

Reply ID: 7YRM

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7/30/14

Hello Friends

I'd like to share a thought by an extraordinary man - His name was Rabbi M. M. Schneerson - He said:

"If you see what needs to be repaired and how to REPAIR it, then you have found a piece of the world that G-d has left for you to complete.

But if you only see what is wrong and how ugly it is, then it is yourself that needs repair."

We need only tune into C.N.N. or The B.B.C. to see things that are wrong, things that are ugly, things that are (or appear to be) irretrievably broken - However, the wisdom of the Rebbe shines through when we shift our focus from those things over which we have no control, to those things within our reach - With the grace that we are granted, let us bloom where we are planted.

Let us start where we are, with what we have, and do the best that we can.

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I'd like to take a moment to say "Hello" to Victor and Meredith! ^{oo} ^y
Unfortunately, the comment you posted for "The Little Wave" (April 9th, 2013) was only recently been forwarded to me - or, rather, it had been forwarded by the wonderful volunteers at Between the Bars - but was "returned" as 'unauthorized' by the mail room at my last "camp": Century CA.

In your "comment", you mentioned a "particular project" you were working on which related to an essay I had written called "Raising the Bar" - At that time you expressed interest in opening a dialogue on that subject. I don't know how far along you are on that project, but I've got about 10 years worth of personal experience I can share on the subject. ^{oo} (inside info ^{oo})
To paraphrase Carlos Kung's song - I've looked at "prungs" from both sides now. ^{oo} The "system" is broken - and it's turning out 70,000 inmates a year. (being released back into society)

However, although the Prison Industrial Complex is easy to find fault with - the fact is, even good people with the right intentions can get things wrong - and the results can be ugly... and I'm not talking about the inmates.

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Fortunately, things are NOT irretrievably broken.


I've been at South Bay Correctional Facility for about 10 weeks -

I've been meaning to update my profile; however, I'd also been hopeful that by now I would be able to include a "PROGRAM"*

(NOTE* I should say that I've been trying to initiate here. - IT IS CALLED THE I.T.E.M.

A PROGRAM) PROGRAM. (AN ACRONYM FOR INMATES TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MENTORING)

I had an appointment to make a presentation to a programs committee here at South Bay - but it had to be re-scheduled. (still writing for a new presentation date)

In fact - here's a rough draft of what I plan to present to that committee. 

South Bay already does an excellent job in providing inmates with valuable skills, trades and knowledge with which to enter the workforce once released.

The I.T.E.M. program would be a natural extension of that by teaching inmates how to build a

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A BUSINESS AROUND THEIR CHOSEN FIELDS. TEACHING THEM HOW TO CONVERT THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED INTO VEHICLES FOR PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT, PROGRESS AND POSITIVE CHANGE.

"I.T.E.M. IS AN ACRONYM FOR "INMATES TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MONITORING" - THE KEY HERE, IS MONITORING

The Aker is just a 15yr old slinging nickel bags in the schoolyard is a businessman... BREAKING DOWN AN ounce of weed INTO 28 grams - WHOLESALEING SOME, SELLING SOME ON CONSIGNMENT, AND RETAILING THE REST. Juggling figures in his head while keeping an eye on his inventory - EVALUATING supply and demand, while looking for ways to INCREASE MARKET SHARE - MAKES him AN ENTREPRENEUR.

Unfortunately, THE WRONG BUSINESS MODEL MAKES him A PRIME CANDIDATE TO BECOME AN INMATE-CITY STATISTIC.

The Key is POSITIVE MONITORING

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY PUTS AN EMPHASIS ON CHANGING

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ONE'S THINKING IN ORDER TO CHANGE ONE'S BEHAVIOR - CHANGING YOUR MIND IN ORDER TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE.

"Think Outside the Cell" is a book written by one of the co-founders of the I.T.E.M. program, Joseph Robinson. That book, like this program, recognizes that a change in thinking is necessary before one can begin to break the chains that bind some people to a repeated cycle of imprisonment, release and recidivism.

The recidivism rate for those taking part in this program can drop from the national average of about 41% down to less than 5%!!

There are basically 4 options for people being released from prison:

- GET A JOB
- COLLECT PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
- COMMIT CRIMES TO MEET BASIC NEEDS
- OR START A BUSINESS (A LEGAL ONE)

Along with the change in thinking - comes the need for a plan. IN addition to the fundamentals of starting and maintaining a business - AN EX-OFFENDER

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FACES REGULATORY OR PAROLE RESTRICTIONS WHICH MAY THROW UP SOME ADDITIONAL OBSTACLES - I.T.E.M. DEALS WITH THOSE ISSUES.

WITHOUT TAKING UP MUCH MORE TIME -

I.T.E.M. IS A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO BUSINESS OWNERSHIP TAILORED TO THE NEEDS OF THE INCARCERATED AND FORMER INMATES.

HERE'S HOW IT WOULD WORK - 3 OR 4 INMATES HERE AT SOUTH BAY, UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A STAFF MEMBER, WOULD UNDERGO A TRAINING PROGRAM BASED UPON STEVE MASTRIOTTI'S NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

AFTER ABOUT 3 MONTHS OF TRAINING AS FACILITATORS - WE COULD HAVE AN I.T.E.M. PROGRAM UP AND RUNNING HERE AT SOUTH BAY.

UP TO 30 INMATES AT A TIME COULD CYCLE THROUGH THE 14 WEEK COURSE - NOT JUST 30 INMATES, BUT 30 PEBBLES IN A POND WHOSE RIPPLES COULD REACH TO DISTANT SHORES... 30 MEN AFFECTING FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES - A COURSE FOR PERSONAL

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EMPOWERMENT, AND A SOURCE FOR
POSITIVE CHANGE.

Thank you

So - That's The presentation
That I hope to deliver in the not
too distant future. - By the way,
info about the I.T.E.M. program
can be found online, at the following
sites: www.PinkOutsideTheCell.com
www.NFTE.org, and
www.ITEM.org
(or by Googling: Steve Mariotti,
and NFTE)

I'd like to go back to Rabbi
SCHNEERSON'S words of wisdom with
which I opened this post - My efforts
to establish the I.T.E.M. program
here at South Bay will address only
a tiny fraction of the problems
associated with the Prison Industrial
Complex (P.I.C.). However, if I do what
I can, with what I have, where I
am - Rather than just focus on the
magnitude and multiplicity of the
problems, I create a little light
instead of simply cursing the darkness.
Just a little light in my corner of
this world, and maybe there may be

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Who can Light Their Candle At its
Flame.

It's about time to bring This
TRAIN of Thought back into the STATION - &
A few points before closing -

- I look forward to hearing from
Victor and Meredith regarding their
"particular projects" related to my
essay 'Raising The Bar' (That essay
explores the relationship between
education and incarceration - and it
can be found as part of my original
profile page - www.betweenthelines.org/blogs/1398)

"The best way to reach me for
continuing that dialogue" is Right
here at: South Bay C.F.

P.O. Box 7171

South Bay, FL (Oh! & Gary Field
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- Over the next few weeks I will
be using the "Reply ID" option to
respond to all of those who posted
Comments or worked on the transcriptions
for my "scribbles" & I appreciate the
effort necessary to make sense of my
crypto-Hebraic Hieroglyphics (A.K.A. Cluekon
Scratch &)