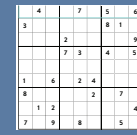


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A Desperate Prisoner Finds Hope Behind Bars

by E.G. Andrews

Although Ocean Lehaul's towering stature and strong build might seem intimidating, one look at his warm smile will put you right at ease. But he hasn't always been so approachable.

"I was angry, punching walls, banging my head. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat, I couldn't function."



Photo by P&W Photography

After years of anger, crime, and pain, Ocean began plotting his own death, until an injured caterpillar changed everything.

Desperate for an end

In a Nebraska prison, Ocean came face to face with the pain of his past and the consequences of letting his emotions control him. "I was angry, punching walls, banging my head," he recalls.

"I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat, I couldn't function. I was messed up." He didn't know how to calm the storm in his soul, and it eventually led him to solitary confinement.

He started looking for a sign—anything that might finally make his pain go away.

Sitting in solitary, Ocean came up with a plan to end it all—he thought taking his own life would be the only way to finally escape from all his pain.

But while on the yard on the day of his "suicide mission," something caught his eye—a small green caterpillar that appeared to be injured. Its pain reminded Ocean of his own, even though Ocean's pain was emotional.

For a moment, Ocean wondered if God had put the caterpillar there for him to

Continued on page 2

Growing up in a broken family around Valentine, Nebraska, Ocean often slept in alleyways and behind dollar stores. His mother, who Ocean says was unable to

free herself from alcoholism, gave up him and his sister to the foster care system. The transition from the independence of the streets to a foster house full of rules was difficult for him.

"You ain't my mom,"

Ocean would say to his foster mother.

Over time, his rebellious spirit only grew worse. He often fought with his foster parents, and one of those fights landed him in juvenile hall.

Angry, aggressive, and out

of control, Ocean soon had a problem with drugs and alcohol—and with people besides just his foster parents. On Halloween 2012, he was arrested for assault on his girlfriend and young son. He went to prison in 2013.

VIEWPOINTS: A Conversation About Respect

with Mark Freer and Chad Prince

Inside Journal asked a retired security director and a former prisoner about the importance of respect behind bars. Here's what they said.

Mark, Security Director

I spent 34 years in the correctional system at five different prisons. In any prison, respect is what makes the environment tolerable

for everyone. It's really a two-way road between inmates and staff.

When there was an issue between an inmate and an authority figure, it was usually due to lack of communication.

When I worked with officers, I always told them, "You've got to put yourself in the prisoner's place and understand the stress they are under."

And I told inmates, "Remember that my officers are coming into this whole

other world inside this building, but they don't get to leave all their problems behind. Many of them will come in grumpy, tired, or upset." Don't judge people until you have time to get to know what they are like.

When there is a conflict, it's good for everyone to take a step back and settle down, then work out the problem, instead of getting distracted by anger. It's when the emotion starts rising, and the officer invokes their authority and the inmate rebels against it, that things start to go haywire. If you're having a hard time managing the issue, the officer can say, "Let's talk to my supervisor," or the inmate can say, "Can we have a conversation together with my counselor?" It helps to involve a neutral third party.

Respect is a learning process.



Photo by Prison Fellowship

Many people come into prison already having issues with authority. Some of those issues are well-deserved; there are some problems in our society with people abusing authority. That turns people very negative, very fast, at a very young age. But I hope we can get prisoners to stop and realize the whole world is not that way. We

can break the cycle and work together as people.

The best way to earn the respect of officers is to understand what they are trying to accomplish by enforcing policies and procedures. Sometimes the rules may seem petty, but you can't take it personally. It might not do any harm if

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INSIDE JOURNAL®

Inside Journal is a quarterly newspaper for prisoners that's delivered to facilities across the country. Available in Men's, Women's, and Spanish editions, Inside Journal contains inspiring articles, tips, news, games, and even free offers for Bibles and Bible studies. Ask your chaplain if your facility receives Inside Journal.

When You Find Yourself in a Hole

by Dan Kingery

A tried and true bit of wisdom says, “If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.” It makes sense, doesn’t it? But most of us don’t stop digging. When we get in trouble, we double down on our strategy for living. If we get caught lying, we tell more lies to cover our tracks. If we feel powerless, we strive even harder for control. But there come moments in life when you can’t strive

anymore. It could be at the loss of a loved one, or in the face of overwhelming odds, or in a jail cell. All you’ve been trying to achieve crumbles to ashes, and there’s nothing you can do to try to fix it.

