

**You have the
key to your
future, use it
wisely.**



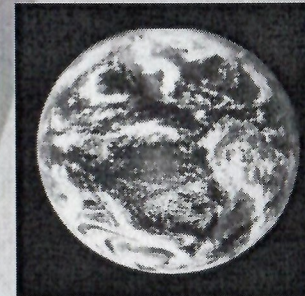
Saving Yourself From Yourself

What you are holding in your hand may be the most important thing you have ever held in your life.

Inside these pages is something that most people never get... a second chance.

Read the words inside this booklet. Accept them as the truth that they are and change your life into something better. Or ignore the helping hand that is being given you and throw this booklet away, along with your chances of a better future.

Right now, this second, you are at a turning point in your life, the whole world is before you. Opening this booklet is your first step in the right direction...



CONGRATULATIONS! You have taken the first step.

I am an inmate. My name is now a series of numbers, it used to be Ney before I decided to let the state rename me.

From the first grade on I never made any attempt in school. This continued until I dropped out in the 9th grade. By the time I was 14 I was lost. I was on a path of self-destruction and I was the only one who couldn't see it. Though I am white I was raised in an all black neighborhood. This may be common now, but this was in the early '70's, and it was pretty much unheard of. I guess this gave me the opportunity to act like a fool because everyone seemed to understand due to the circumstances.

By the time I got arrested at 22 I could hardly read or write. Once I got to prison a strange thing happened to me... I figured it out. I could finally see what everyone else knew all along, I was a fool and now it was too late. I never cared about doing the right thing; I never cared about anything, including myself. So now, once it was too late, now that I had a life sentence, I did the only thing I could, I changed.

First, I taught myself how to read and write. Then I enrolled in school and got my GED. Then I proceeded to study everything I could; Quantum Physics, Renaissance Art, Psychology, Philosophy, Electronics, Computer Sciences, Painting, Drawing, Plumbing, Horticulture, and anything else I could get books on. I enrolled in every vocational course that was offered. I began working in the PRIDE prison industries program where I became a Graphic Artist and Printer, and it's never stopped.

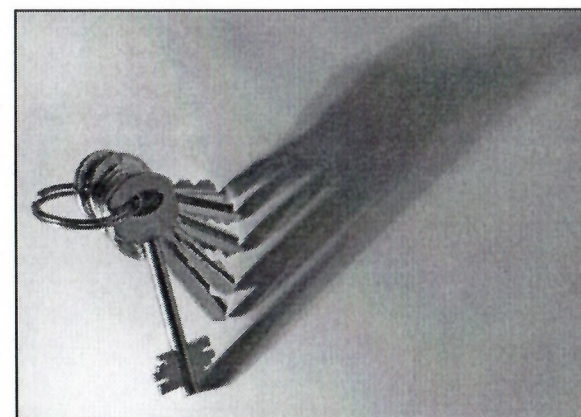
Today I am an accomplished artist with copies of my work in print and some that have been on display in galleries. I'm working on a book. I have won seven international printing awards. I have produced several inventions that are in use today. I have 48 certificates from various courses. I have taught classes on Quality Control, Printing and Art to hundreds of people, and at last count, I have read over 2,000 books.

What I don't have is my freedom. Barrack Obama and I are the same age. We both started out in life at the same time. He became President, I became an inmate. Guess who made the right choices in life? I can never take back any of the things I have done, all I can do is concentrate on today and the future. There is no doubt that I could have been something in life besides an inmate, but due to my decisions early in life, that's what I am, and inmate, nothing more. I have been in prison since 1983, well over half of my life, and I very well may die in here. Regardless of that, one thing stays foremost in my mind, keep moving forward. All of you have something that I don't; a future of promise. You can be and do anything you set your minds to. But you have to do it now, today, you can't wait. A day could make the difference and save your life, or ruin it. The bottom line is that I could have been anything, but I waited too late, don't be me.

Inmate forever, Ney McCain

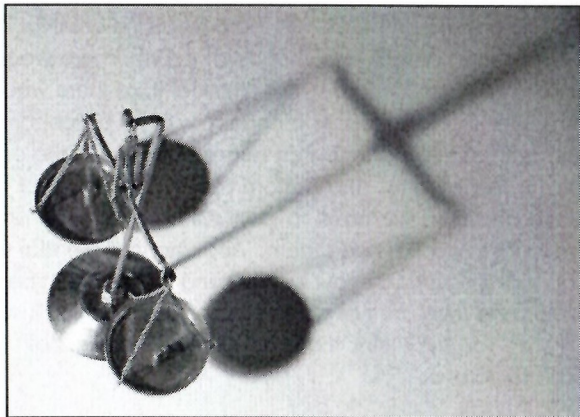
What Do You and I Have in Common?

