A Runaway Finds Freedom from the Rat Race

by Joanna Breault

Ever since she was a teenager in upstate New York, Terri Grewell was determined to run her own life—even if it meant risking bodily harm.

“I started running away from home when I was 14 years old,” Terri says. “I would jump from my second-story bedroom window to run away! When my mom told me no, I did it anyway.”

She used meth to self-soothe. Just like running away, drugs were an escape.

The daughter of an alcoholic father who was frequently absent, Terri started drinking in eighth grade. She soon moved on to marijuana, acid, and eventually meth, which became her “drug of choice.” At first, she got high because she thought it was fun. But soon, she was a full-blown addict, unable to get out of bed in the morning without using first.

When she was 17, Terri got in trouble with the law. Afraid of being tried as an adult, she ran away to Arizona before turning 18. She married and had three children, juggling motherhood and addiction. To support her drug habit, Terri began selling, which gave her a sense of power. She liked holding her own in the traditionally male world of dealing. “Selling drugs was an addiction in itself,” Terri says.

Terri’s marriage dissolved, and she moved to Oklahoma with another man, who turned out to be a violent alcoholic. She used meth to self-soothe. Just like running away, drugs were an escape.

“I never felt,” Terri says. “I numbed all those years. I just didn’t know how to feel.”

Eventually, she wasn’t just selling meth but making it, too. She became so consumed by her addiction that she sent her children to Colorado to live with their father.

In 2000, Terri went to jail for five months for manufacturing methamphetamine. While there, she got sober. She stayed clean for almost nine years. But then she began what she now sees as a deeply unhealthy relationship.

“When he said ‘jump,’ I would jump,” Terri says. “And when he relapsed, so did I.”

Terri was spiraling deeper into addiction and darkness. She was estranged from her extended family, and all she cared about was her next hit.

The end of false freedom

In 2010, Terri was arrested for drug trafficking, and she was finally forced to stop the running and the numbing. Although Terri had grown up Catholic and knew about God, it took hitting rock bottom to fully surrender everything to Him. While in

Continued on page 2

Mental Gymnastics:

7 Activities You Can Do in Your Cell to Keep Your Mind Sharp

by Stacia Ray

Anyone who has spent any amount of time in lockdown or alone in a cell knows how lonely and isolating the separation from other people can feel. A lack of human contact not only can take a toll on your mental health, leading to anxiety and depression, but it can also cause your brain to become slow and sluggish. Studies show that social isolation can lead to mental fatigue (“brain fog”), lack of self-control, impaired memory, and difficulty making simple decisions. Just like our body’s muscles need exercise to stay in shape, our brains also need exercise—through stimulating activities.

Here are some easy, lockdown-friendly “mental gymnastics” to keep your mind stimulated while alone in your cell.

1) Exercise.

It’s simple: To stimulate your brain, you need to stimulate your body. Physical exercise increases the oxygen and blood flow to the brain and maximizes brain activity. One university study discovered that three vigorous, 40-minute walks per week over a six-month period improved memory and reasoning. You may need to settle for jogging in place or walking in circles in your cell, but movement of any kind is better than sitting still.

2) Do mental multitasking.

Grab something you have two or three of (socks, commissary items) and juggle or toss them to...
Letters to the Editor

Marcia, South Carolina
I was prompted to write a letter after reading Mr. Ackerman’s letter because it reminded me that Chuck Colson was the Founder of Prison Fellowship! I used to listen to him on [Christian radio]. … I remember him talking one day about going to the streets to preach. … It made me want to get inside the prisons to love on the hurting women and help the ones in need on the streets. And ironically, 25 years later, I’m incarcerated after backsliding in life as an inmate rededicated to following God’s every command!

Dear Marci:
Thank you for sharing your inspiring story. Keep on moving forward with Christ and encouraging others to do the same.

Rachel, Arizona
I love the newspaper that Terri’s faith began to grow. And why not. and explained the parts of the Bible that confused her. I still have anger and pride issues that allow the enemy to one-up me. I see a lot of positive changes God has made in me, but I still feel that I’m carnal so I’d like to dig deeper.

Dear Stephanie:
We all could use a makeover in some area of our lives, whether it involves getting rid of pride, anger, or some other harmful behavior. We applaud your desire to go deeper with God and exchange “jailhouse religion” for something that’s authentic. We’ll be praying for you!

Dear Rachel:
Our faith often grows when we hear about other people who trusted Jesus and had positive outcomes. Keep trusting Him in all your issues, as He is stronger than any struggle!

