

THE ONE FREEDOM THAT CANNOT BE LOCKED AWAY

Prison has a way of reducing life to routines. The same walls. The same doors. The same count times. Days begin to resemble one another until the calendar becomes less important than the next mail call. In a place designed to limit movement, it becomes easy to believe that growth has stopped as well.

But growth is a choice.

No prison has ever managed to imprison an idea. A book still opens. A blank page still waits. A question still demands an answer. A curious mind can travel farther than any airplane, because imagination has never required permission to cross a fence.

The greatest lesson I've learned is that education is not merely preparation for employment; it is preparation for freedom of thought. Every book read, every paragraph written, every new skill learned changes that person who acquires it. That change cannot be confiscated, searched, or placed in a property box.

I have watched prisoners discover talents they never knew they possessed. Some became artists. Some found poetry. Others learned mathematics, history, philosophy, a new language, or how to write a letter that finally said what years of silence could not. Those victories rarely make headlines, but they matter. They represent people choosing construction over destruction.

Whether someone is behind prison walls or simply trapped by the circumstances of life the principle is the same: invest in your mind. It pays interest for the rest of your life.

If you have the opportunity to learn something today, take it. Read one chapter. Ask one difficult question. Write one honest page. The walls around you may not move. But the horizon inside your mind always can.

"He who opens a school door, closes a prison."

--Victor Hugo

"Not everything that is faced can be changed,
but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

--James Baldwin,

"As Much Truth as One Can Bear"
(1962)