What makes me qualified to say these words to you? Why me? That's easy, you could be me, and I may be able to prevent it. You and I have both made mistakes in our lives. The difference is that you are still standing on the edge of the pit and I have already fallen in. What you hear now, in these words, is my voice coming out of the pit trying to warn you not to fall in with me. I am the voice of experience. I have been free, young, and on the path of self-destruction, just like you. But you, on the other hand, have never been in prison for nearly 30 years as a result of it. With this being said, listen to me when I give you these final words of advice. I never thought I was going to end up in prison. The truth was that I wouldn't stop long enough to take a look at myself. I felt that no one knew what it was like to be me. I thought I was smarter and would never be caught for my actions. And the hard truth of the matter is that I was not in control of my life and I was the only person who couldn't see it. If you are reading these words you are probably out of control as well. But the funny thing about being out of control is that you don't know it until it's too late and something bad happens in your life as a result of it. Sometimes these bad things are our wake-up calls, and you are getting one right now. I'm asking you from the pit I'm in to listen to this wake-up call. Use this "pit stop" in your life to save yourself from the same fate I've had. The only person that can save you is you. A lot of people are trying to help you right now, but unless you reach out your hand and turn the key being offered it will all be for nothing. Everyone here knows that you're worth saving. Do you know it? You are worth saving, but you are the only one who can do it. These words are your key. Please believe me - I never want anyone to know what a life like mine is like - especially you.



False Expectations

The Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy and Santa Claus, all of these turned out to be made up ways to make our childhoods an easier and more magical place. Many of our story books ended with, "and they lived happily ever after." Did these things lead us to believe that the world was going to be a better place than it is? Well if it did, we should be thankful for the small time we had to believe it. As all of you know by now, the world can be a pretty bad place, in serious need of a few more happy endings. But think about this, why am I writing this to you? Do I sound like a I hate the world in which we live? Do I sound like I believe that you can make your life better than it is now? In spite of nearly 30 years in prison I have never lost sight of one very important truth; Life is what we make it. Being poor, or in prison, or anything else will not require us to give up happiness. The opposite is true as well; being rich, free or anything else will not keep us from being sad. It all boils down to how we choose to live. We can spend our time angry at things, or we can try to make our lives better. You can't expect any of these changes to take place over night, but I know one change that can take place in seconds... and that is to change your mind! By changing the way you think, and raising the expectations you have for yourself, you can make the biggest change you will ever make in your life. You can choose to do better in school. You can choose to listen to those who love you. You can choose to obey the laws, and you need to if you hope to stay out of prison. Believe me when I tell you, if you don't choose these things, then it means you chose a life hardly worth living.



Introduction

In spite of what you might think, no one involved with this program is mad at you. But chances are that many of them know you can do better, and expect you to do so. The truth is that everyone involved is going out of their way to help you help yourself. Your success is their success, your failure is their's as well. Everyone involved knows that you are at a very important part of your life and they want to do what ever they can to help you understand what could happen to you if you continue on the path you are now on. Their jobs and responsibilities are to make this program work. Your job is the easiest of all...just listen, admit to yourself when you are hearing the truth, and ask any questions you may have. If you are here, you are in trouble, and someone feels you can be saved. They are right; you can be saved, if you will allow it. The choice is yours, and chances are that everyone but you knows it. It's time for you to know it too.

Saving Ourselves from Ourselves

Why do we do things that hurt others, and ourselves? When we hurt people, or break rules or laws, we know it's wrong, but we have chosen to do it anyway. Usually we don't think we will be caught and punished, or we don't care if we do, at least at the time.

The truth of the matter is that we are on a path of self-destruction. Sometimes we see it, sometimes we don't. But no matter how much we may choose to ignore how our actions hurt others and ourselves, the damage is being done and we are going to have to pay the price. From my experience the price we end up paying is so great that it sometimes far exceeds anything we could have imagined.

The way we pay changes from person to person, depending on the offense, we may find ourselves paying a fine, on community control or probation, or perhaps even in prison; but what does going to prison really mean?

The harsh reality of things is that no person should have to go to prison, especially the young. If I could snap my fingers and create a perfect world I would make all of the prisons disappear. But unfortunately we need prisons, and that is not going to change. People who break laws are going to continue to be locked up, and that is when their problems will truly start.

Everything you do and experience changes you. Just like making a soup, everything you put into it matters. Too much of one thing, or not enough of another, can ruin it. Our lives, and the way that we live them, are like making a soup. Going to prison is one ingredient that you want to leave out of your life.