Rachel, Ohio
I’m interested in your “fired up” Bible study. I think I’m suffering with jailhouse religion, because I still have anger and pride issues that allow the enemy to one-up me. I see a lot of positive changes God has made in me, but I still feel that I’m carnal so I’d like to dig deeper.

Dear Marci:
Thank you for your non-dominant hand (if you’re right-handed, put the pencil in your left hand). Or do a “double doodle” with a pencil in each hand, drawing random shapes or specific scenes.

4) Play the categories game.
Either on paper or in your head, pick a category (brands of jeans, names of TV shows, famous singers, etc.) and see how many you can list. To challenge yourself even more, see how many you can list that only start with a certain letter.

5) Play the memory game.
Closing your eyes, see how many details you can recall of your daily life. What specific objects are in your cell? What color is the floor in the cafeteria? How many tables are outside on the yard? What color hair do the different corrections officers have? Do any of them have a beard? What did you eat for lunch three days ago?

6) Play the memory game, the drawing version.
In this spin on #5, use pencil and paper to test your memory. Draw a map of your hometown. See how detailed you can get with the street and business names. Or draw your home or bedroom from childhood.

7) Learn a new skill or language.
If you have access to the prison library, check out books on hobbies you can learn in your cell, such as origami (which only requires paper) and calligraphy (which only requires a pen and paper). And lockdown might be a good time to pick up a new language.

Try these ideas or create mental gymnastics of your own. It’s important to keep your mind sharp during times of boredom, loneliness, or lockdown. And don’t forget to eat healthily (see page 4 for more on healthy eating) and get enough sleep. Your mind and body will thank you.

Subscription Info
At Inside Journal® (IJ), we receive many letters each week from prisoners asking for subscriptions to our newspaper. Because of limitations on our staff and budget, IJ is only available in bulk shipments to your chaplain, programming coordinator, or a volunteer who visits your facility. Chaplains, to set up these shipments for free, please contact our editorial staff at: P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790 or insidejournal@pfm.org.

NEED A BIBLE?
Get a free Inside Journal Life Recovery Bible!

WRITE TO:
Tyndale House Publishers
Attn: Inside Journal Bible
351 Executive Drive
Carol Stream, IL 60188

DON’T FORGET!
Include this information to make sure your Bible gets delivered:
✓ Your complete name and prison ID number
✓ Your facility name
✓ Your facility address for prisoner parcel delivery
✓ Whether you want English or Spanish*

*Bibles are available in large print English or large print Spanish. Limit one Bible per person.
by Stacia Ray

M y close friend Mike was barely 32 years old when he was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. For years after, he endured chronic pain and was in and out of hospitals. Yet no matter how much he hurt, or how close to death he came, he always seemed to be in a good mood. He was always so peaceful, content, happy. I didn't really understand it, but I admired it. How could someone suffering so much be so happy, while I griped and complained about minor things?

It turns out Mike wasn't experiencing happiness. He was experiencing joy. And when I truly learned the difference, it changed my life.

Happiness is a temporary feeling that's a reaction to something external. Joy is a deeper state of being that's internal. Unshakable joy comes only from God, and it's as simple as accepting Jesus into your heart and finding contentment in His salvation. Well, actually, it's not quite that simple.

Superficial earthly goals
Since childhood, we're taught to seek happiness. We've been conditioned to chase after fancy cars, celebrity mansions, problem-free relationships. Yet life isn't problem-free. We've been conditioned to seek happiness. We've been taught to seek happiness. Superficial earthly goals are not salvation. Well, actually, it's as simple as accepting Him, we can trust that He has a greater plan in mind. UNshakable joy comes only from God, and it's as simple as accepting Jesus into your heart and finding contentment in His salvation. God is Sovereign, God is Love.

Priceless heavenly goals
Joy should be our goal in all moments, even the hard times. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says to "always be joyful," not just when life is good. The translated word for joy is mentioned in the Bible several hundred times. (Happiness is mentioned fewer than a dozen times.)

So how do we find joy in difficult times? First, we need to get to know God better. Once we understand that He works all things (even painful things) together for the good of those who love Him, we can trust that He has a greater plan in mind. He also says that if we follow His commandments, our joy will overflow (John 15:10)—but we also need to really learn those commandments. Second, we need to actively seek joy. You may need to work at this at first, especially after seeking earthly happiness for so long. But in time, Christ's joy will start to flow through even painful moments. Troubles will become an opportunity to give thanks and to grow. When it comes to seeking joy in hardships, I'm still a work in progress. But watching Mike live out James 1:2-3 has inspired me so much. Despite his extreme pain, he rarely complained and instead focused on the joy of Christ. I want to be more like that.

