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When Broken Dreams Become a Better Reality

by Aman Mengistu

Kadesh grew up a member of a large Native American community in Henryetta, Oklahoma, where poverty was common. He watched his single mom work hard but struggle to provide for him and his three siblings.

At a young age, Kadesh thought he had found a way out of poverty: football. He started playing in third grade, and by high school, various colleges were scouting him as a potential recruit. But his junior year, his dreams of a football scholarship were shattered by a serious knee injury.

"I went to go tackle somebody, and my foot got caught in the grass," Kadesh recalls. "Then everybody rolled over on it, and it popped." That



photo submitted by Kadesh

When Kadesh's leg was crushed, so were his dreams of escaping his difficult childhood. Pain medication turned to addiction and incarceration. But prison became the unlikely place that gave him true freedom.

pop was the sound of his ACL ligament tearing, which Kadesh calls "probably the most pain I've ever had in my life."

Kadesh had surgery to repair his knee. Afterward, he didn't keep up with his physical therapy, but he did

keep taking the pain pills. "That's when my addiction got started," he says.

From athlete to dope dealer

Before his injury, Kadesh's main identity was athlete. "That's

what I did and that's what everybody knew I did. I played sports, and I was good at it." Without sports in his life, and with a growing addiction, he soon began to get in trouble.

"I was definitely running with the wrong

crowd," he says. "I started hanging around with gang members and people selling drugs, and I thought that was cool." Just three months before his graduation date, Kadesh was kicked out of high school for getting into a fight.

After that, Kadesh says, "I really didn't know what else to do except sell [and use] drugs." His view of himself changed. "That's where I was starting to get my identity at now. So I went from being a great athlete to a dope dealer."

Kadesh was making a lot of money running drugs between different cities in Oklahoma. Then his life came to a screeching halt when his best friend was murdered. Devastated, Kadesh became depressed.

Continued on page 2

5 Tips for Managing Anger Behind Bars

by Prison Fellowship

Prison can really test your limits. Maybe you're seeing red because your lawyer is working too slowly on your appeal. You're annoyed with your spouse and friends because your commissary money didn't arrive. Someone says something rude to you. You get turned down by the parole board. All these things can trigger rage.

Although you can't control other people, you can learn to control your reaction to them. It's sometimes easier said than done, but here are five ways to manage your anger:

1. Evaluate your thoughts.

Walk away to avoid saying something you'll regret in the heat of the moment. Count to 10. Take deep breaths.

2. Get more information before reacting.

You can't read people's minds, so

you may never know all the reasons for a person's behavior. If you're married and your wife hasn't been

answering your calls, instead of assuming she no longer cares about you, consider other explanations. Perhaps she is sick. Her phone may be lost. Maybe she picked up another work shift to temporarily help her parents with their medical expenses. Before you leap to conclusions, try to stay calm until you learn the whole story.

Continued on page 6

Letters to the Editor

Sidney in Virginia

I recently had a chance to read your Inside Journal winter edition. There was an article about finances that was very knowledgeable. I am writing to see if you can give me some information on how I can join Faith & Finances or if you know of any financial literacy programs that I will be able to join. I have a goal to not only learn for myself but also be able to start a group program where my fellow prisoners will be able

learn as well at whatever prison I am at. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Dear Sidney:

Whether you have access to financial classes, and what those classes might be, will vary by facility. Ask your counselor or check your prison library for resources. You can also ask your chaplain to visit chaplains. prisonfellowship.org to see a list of free resources they can order to help you and your peers. God bless you on your quest for financial freedom!

John in North Carolina

I have been sitting in this jail and I keep trying to turn my life around, but I feel like I keep dwelling on the past. ... I read my Bible each day and know that Jesus saved me by getting me away from the destructive life that I was living. I have got a Prison Fellowship Life Recovery Bible that I read each day, and it has helped me a lot. I just want to do what I can to stay focused so that I don't keep backsliding. ... I want to be done with my old life and be clean and free. I'm tired of these thoughts



of the past [that] keep popping up. If you know of anything that will help me move forward, please let me know.

Dear John:

If you don't already have it, the Inside Journal Life Recovery Bible's accompanying workbook is a helpful resource (see ad below for more

information). Remember that the road to recovery is often long and difficult, so be sure to give yourself grace on your journey. Multiple relapses are not uncommon during recovery, so even if you backslide, don't give up. We will be praying for you.

