

MY RESPONSIBILITY!

by La Lin Achim 18.21

Beginning in June of 1983, the thought of "getting out," or being free, has been first and foremost on my mind. Since my capture and incarceration, this thought has invaded my dreams and permeated my every-waking-moment.

I literally gasp for breath, at what has happened and what is continuing to happen in my life. I had been told blood-curdling "war stories" about prison. I questioned my "courage," and even my ability to survive, I said to myself: "I am not going to make it!" I had found myself in the most barbaric, life threatening challenges of my life. I was on my own to sink or swim.

I began to realize how the obstacles of injustice in my life, along with the painful, stumbling

blocks of my mistakes, had caused my grievous downfall. I then reasoned, I could turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones, and obstacles into knowledge of enlightenment.

Most of the prisoners were equally divided as to how to survive "doing time". It became evident to me, that this was to be one of those negative/positive learning experiences.

I decided to focus my energies on constructive-pursuits. I would discount as best I could, the enormous negativity of this "place of nothingness." Realizing that no one, without exception, was more qualified to evaluate and understand me, than me. The awesome task of self-therapy, self-evaluation and the search for inner-truth was my responsibility.

For the first time in my entire life, I felt totally alone. It was time for me to face the facts, That my lifestyle prior to my capture, probably wasn't the

most reasonable course, or even the best choice that I could have made.

Plus, there were more of "them" (police, prosecutors, judges, etc.), than there were of me. By adapting a "You can't win them all" attitude, with that face saving, soothing rationale, I was able to lick my wounded pride and get on with my life. This was going to be an opportunity for me to learn the "what's?" and "whys?" of my behavior, through THE ABUNDANCE OF TIME IMPOSED UPON ME.

To face my realities, I had to accept in the survival sense, my most unfortunate predicament, (imprisonment itself) I became institutionalized. I began to focus my energies inward. I pursued and learned from myself, as I had no reasonable alternative if I wanted to survive this imprisonment from a mental perspective. I felt I must

persevere in a rational and positive way, to make the most of the "time" that I had on my hand.

With the efficient management of my life's energies, self-therapy and self-education, I discovered that I had time to pursue several college courses. I even found time for my fellow prisoners. For a while, I taught the Substance Abuse, Anger and Stress Management classes. I found these life-management activities to be enriching, empowering and life-affirming. I began to understand that the obstacles and negative influences, of which I had allowed to "ruin" and impact negatively upon my life, no longer had a place there.

I have now gained an enormous insight about interpersonal-relationships and interpersonal-skills. This insight has virtually eliminated my former destructive and

unproductive behaviors and attitudes.

Having learned to value and trust my opinions has enabled me to respect the opinions and rights of others.

Unmistakably, those in power, and those who have persecuted me, don't have all the answers and have been proven wrong more often than not. Having abandoned my fears, I will no longer consign myself to being the hapless victim reacting. I am NOW a survivor, a warrior responding, fully qualified to defend any encroachment upon my dignity and any attempted injustice imposed upon my life.

I am practicing management of my distrust, greed and selfishness towards others which helps me to be more tolerant and patient; to wait for the things that I need and want from life.

Conscious-awareness and self-respect has become my most

valuable ally and treasured possession. This is my key to understanding others. Attributes that had been sorely lacking in my life, prior to my rebirth have now become my "road map" of life's travels. My miraculous transformation, is-in the truest sense of the word; A rebirth.

The loss of my freedom has been a most heartrending and cruel deprivation upon my life.

A bitter pill I have had to swallow. I swallow it I must, if I am to salvage what is left of my life. The bitterness of my fourteen-years of imprisonment, lurks deep within-ready to erupt at any moment. I know that I, I alone am responsible. I must suppress this monster.

If unleashed, this monster of Anger and Vengeance, will most certainly destroy amongst others, its primary target-ME!

It is quite apparent to me and I have been told by others, that my presence and attitude is

like no other. I-too feel this separation.

Of course, I am appreciative of my individuality and my feeling of authentic humanity. But, I am ever mindful, of the gravity of my "aloneness".

I now understand how my desires, dictated my ~~unwise~~^{selfish} and ~~some~~^{sometimes} violent behavior towards others.

It is a phenomenal "feeling" to be able to think sincerely and genuinely about others, without ulterior motives. To be able to do some UN-grudgingly sharings of self and material possessions, without expecting and demanding something in return. I have learned these things, inter alia, during my fourteen-years of imprisonment, and they are all inclusive and exclusive of the reasons, as to "Why?" I should be released from prison.

COMMENTARY(1):

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"Achim" . why is it that convicted criminals, routinely contend that they are innocent, even in the face of overwhelming evidence?"

Undoubtedly, no different than those in government, when they are caught. It is easier to deny than to admit, easier to defend than to surrender. Your mind loves you, and to prevent you from bearing the pain of "Guilt," it will rationalize whatever you do

Therefore, you need
Accept Responsibility, never
Guilt!

FOOTNOTE: These were my THOUGHTS AND
INTROSPECTIVE FEELINGS IN 1997

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