Prisons are full of people who have been deemed too dangerous to be allowed to walk freely among everyone else. There are people who rob, kill, rape, assault and other things too terrible to speak of. When you find yourself locked in a two man cell with one of these people (and if you are reading these words someone with more insight than you knows that it is going to happen sooner than you think) what are you going to do? Are you going to be this person's next victim? Are you going to defend yourself, maybe even kill them in order to avoid being killed yourself? Let me tell you this, you don't want either one. But once the cell door is locked it's too late. No officer is going to ask you if you like your new cellmate before they place you in the cell. The truth of the matter is that if you didn't want to go in the cell with this monster you should have stayed out of prison. Right now, as you hear or read these words, is your fair warning! Do not come to prison! The movies have it all wrong! The truth is so terrible that no one would buy a ticket to see the reality of this place. If you're not careful you're going to have a starring role.

Keep in mind, those of us in prison, with the exception of a very few, chose to come to prison. We did this to ourselves. What does this knowledge do to us? Do you start to hate yourself for putting yourself in prison? For taking yourself away from everyone you love and placing yourself with everyone you hate? You might. And walking through life hating yourself is no way to live. Most people in prison choose the path of denial. Instead of placing the blame where it belongs, on their own shoulders, they blame either the person who called the police, or the courts, or the police who arrested them, or in many instances, they simply blame "the system." These are the ones that have the least chance of saving themselves from themselves because they won't admit that they are the one hurting themselves the most. Which one are you? Are you still blaming "the system" or have you realized that you are your own worst enemy? Until we realize that we are the biggest problem in our own lives we are doomed to continue to make the same mistakes over and over again, that will one day, not only ruin our lives, but also the lives of those we love. Do you think it's a joke to sit across the table from your mother in the prison visiting area? Do you think your mother will be ok with all this? Let me tell you right now, when I came to prison I forever changed the lives of more people than I'll ever know! Let's think for a minute there. Who did I hurt? My victim, my victim's family, my family, my friends, my children who will never be born, the tax-payers who have to pay for my incarceration, and let's not forget myself. At least I had a choice. The others on the list never got a vote, they just got hurt, and I did it. Let me tell you this, there are worse things to be locked in a cell with than a dangerous roommate. Try sharing a cell with your own thoughts sometime. In the end we get caught for everything we do. Every small infraction! Because for the most part we are committing these crimes against ourselves and there will be no way to avoid the knowledge that we are the ones responsible for ruining our own lives. You think it's tough asking someone for forgiveness? Try asking yourself for forgiveness.



Dealing with Our Problems

Everyone will have problems in their lives. Thankfully, most of the problems that we face won't last forever, but sometimes it's easy to feel that our problems are worse than they are, or will last forever. I know that some of you have been through some very bad times, and the bad times have led to the new problems you may be facing now. It's easy to become angry over something. It's also easy to create new problems for ourselves by being angry. But somewhere in our lives we must ask ourselves if we are doing something wrong (chances are if you are reading these words you have probably been doing something wrong). This is your chance to get something that I never got. Had someone cared enough to say these simple words to me maybe I could have saved myself; "If you do not change the way you think and act you are going to end up like me, in prison forever with no chance of ever getting out." Guys, I came to prison in 1983 at the age of 22 and I'm going to die in here. No one asks me if I'm sorry. No one wants to know if I'm ready to get out. The truth is that once you are in prison it's too late, and no one cares. It's not too late for you. Like it or not, and it doesn't matter if you believe what I'm telling you or not, if you don't get it together the problems you have now are going to seem small compared to the ones you'll have in the future – if you have a future.

Laws, Rules, and Why We Need Them

What would our life be like with no laws or rules? Wouldn't it be great! Doing whatever we wanted? Well of course we couldn't play any sports or games because those require rules to work, but we could do anything else. As long as we didn't use the roads, because with everyone going a hundred miles an hour and ignoring stop lights it would be too dangerous to use them. But everything else would be straight! Of course, there would be no stores, schools, or factories since there would be no laws to enforce how they operate, and with no schools no one would be able to learn medicine or things like that. We could hang out at the house a lot. Though of course, there wouldn't be any electricity or running water, and now that I think of it, all there would be is over 300 million people trying to survive in a country with no police, ambulances or fire trucks. The truth of the matter is that nearly everyone in the country would be dead within a few months. The bottom line is that in spite of the fact that the current laws and rules we have to deal with may prevent us from doing something we want to do, we need them. And chances are that whatever it is we want to do that's against the law is something we shouldn't be doing in the first place. Rules and laws are not going to go away, but you just might if you don't obey them. You may think these people are playing, but I know better, and I'll know better forever.