**Sincerely,
The Editorial Staff ■**

NEED A BIBLE?

**Get a free Inside Journal
Life Recovery Bible!**

NOW WITH A WORKBOOK!

WRITE TO:

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

Include this information to make sure your Bible or Workbook 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 and Workbooks are available in English or Spanish. You can order a Bible and Workbook together, or separately. Limit one order per person.*



Better Reality

Continued from page 1

He decided to make a fresh start by moving to Wyoming, where he found a girlfriend and eventually became a father.

After several years, Kadesh was charged with his first felony: drug possession. Although he was given a 10-year suspended sentence, he continued to sell drugs and started getting into financial crime, writing forged checks. "It worked for a little while," Kadesh says, "until it didn't."

Within just three months of receiving his first felony charge, Kadesh was arrested again for fraud and drug possession and was sentenced to 12 years in prison and 18 years of probation. One evening before his sentence began, Kadesh realized his life was out of control, and he cried out to God for help.

"I just broke down that night and I prayed," he remembers, "I can't do this no more. This is all in Your hands. I can't seem to shake this addiction." After this prayer, Kadesh says, "I just felt relief." The spiritual journey that started that night continued while he was incarcerated.

In prison, Kadesh started reading the Bible and connecting with the Christian faith. With this newfound faith, Kadesh recalls feeling some tension from prisoners and from his own Native American community, since faith can be a touchy subject.

But he challenged others to see his perspective, trying to find ways to make God relatable to people who think differently.

Kadesh grew in his faith and stayed sober. He also became eager to expand his education. "I took every class I could possibly take," says Kadesh. This eventually led to a transfer to a work center facility. After serving three and a half years of his sentence, Kadesh became eligible for work release.

Thriving on the outside

After leaving prison, Kadesh was hired in the maintenance department of a hotel management company. Over the next five years, he was promoted three times, eventually becoming chief engineer overseeing two Marriott hotels. Kadesh has been able to use his experience to connect other former prisoners to local jobs.

"It's not the end of the road ... if you've got God in your life, He's fixing to take you up and beyond."

Kadesh also served in the prison ministry of his local church, where he met a woman who was also recently incarcerated. They got married and had a daughter.

Kadesh has also been able to reconnect with his older kids and be involved in their lives. He loves being able to provide for his children. He also loves serving with his wife in prison ministry. He currently preaches once a month and is working toward becoming a licensed pastor.

Kadesh is passionate about encouraging people who are incarcerated to never give up hope. He recently spoke at a Prison Fellowship Academy class about his journey. "It's not the end of the road ... if you've got God in your life, He's fixing to take you up and beyond," he says. "Just don't give up." ■

Unhappy Holidays: When We Feel Alone

by Dillon Shaw

During the last year of my incarceration, one of my deepest fears became a part of my reality. Around Christmas of 2019, nine short months before my earliest release date, my mother died. Her death was unexpected, and so was the intense storm of grief that followed. After she passed away, I experienced a depth of pain and loneliness that I never knew existed.

While pain must be acknowledged and processed, loneliness is a parasite that hitches a ride on whatever it can until it invades our minds. And like a parasite, loneliness needs a host. It clings to conflict and leeches off our insecurities. When abuse occurs, loneliness sneaks in undetected and uses shame or fear to push us deeper into isolation.

Loneliness can even hijack seasons meant to bring joy and togetherness. Whether it's as a result of poor choices, death, unhealthy habits, believing lies, or more, loneliness will use whatever tools necessary to make you feel alone and unworthy.

Have you recently experienced loneliness? Why is loneliness such a fearful or paralyzing experience? According to Psychology Today, "Though our need to connect is [instinctive], many of us frequently feel alone. Loneliness is the state of distress or discomfort that results when one perceives a gap between one's desires for social connection and actual experiences of it. Even some people who are surrounded by others throughout the day ... still experience a deep loneliness. Research suggests that loneliness poses serious threats to well-being as well as long-term physical health."

Even the most independent introvert has a desire for connection with others. Sometimes the loneliness we experience is a result of what we think is true, not necessarily what is true.

Created for connection

In the Bible, God demonstrates the value of relationships over and over. God created man to have a relationship with Him in the garden of Eden. In Genesis 2, we're told that God said it wasn't good for man to be alone, so God provided a partner in Eve.

Throughout Exodus (especially chapters 1–34), God called the people of Israel to be His own special community, a chosen nation. Even God's decision to send His only Son to earth was about relationships: Jesus made the idea of an almighty God relatable. People could intimately connect with Jesus in a personal relationship.