Mike went to heaven this week. He was only 38 and left behind a wife and young kids. But he also left me these priceless reminders: Stop seeking earthly happiness and instead choose godly joy. Appreciate every breath, even the painful ones. And no matter how difficult things get, remember the truth proclaimed in Nehemiah 8:10: “Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

WHO IS GOD?

God is Good,
God is Merciful,
God is Love,
God is Sovereign,
God is Holy.

Would you like to participate in this free 5-lesson Bible Study?

WRITE TO:

CLI Who Is God Study
P.O. Box 97095
Raleigh, NC 27624

Please specify whether you’d like to receive the study in English or Spanish. Also available on tablets in select facilities.
Better Health Behind Bars

During a recent National Inmate Survey, 40% of people behind bars (in prison or jail) reported having a current chronic medical condition, with high blood pressure being the most common chronic condition reported. And 21% reported having ever had tuberculosis, hepatitis B or C, or other STDs (excluding HIV).

Health problems are common behind bars. And although some medical conditions require medication or treatment, some can be helped through better lifestyle choices. Things like prayer, meditation, exercise, restful sleep, and healthy eating habits help us stay healthy and ward off diseases. Superfoods like blueberries, broccoli, kale, and arichokes have antioxidants that can help our body’s cells function properly. But when’s the last time you bought fresh kale at the commissary?

There are some commissary-friendly ways to stay healthy while incarcerated. Here are a few to get you started:

- Limit your salt and caffeine intake, which can raise blood pressure and hinder deep sleep.
- Go nuts! Walnuts, pecans, chestnuts, and even peanuts are rich in antioxidants (which may reduce the risk of diseases); almonds contain more fiber and Vitamin E than any other nut; macadamia nuts contain the most monounsaturated fat (shown to lower cholesterol and blood pressure). Just be careful not to eat too many at once, as nuts are also high in fat.
- Fill up on oatmeal! Oatmeal can help lower cholesterol, can improve blood sugar, is filling, and is high in fiber, antioxidants, and nutrients. Just be warned that some flavored oatmeal packets contain sweeteners and artificial ingredients, which can be unhealthy.
- Get fishy! Canned tuna, sardines, and salmon are all vitamin-rich, lean proteins that are high in Omega-3 nutrients, which can help your heart and mind stay healthy. See recipe in box for a yummy spin on canned tuna.

Hope Reaches In

As the pandemic continues into 2021, Prison Fellowship has continued to serve incarcerated men and women in creative ways. Despite the colder winter temperatures making it harder to have outdoor activities, Hope Events have continued, including some outdoor events in warmer climates and even some indoor events with social distancing, masks, and other safety measures in place.

Prison Fellowship partnered with departments of corrections to bring hope inside however possible. This has included hosting more virtual Hope Events through Floodlight™ — the video-based platform created last year in response to the pandemic’s limitations on indoor events—and hosting more “outside-in” Hope Events that took place just outside the prison fence. These events include musical performances, testimonies, and an altar call, where dozens of prisoners continue to dedicate or rededicate their lives to Jesus.

So many families last year said their Angel Tree gift came “at the perfect time.”

Roll halfway, then fold inward and finish rolling. (Hint: tortillas can crack, but if warmed first, they will be more flexible.) Warm the tuna wraps in a hot pot or microwave or eat cold.

Note: Some of these ingredients may not be available, and restrictions on cooking vary. Be sure to comply with your facility’s rules and regulations. Also, this content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Talk to your facility’s medical staff about any questions you may have regarding a health condition.

Zesty Tuna Wraps

- 6 oz. tuna, drained
- 1 tbsp. salsa
- ½ small pickle, diced
- ½ tsp. ranch dressing or creamy cheese
- ½ tbsp. low-fat mayo
- 1 flour tortilla
- ½ oz. Velveeta-style cheese

Combine tuna, salsa, pickle, ranch dressing, and mayo in a bowl, stirring until well blended. Place 1 tortilla (the wrap) on a clean work surface. Spread cheese along one edge of wrap. Place tuna filling on top of cheese. Roll wrap starting at the edge with the filling.

For more prisoner recipes, visit AngelTree.org/recipes.

News + Notes