As hard as it is to believe, these “holes” can be some of the most helpful, rewarding seasons in our lives. Facing failure is the perfect time to re-evaluate who you are, what you stand for, and what you want out of life. It’s a time to test your beliefs and your values and make adjustments. It’s a time to start finding accountability and stop trying

to control things you can’t or shouldn’t.

Maybe you’ve had a relationship with God, or maybe you’re not sure He even exists. Either way, now is a perfect chance to ask, “Where is God in this situation? Could it be that He has something good planned for me in all this?”

Right now, you might feel crushed. But the worst day or worst decision of your life doesn’t have to define you. You have a future, and in God’s hands, good can come from your current circumstances. No matter how lost, devastated, or sad you feel, choose right now not to give up. It’s OK if you don’t know what tomorrow will bring. Make the decision today to not just “do time.”

You can actually use this time to change your life for the better.

Although you may not have the power to make many choices behind bars, there are three things you can choose: your attitude, your behavior, and your friends. You can make positive choices about how you approach your time, how you spend your time, and with whom you spend it.

You don’t have to repeat the mistakes that got you in this hole in the first place. Stop digging. By making deliberate, productive choices, you begin the path to being a better person with a brighter future. The new you is a step-by-step, moment-by-moment journey ... and it starts **now**. ■

Viewpoints

Continued from page 1

one person gets away with breaking a rule, but if the officer makes an exception for you, he has to make it for everyone else, too. Then we’ll all have a real problem.

The job of the COs is to maintain the level of security needed for everyone to live and work in a safe environment. When people give in to negativity, the prison environment becomes like a jungle. No one wants that chaos. But when you show respect, act with integrity, and hold yourself as a person of character, you make the environment better for everyone. That’s the kind of environment where people can make real changes in their lives, so they never have to come back. That’s what we all want.

Chad, Former Prisoner

I did my time at Louisiana State Penitentiary (“Angola”), a maximum-security prison. I had to learn how to have the respect of both staff and my fellow inmates to make the most of my sentence.

Having respect for authority in prison isn’t about your intentions, although that is important. Other people can’t read your mind—they can only observe your words and your actions.

One of the easiest ways to show respect is with your language around officers. “Yes, sir,” “No sir,” and “Right away, sir” will go a long way. It’s also best to avoid cussing, complaining, and questioning their authority. Officers are just trying to get through the day the best they can. If your words are respectful and encouraging, it will make their job easier, and they’ll see you as helpful and compliant. But if you are routinely showing disrespect, you won’t give the officers much choice but to exert their authority.

Your actions can also show respect. One of the best things I learned early on was to read the rule book closely—and then follow it. Officers generally won’t have sympathy for prisoners who violate a policy and then claim they didn’t know their actions were wrong.

How you relate to your fellow inmates will also influence how prison officials view you. Avoid negativity, be cooperative and respectful, work hard, and don’t act lazy. It won’t take long for staff to see you as a helper instead of a troublemaker. They’ll recognize you as a leader, and you’ll have less tension in your day. ■

Hope Behind Bars

Continued from page 1

find. He prayed, “[God], You wanted me to find this? I already understand suffering. Why would You show me this?”

He started cussing God out. Then, with tears of desperation, he sat on the ground and prayed, “Let there be a purpose for suffering.”

Ocean began to realize that he couldn’t control the circumstances that caused his pain, but he could control how he reacted. He’d never understood that before.

If I’m wrong about that, what else am I wrong about? he thought.

Finding a second sign

Ocean knew he would

need a safe place to ask hard questions. While in restrictive housing, he received visits every week from Prison Fellowship volunteers. His mentors, Jeff and Steve, met with him to discuss many difficult topics, like faith and doubt, pain and healing. Slowly, Ocean’s stone heart began to soften.

Still, he wanted a sign to show him that God really loved him.

“Ocean, let me ask you something,” said Jeff, who is a pastor. “I have 1,800 people at my church on a Sunday morning. Do you know which of those I spend the most time with?”

Ocean’s face went blank. He didn’t know.

“You,” said Jeff. “You are the one I’ve spent an hour

and a half with every week for the past year. How’s that for a sign?”

Ocean said he felt like he was about to fall off a cliff. Then Jeff asked Ocean if he wanted Jesus Christ to be the one to catch him. Ocean did. He broke down sobbing.

“They prayed over me,” Ocean remembers, “and I felt everything just release from my shoulders. All the weight, the pain, the anger, the resentment ... God had to take it from me.”

When Ocean entered general population, he didn’t know how to socialize. He just knew he wanted to get involved in a Christian community.