God's call to every one of us is a to live a life-long, life-giving relationship with Him. In Deuteronomy 31:8, Moses, a leader of God's people, declares, "Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you."



RuthBlack/Getty Images

The truth that God will never abandon us is echoed throughout the entire Bible. Matthew 1:23 talks about the upcoming birth of Jesus, saying "[Mary] will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" We are never alone if we ask God into our hearts.

All we have to do is cry out to Him, and He will rescue us from the storms of life (Matthew 14:22–32).

A lighthouse in the darkness

At one point during that dark, cold, lonely storm of my mother's death, I felt like I was drowning in the pain. But I cried out to the God who loves you and me, the God who is willing to ease our loneliness and pain to be with us. And He met me in that darkness and assured me of the truth once again that He will never fail me or abandon me.

In that moment when I cried out, I felt a tug in my heart of God directing me to "Get up and go ask for help!" with a sense of urgency. So I walked out of my room, carrying the weight of my painful loneliness, still crying bitter tears. Just then, one of my closest friends, a follower of Jesus, was walking up the floor below me, and I asked him for help.

In John 14:15–23, Jesus declares that He will not leave us alone, but that He will

come to us. He promises that He and the Father will make their homes in the hearts of those who trust in Him. And even more, all those who trust in Him become a family, a community of belonging and purpose deeper than blood could ever run.

So this season, if you feel lonely, cry out to the God who promises to be with you. He will be with you. And make the move to reach out to those who follow Jesus because they will be with you too! ■

COLSON QUOTE CORNER:

In 1976, Chuck Colson—a political advisor who served under President Richard Nixon and was incarcerated for Watergate-related charges—founded Prison Fellowship, which is now the nation's largest Christian nonprofit serving prisoners, former prisoners, and their families, and a leading advocate for criminal justice reform. Chuck passed away in 2012 at age 80, but his ministry continues to grow, with Prison Fellowship programming in all 50 states and Prison Fellowship International programming in more than 113 countries. ■



Photo by Prison Fellowship

"One of the most wonderful things about being a Christian is that I don't ever get up in the morning and wonder if what I do matters. I live every day to the fullest because I can live it through Christ and I know no matter what I do today, I'm going to do something to advance the Kingdom of God." —Chuck Colson

TIRED OF FEELING LONELY?

When you hit the pillow at night, does loneliness creep in? Even someone with dozens of friends can feel lonely. That's because humans can't fully satisfy our need to be understood and to feel loved unconditionally. Only God can fulfill that need. Numbers 23:19 talks about God being even more reliable than any person: "God is not a man, so He does not lie. He is not human, so He does not change his mind." James 4:8 asks us to turn to God above turning to the world: "Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world."

God created us for relationships, and not just with people, but with Him. He wants us to carve out quiet time and talk to Him. He says in Revelation 3:20, "I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends." That doesn't mean God will show up in your cell with a plate of burgers tonight. But it means He will be there when you feel alone, curing your loneliness like the most amazing friend imaginable—if you let Him into your heart.

The biggest way God showed us His love is greater than any human affection was by sending His one and only Son Jesus to die as a payment for our sins, so that anyone who believes may have eternal life.

The next time you feel lonely, consider asking God into your heart and accepting His free gift of eternal salvation.

Not sure where to begin? Start with this simple prayer:

"Dear Jesus, I don't want to feel alone ever again. I surrender my life to You. I confess my sins and ask Your forgiveness. Please take away my loneliness. Help me to feel Your presence. Amen."

To learn more about Jesus or to sign up for a free correspondence Bible study through one of our trusted partner organizations, write to us at "LONELY," c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. For a free Bible or accompanying study guide/workbook, see our ad on page 2.

OVERCOMING LONELINESS:

Activities for Isolation

by S.L. Ray

Christmastime Hallmark movies and TV commercials show families sharing meals together and bonding through laughter. But behind bars, life can sometimes feel pretty lonely. And not just during the holidays, but in any time of isolation, quarantine, or restrictive housing (segregation).

Thankfully, there are healthy ways to keep your brain engaged and help prevent loneliness. Here are five activities to distract you if you're ever stuck in isolation. Write to us to share any other activities that help you. And read the "Unhappy Holidays" article on the previous page to learn how we are never truly alone.

