



The
Compassion
Revolution
is
Evolution!

MyQuest

By Daniel Labbe



Quote of the Day: "Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tide, and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love. Then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire." Teilhard de Chardin

Meditation - When I first came to prison, nine years ago, I thought there was no way I would survive. I hated everyone: the staff, other inmates, and myself. This was a true hell. People were mean, crude, hateful, manipulative, violent, selfish, desperate. And a whole lot more. I thought, how in the world am I going to survive another day in this hell? Every second was torture.

The truth is, I didn't. The stress, the pain, loneliness, hopelessness, and blackness of it broke me down. I ended up going to the state hospital on five separate occasions. I cut my arms and neck with a razor and in 2008 I tried to kill myself. The person I was could not survive prison.

To my disappointment ~~at the time~~ ^(at the time) my body survived that suicide attempt. This was the time of rebirth. After that incident I decided to give all I had to transforming myself and my life. There was no other choice. The life I had before the suicide attempt was no longer an option. It was just too painful, too full of hate, anger, desperation, and dysfunction. I had dealt with those emotions all my life and it just wasn't going to be an option anymore.

The next few years took me on an amazing journey.

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I ate self-help books like they were potato chips. I explored religion, myth, psychology, and philosophy, and I began a meditation practice. Today... life is an extraordinary mix of joy, sadness, beauty, tragedy, and deep, rewarding purpose. I love life today. I'm no longer on psych meds (over two years now), and I created my own self-help meditation group called Mindful Living.

You may be wondering, well isn't prison life still hell? My answer: NO. It's tragic, chaotic, violent, and full of mystery, but it isn't hell. I think it was Milton who wrote "It is the mind that makes a heaven of hell and a hell of heaven," or some such thing. Also, the Buddha said, "We are what we think... with our thoughts we make our world."

Prison itself hasn't changed, yet it is no longer a hell. The reason for this? I believe a huge part of it is that as a result of my meditation practice and efforts at personal growth I have learned Compassion. I no longer live with hateful animals or ignorant punks. Instead I live with fellow humans who are deeply suffering the effects of a painful life.

When I first came to prison if someone behaved in a crude or violent way or was disrespectful I would think "What an asshole!" Now such behavior sparks an interest, a desire to look deeper. I inevitably find that everyone is just hurting and have found their own ways to find relief - productive or unproductive. The pain most people in prisons hold inside is massive. Abuse, childhood

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neglect, poor education, oppression, mental illness, ~~and~~ Poverty ~~and~~ and extreme violence are just some of the causes of the pain. ~~that~~ Desperately, and unskillfully, seeking relief from this pain is the cause behind so much of the crime you see and hear about. Men and women who hurt so deeply, yet were never taught, or never trusted, healthy coping skills, healthy ways to get needs met and to deal with the enormous pain. This is the cause of all unproductive behavior. Not "evilness." Not being "a bad seed." Not even being an "asshole."

When I saw this in myself I was able to see the truth of it in everyone. This isn't to say that ~~that~~ people who commit crimes shouldn't be held responsible, but rather they should be held compassionately responsible. Rather than hate people who act out, we need to recognize the pain behind it and help them while still keeping society safe. Punishment is a ~~a~~ ridiculous solution.

My point is, it was compassion that changed my world from ~~to~~ a hell to the amazingly rewarding life I have now. Compassion for myself, and for everyone else.

Question of the Day:

→ If such compassion can totally change my experience of this extreme environment, what can it do for your world?

— P.S. If you leave a comment I won't get it for a few weeks. So to everyone that left comments on my last couple of posts, thanks for the support! I love hearing feedback, so keep it coming. If you have a question for me you

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Write me at the address below. Include an address I can respond to or I can respond here on the blog. You don't know how much it means to hear feedback, so don't be shy 😊!

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