“[God] helped me get back into reality. For the first time, I trusted Him,”

he says. “I didn’t care what people thought about me, because I knew what God thought about me.”

In June 2015, Ocean was released. Today he lives in the same area where he grew up, but he’s a different man now. He has forgiven his biological mother, who he says still struggles with addiction. He also has a job, a home, and a family.

“When I got out, I wanted to change the world,” says Ocean. “I realized I can’t change everybody, but I can make some difference. Right now, I’m [enjoying] being a father. And I have a desire to be much more.”

“If the old Ocean could see me now,” he adds, “I think he’d say, ‘I’m proud of you.’” ■

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Ask your chaplain, program coordinator, or Prison Fellowship representative for more details about these programs. Not all programs are available at all facilities, and some conditions apply.

Don't Do Your Time Alone

by E.G. Andrews

In April 2016, Sgt. Joseph Serna faced a night behind bars. But the retired Special Forces Green Beret was not a stranger to dark places.

Over the course of three tours in Afghanistan, Serna survived several traumatic experiences that could have easily claimed his life. He withstood the dangers of a roadside bomb and a suicide bomber. He survived another close call in an overturned truck, which landed upside down in a canal. Only Sgt. Serna would make it out of the vehicle alive.

While these incidents earned Serna military decorations, they also left him with his fair share of emotional baggage. Like many of his fellow soldiers, he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, and a sense of isolation and loneliness. To cope with the pain, he turned to alcohol. His situation reached a

critical point in Fayetteville, North Carolina, when he was arrested and charged for driving under the influence.

Part of Serna's sentence required that he report to Judge Lou Olivera at the Veterans Treatment Court every two weeks. One time, Serna lied about a recent urine test. He later admitted this, and the judge sentenced Serna to one night behind bars.

A dark night

After his wartime experiences, Serna already feared being in tight spaces. A night alone in prison sounded like more than the veteran could bear. Olivera could tell that Serna was anxious. He later remembered, "When Joe first came to turn himself in, he was trembling."

Serna knew it would be a long night.

Many of us have experienced a "dark night of the soul." That is the kind of night Serna faced in that North Carolina jail. He had

no way out of the cell. He was tired of dealing with PTSD. It was one more nightmare he just wished he could wake up from. The worst part is that he was facing it all alone.

The Bible tells of Jesus' own experience with loneliness. Jesus, who lived a faultless life, entered into our darkness in order to bring His light. He showed God's love, healed the sick, and taught those who would listen. Eventually, Jesus would be accused by people who refused to believe in His message. He then faced the darkest time in His life: abandonment, isolation, torture, and ultimately, death on a cross. Knowing what was to come, Jesus spent time alone in a garden and prayed. He was honest about the pain and anxiety. Still, He asked that God's will would be done, even in a night as dark as that one.

Never alone

As Serna sat alone in his cell, the silence was broken moments later by an unexpected visitor: Judge Lou Olivera. To Serna's surprise, the judge entered the cell. The door closed behind him.

"I got chills when he walked in," the retired sergeant told *The Fayetteville Observer*. Serna did not move. Olivera took a seat beside him. It was the only bunk in the cell, and naturally, Serna was confused. He remembered what Olivera had said earlier as they drove to the prison together: "We're going to turn ourselves in."

Surely the judge could not have been serious. "You are here with me for the night?"

Serna asked incredulously.

The judge replied, "Yeah, that's what I'm doing."

From then on, Serna was not the only man in the cell. He was not the only veteran, either. Olivera had served in the Gulf War and endured his fair share of war's horrors. He feared that a night alone would trigger Serna's PTSD. The battlefield is difficult for any soldier to leave behind completely.

Between bites of meatloaf, he and Serna shared their stories. They found common ground in their experiences as U.S. soldiers. Olivera even gave Serna the single bunk in the cell; the judge slept on a mattress on the floor. Literally overnight, their relationship transformed into something Serna had never imagined. All it took was having someone there—someone who saw him, not for what he did, but for who he was. "It was more of a father/son conversation ... It was personal," Serna told *The Washington Times*. With one act of humility and compassion, a dark and lonely cell became much brighter.

Jesus Christ showed even greater humility and compassion when He gave up His life. That sacrifice has paid the debt we owe for our mistakes—a debt we could never satisfy. Now, those who accept Christ's gift of grace can join a new community: fellowship with God. All are invited to have a relationship with God, to be called His sons and daughters, and to experience new life with Him always at our side.