1. Perfect your penmanship.

The Inside Journal staff is blown away by the artistic handwriting of some of our readers in their letters to us. Handwritten letters and cursive writing are becoming more artful as typing becomes more common. To stay stimulated and keep away boredom, try different fonts and cursive styles. Try calligraphy. (See below.) Try writing left-handed if you're right-handed or writing right-handed if you're left-handed.

2. Serve selflessly.

Research shows that service is an act of connection that will help lift you from your loneliness. Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Although you can't directly serve others while you're isolated, isolation won't last

forever. Use this time alone to write out your strengths and be ready to offer help to others once you get out of isolation. Are you athletic? Develop an exercise routine or yoga moves you can teach others when you're no longer isolated. Artistic? Create coloring pages fellow prisoners can give to

their kids. Musical? Write inspirational songs to encourage others. And speaking of music ...

3. Practice the piano.

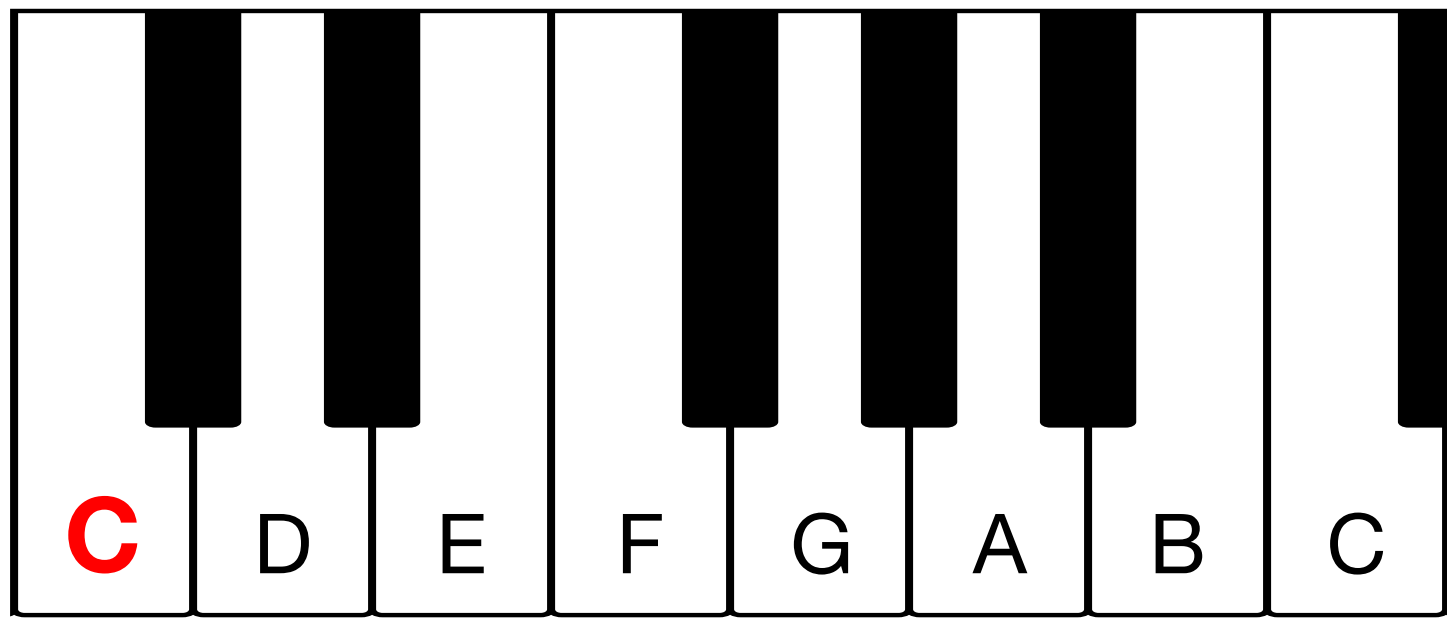
Use the drawing below to learn the piano keys. You can even teach yourself chords. Here are the chords for "Silent Night":

Silent Night (G),
holy night (G),
all is calm (D),
all is bright (G),
round yon Virgin (C)
Mother and Child (G)

