

Robert A. Russell, V35292
SQSP 1-H-9
San Quentin, CA 94964

Just another note from Up The Creek...

Approx... 5.24.18

It has been a very interesting weekend. San Quentin had its 8th annual 'Day of peace' rally last Saturday and it was awesome! I was able to see all the programs for personal growth offered here as each had a display set up on the yard, they were manned with volunteers to answer our questions. I will be partaking of a program that addresses the correlation between finances and emotions, A topic hopelessly intertwined for me! It's called Financial Empowerment through Emotional literacy (FEEL). Nice!

Two weeks later . . . 6.4.18

I have been away awhile, been very busy trying to further myself along the path. There is a program here at "The Q", CODE. 7370, that trains individuals to build and manage websites. The end game is a much-coveted position in The Last Mile, a Joint Venture Program that allows an individual to work at the craft and be paid the awesome some of \$16. 75 an hour. Note that all other "prison jobs" pay from 8 cents to 32 cents an hour. As you can imagine, this is highly competitive, and even a bit dangerous, path to follow. That is my Path. It will allow me to pay Dad long owed money, to send Mom some support, and bless my Son and his family, all of which is important to me. I have never worked harder towards anything in my life as I am now working towards that!

On a different note, I had a really bad night last night I now wish to take a look at that. Ok, let me wrap my mind around the main philosophical bent of ACT(Acceptance and Commitment Therapy). **Accept** the fact that there are disrespectful individuals around me. They will be loud, attention seeking, and devoid of any care for the rights of others. This will in fact be a part of reality wherever I may find myself. That is a fact, and I can utterly ~~ware~~ myself out attempting to change them, which merely distracts me from, and prevents me from, furthering myself along the path I and my HP have chosen for my life, as well as sapping all my energy, This would be a life sucking catastrophe!

Once I just simply accept this fact of life, I can acknowledge it when I encounter these rather unpleasant individuals, and then renew my **commitment** to follow my path. The choice really is mine to make. It is not an easy choice, as disrespectful individuals are, to a large degree, attention seekers who for whatever reason, actively seek to derail you and drag you into their non-sense.

So, last night, the idiot blaring his TV, then the idiots deciding if the TV cannot make noise, they will. Acknowledge it, "**Wow!** Dudes are lacking in any sense whatsoever." Then figure out what I need to do to **accept** that fact, remove that fact from my consideration (this may involve a physical location change) and consciously renew my **commitment** to a higher path. Remembering my higher path is for the good of family, community, country, and ultimately God Himself.

None of this is easy; my natural bent is to demand my rights. But why do that? That is an energy draining, distracting bit of non-sense itself. Raising above is always the answer, but often the hardest path to follow, for me at least. But, since last night I bit into their nightmare BS big time, I have decided to make this the focus of my "training" for the foreseeable future. It is necessary for me to develop this skill if I am in fact to succeed, especially in this environment, where I arguably encounter more than my fair share of those who display idiotic behavior.

The Next Day 6.5.18

Ok, so last night I tried to sort out all the chaos involved when I react to **disrespect**. At first look, I saw a path from stimulus, to emotion, to thought. I was caught up in the emotion stage, which made for some stinking thinking! Therefore, I backed up to stimulus. I was being disrespected by others blaring TV and speaking in a voice so loud the whole dorm could hear them, disturbing all.

“Disrespect” What does that mean to me? It is defined by me, without conscious thought, as one who imposes themselves into my space; they have violated my world, not left me the “F” alone! WOW! That can’t be right? Or can it? My definition of respect was taught to me by outlaws and convicts, I desire to be neither. So, is that a true definition? Last night I began to research what disrespect means. According to the dictionary & thesaurus, it boils down to “discourteous behavior,” which is what is held in this subculture of criminality. That can’t be right, or is it? It would seem that the problem of a faulty definition of respect is not just a problem in my current environment. The world too suffers from a **“Me”** mentality.

But a very wise man I talked with had a different understanding. I told him about when I learned what respect means. I was at the BASS LAKE motorcycle run with the Hells Angels (I was living with a member) at age 13 or so. I was in a loft of a cabin, rolling j’s and came down to ask a question. I interrupted a couple of Filthy Few who were talking; I received a Molly Whooping for being disrespectful. This wise man told me, “NO! that was not about respect, respect is about equality!”

Equality? Does that mean that those who were loud and discourteous had equal rights to be that way as I do in wanting quite? Did I view them as equals, or subjects? How did my view on this pivotal matter affect my emotional response to the stimuli? Crap! I had some work to do!

First off, once examined, I rejected the definition of respect that I had held but never examined. It wasn’t right even if it is held in prison my most all and is probably the most sacred part of the society here. Ninety-nine percent of all problems here, all the violence, boils down to a matter of respect, but a respect I can’t, well...respect.

I looked up “respectful” and found it closer to values I hold dear that under- pin my understanding of true respect. It talks about honoring others and esteeming them more than self; it’s about seeing them in a place of superior honor to oneself. It was not exactly in line with my values, nor of equality, but it is closer than simply being courteous and expecting others to be so too.

So my problem was I was telling myself I was being disrespected, and in here, that is a very touchy area of concern. If one allows himself to be disrespected, he can become a “punk”, basically a slave of another. A perpetual victim of all. But that fear discounts the awesome power of my higher power to protect, guide, and lead me. No small thing!

So, what is my definition of disrespect? I am not sure. But is not merely discourtesy, which, after all, speaks to the nature of the discourteous one, not I, whereas disrespect is aimed at dishonoring me personally. But even that being the case, does one man dishonoring me in any way obscure the path my higher power has shown Me? Does it prevent me from honoring others, from living a life that honors myself? From reflecting on the importance of having and deserving the respect of my loved ones? Not a bit. The result is that I find I am separate from my fellows here in prison, not better than, but not the same. Our definitions are different. We are not the same people, heading in the same direction, valuing the same things. It made me feel lonely. There are others here, I am sure, who feel as I do, but they, like me, keep their head down and are afraid to ‘rock the boat’ or bring attention to themselves, so we are quite, but we are growing into men, and that is enough, just for today...

May your day be blessed, as you travel the path set before you.

In the Light and Grace of God,

I remain,

Russ