Nobody has to do time alone. ■

WHERE TO TURN WHEN YOU'RE FEELING ALONE

Grab your Bible (or if you don't have one, see the Bible ad on the bottom of this page), and use the following verses to guide you.

What to Read When ...

You're lonely or afraid: Psalm 23; Isaiah 41:10; Joshua 1:9; James 1:2-3

You're bitter or angry: Luke 6:27-28; Ephesians 4:26-27; Colossians 3:8-10

You're in danger: Psalm 32:7; Psalm 91:11; Genesis 5:20

You're worried or anxious: Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 6:25-34; Romans 8:28; John 14:27

You need assurance: Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalm 46:10; John 16:33

You're feeling tempted: Matthew 26:41; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 6:11-12

You're feeling guilt or shame: Psalm 51:7-15; John 3:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 1:9

Want to go deeper? Sign up for a free correspondence Bible study through our partner organization by writing to: "Never Alone," c/o Inside Journal, PO Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790.



Photo by Chad Prince

Sudoku: Find the Key to Success!

Complete the Sudoku puzzle below. Then use the numbers in the top row to fill in corresponding letters on the secret message!

S	C	G	F	I	R	P	U	O
	4			7		5		6
3						8		
			2					9
			7	3		4		5
1		6		2	4			
8					2		7	
	1	2						4
7		9		8			5	

Use the letters directly above each number to unlock the message below!

1 6 D
 7 2 Y 6 3 8
 8 E 4 7 5
 9 6 8
 2 3 4 4 E 2 2 !

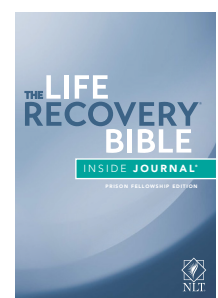
See Page 4 for answer key.

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DON'T FORGET to include this information:

- ✓ Your complete name and prison ID number.
- ✓ Your facility name.
- ✓ Your facility address for prisoner parcel delivery.*
- ✓ Whether you want English or Spanish.**

*Bibles typically take several weeks to arrive, so be sure to check your facility procedures on receiving mail, especially if you are going to be transferred.

**Limit one Bible per person.

7 Tips for Better Sleep Behind Bars

by S.L. Ray

“Don’t go to jail if you want a good night’s sleep,” jokes Chad, a former Louisiana prisoner. There’s no doubt about it: Prison can keep you from catching many z’s.

Inside Journal asked former and current prisoners about their sleeping experiences. The majority had trouble sleeping, especially their first weeks, thanks to uncomfortable mattresses, a snoring cellie, the noise of officers’ keys, banging doors, screaming or loud talking, anxiety, safety concerns, and flushing toilets.

Getting less than six to eight hours of sleep can negatively affect your body, mind, and spirit. Sleep deprivation is also downright dangerous. According to the National Sleep Foundation, extremely sleepy people are 70% more likely to have a workplace accident.

Studies show long-term sleep loss can cause weight gain, memory problems, a lowered immune system, high blood pressure, and an increased risk for diabetes, depression, irritability, and more.

To know if you’re getting enough sleep, ask yourself, are you:

- Waking up not feeling refreshed most days?
- Feeling sleepy most days?
- Struggling to concentrate and stay alert during work or activities?
- Feeling depressed or on edge?

If so, here are some tips for better sleep, as shared by prisoners and psychologists.

1) Make your sleeping area as comfortable as possible.

Buy earplugs, a small fan, or a radio with headphones and use them to block out external noises. Also, make sure your body isn’t too warm or cold.

Get creative with your blankets and pillows. “My mattress is not conducive to a good night’s sleep, but I fold up a blanket [to put under] my hips,” says Steve, a current prisoner, about his flat, hard bed.

2) Be kind to your body and mind.

Avoid anything unhealthy or negative before bed, such as junk foods and violent TV shows or books.

According to many sleep experts, including Dr. Michael Breus, you should avoid

caffeine after 2 p.m. and stop eating or exercising several hours before bedtime.

Many prisoners agreed, adding it’s also important to exercise and eat right daily.

Joseph, another current prisoner, says he buys melatonin (an over-the-counter sleep aid) at the commissary to help him sleep.

3) Pray and read Scripture.

Prayer has helped many prisoners to get better sleep, like Zane, who says, “Surrender things beyond your control to God or a higher power.”

After struggling with awful sleep, night terrors, and cold sweats, Zane dug into prayer and Scripture. Eventually, he was free of his sleep issues for good.

Michelle, a former prisoner in New York, had a similar experience. “I slept better because I began the process of forgiving myself and started attending chapel,” she says.