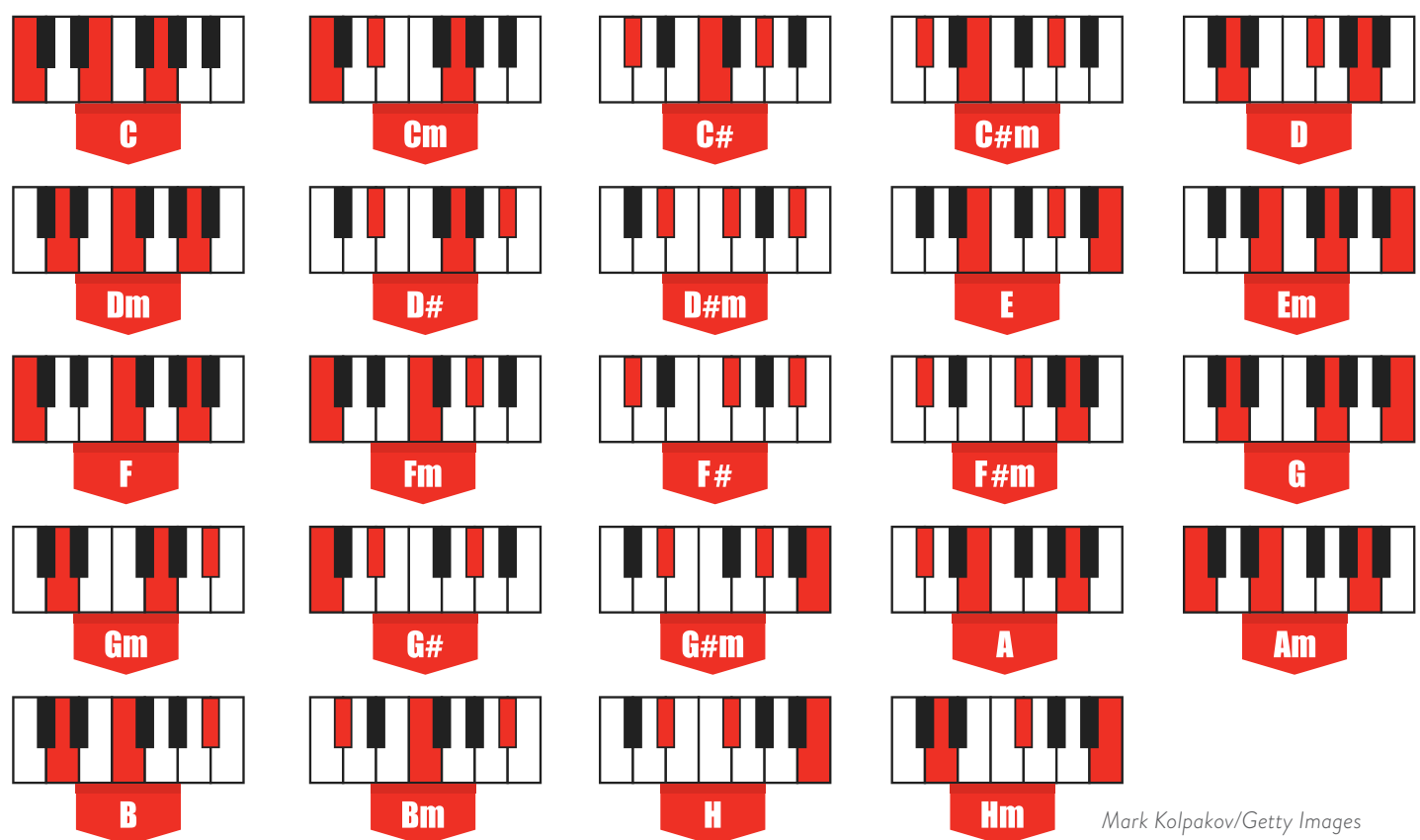
holy infant so (C)
tender and mild (G)
sleep (D)
in heavenly peace (G),
sleep in heavenly (D)
peace (G).

Other songs with these same three chords are "Come Thou Fount" and "Amazing Grace" (hymns), "Love Me Do" (The Beatles), "Sweet Home Alabama" (Lynyrd Skynyrd), "La Bamba" (Ritchie Valens), "Ring of Fire" (Johnny Cash), and more.

