it's more serious because we are in it yet it's in our overcoming these hurdles that show us in our best light.

Something I read a long time ago seems to fit - "for every adversity there is within it the seed of an equal or greater benefit."

So rolling in the sand seems a minor sacrifice when I consider others who face a much harsher struggle.

The morning is definitely my favorite part of the day, the music of the world waking, greeting the rising sun pregnant with possibilities I am thankful for the gift of each new day.

I encourage all of you to enjoy each and every day, live your lives with love and happiness because life itself is an amazing gift.

before I close — I have another blog site with artwork you are welcome to see at Soaringhand.com Find your seeds wherever they are and nurture them, today will be tomorrow much too quickly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in an oval. The name appears to be "Daniel".