“Evening devotionals also help,” adds Joseph.

4) Write out your worries.

Several prisoners we spoke with found journaling to be an effective way of getting thoughts out of their heads for better rest.

“My anxieties, if allowed to

go unchecked, will keep me up at night,” explains Marvin. “An unsolved problem will float through my brain until I write it down,” adds Jesse about his incarceration worries.

5) Find your “happy place.”

James Peasley, a Minnesota therapist, explains that if negative thoughts or worries are running through your mind, you can change your thoughts just like you would change the channel if something bad came on television.

To change your thoughts, he suggests finding your own personal “mental safe place,” somewhere you’ve been that has really positive memories, ideally somewhere in nature. Close your eyes and vividly visualize all the sights, sounds, smells, and sensations of that place until you feel calm.

“This can actually cause you to get control over troubling emotions,” Peasley says.

“It doesn’t mean the troubling situation won’t happen or doesn’t need attention, but it resets your brain” to stop the obsessive worrying.

6) Breathe and count.

Peasley also suggests placing your hand on your stomach and slowly breathing

in through your nose for a count of five and out through your mouth for a count of five, for five minutes total.

Dr. Breus tells people to count backward from 300 by threes, which requires concentration, thereby taking your mind off all other worries, and is boring, thereby putting you to sleep faster.

7) If you’re still anxious, try grounding exercises.

Observe your surroundings, including the feel of your body getting heavy on your mattress, and then slowly list, out loud, five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.

Experiment until you find what works for you, and then stick to it, doing the same things at the same time every night. And remember, sleep habits, like any habits, don’t happen overnight.

“It took me close to a year to calm my mind down and start to embrace the fact that I couldn’t keep feeling so guilty,” says former prisoner Michelle.

In time, restorative sleep behind bars is possible. So rest easy. ■

Start Your Sentence Strong With the ConBody Workout

by E.G. Andrews

There’s a street corner in lower Manhattan where Coss Marte, then a teenager, launched his career selling drugs. By 23, he was in prison and out of shape. He feared that if something didn’t change, he would likely die of a heart attack before his seven-year sentence was up.

He ran laps around the prison yard and exercised in his 9-by-6 cell, with nothing but the walls and floor for equipment. He lost 70 pounds in six months.

Before his release, he helped at least 20 fellow prisoners lose more than 1,000 pounds total. After being released from prison, Marte launched ConBody, a prison-style workout program led entirely by formerly incarcerated people. The first studio opened in 2015 on the same corner where Marte used to sell drugs. Today, ConBody also offers a variety of online workout videos. Marte hopes incarcerated men and women can exercise using his videos in prisons where computer tablets are allowed.

For those of you who don’t have access to computers, here are a few Marte-

approved core exercises that you can accomplish right in your cell* (just make sure to drink plenty of water!).

EXERCISE 1



Bicycle Crunch:

Lie on your back and bring your knees up to form a 90-degree angle. Keep your hands by your temples, crunch up, and twist across the body while kicking your legs in a bicycle motion. (For example, if you crunch up and to the right, you should draw your right knee in.)

EXERCISE 2



Flutter Kick:

Lie on your back with your arms by your sides and the palms of your hands down. Extend your legs completely out, with knees slightly bent. Lift your heels about six inches off the floor. Make small, rapid,

up-and-down scissor-like motions with your legs.

EXERCISE 3



Hello Dolly/Scissor Kick:

Lie back and keep your legs together. Extend your legs out and point your toes toward the ceiling. Slide your hands, palms down, under your tailbone. Keep your head back and your chin tucked. Using your core strength, lift your feet six inches off the floor. Separate your legs horizontally as far as you can, and begin a horizontal scissor kick, back and forth.

EXERCISE 4



Crab Toe Touch:

Sit on the floor with knees bent and feet together. Place your hands behind you. Lift your hips off the floor, kick your right leg up, and touch your right foot with your left hand. Then place your right foot on the floor, kick your left leg up, and touch your left foot with your right hand. Keep alternating legs quickly, keeping your core engaged and your neck relaxed.

*Be careful when exercising, and stretch first to help avoid injuries.

Marte encourages those behind bars to stay motivated and grow stronger—working out, taking classes, getting counseling, and learning a skill.

“You’re going to come out struggling,” says Marte. “It’s going to be difficult. But work hard. Build your character. You’re going to survive, and that’s real success.” ■



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Use the letters directly above each number to unlock the message below!

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 1 6
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 S U C C E S S !
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