Piano & Chords

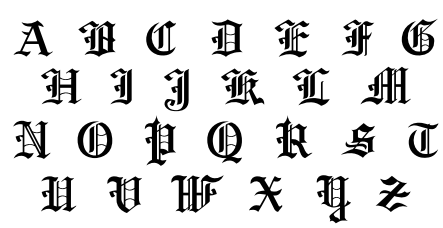
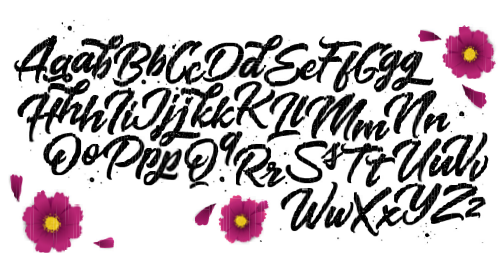


PeterHermesFurian/Getty Images



Mark Kolpakov/Getty Images

Calligraphy



Lefthand: Very Well/Getty Images
Middle: paseven/Getty Images
Righthand: geengraphy/Getty Images

4. Meditate with a mandala.

Deep breathing exercises are great for calming anxiety and loneliness. But did you know drawing repetitive patterns is another great way to soothe stress and move through difficult emotions? Take a few minutes to meditate, pray, or reflect on a favorite Bible verse while making the art project **to the right**.

5. Love life.

“If you make friends with yourself, you will never be alone,” wrote surgeon and author Maxwell Maltz. This might be easier said than done. But even when your self-esteem is low, you still have positive traits. And even on bad days, there are still blessings, if you look hard enough. List the things about yourself that you like. List the people or activities that bring you joy. List all the good parts of your day, even if the best part is that it’s over. You get to start fresh tomorrow. ■

Mandala
Meditation

This art project is based on a Prison Fellowship Create: New Beginnings (C:NB) in-prison workshop. C:NB is a program for incarcerated women, but the relaxation techniques used here can apply to both men and women.

Supplies:

- Pencil
- Pen
- Paper
- Colored pencils (optional)



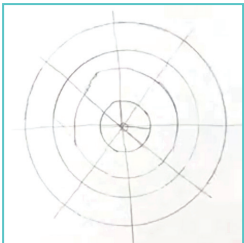
MAKING EMOTIONS INTO ART:
(Featuring the drawings of artist Stephanie Logan Segel)

Directions:

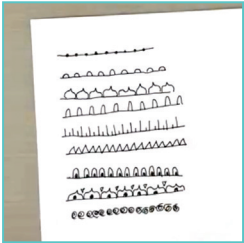


Using a pencil, draw a circle in the center of your paper. This will be the largest of several circles

you will draw. You can trace the base of a cup or other round object. But it doesn’t need to be perfect. Next, draw a smaller circle inside the larger one. Then draw an even smaller one inside of that. Continue with as many smaller circles as you’d like.

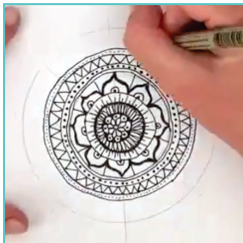


Next, divide your circles into sections. Use an item (like the edge of a book) to keep your lines straight.

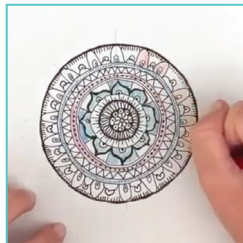


Next, determine which patterns you will want to use to build your mandala.

Some common shapes are: lines, dots, circles, small petals, bigger petals, triangles. Or create your own unique pattern.



Start from the center and build the mandala outward, using combinations of different sizes of your chosen shapes/patterns.



You may decide to color your patterns using colored pencils. If so, use the time that you’re coloring to reflect on your emotions and process your feelings.

FROM THE INSIDE OUT:
Christmas Choir

Elizabeth in Florida reached out to Inside Journal to share this story, hopefully as an inspiration for other prisoners who may someday want to organize something similar. (Be sure to follow your facility’s rules and regulations.)

“In early November [2021], I asked a respected inmate if she would be interested in helping to coordinate a Christmas choir. A

talented singer, she was instantly enthusiastic, and we started passing the word around the camp. We posted a notice on dorm bulletin boards for rehearsals and practiced for the next six weeks. On December 23 at 6 p.m. in the courtyard, the chorus of about 15 women performed around 12 secular and sacred songs, I read from Luke 2 and read the back story to the song ‘Silent Night,’ and



about a dozen of us performed sign language to ‘Silent Night.’ About 100 inmates, including performers, attended.

[That’s] half the camp! It lasted about 20 minutes and was an overwhelming success.” ■

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Do you have an inspiring story you want to share with our readers? Or even a great recipe using commissary items? Please send your poems, recipes, or other works to: **SUBMISSIONS**, c/o Inside Journal, P.O. Box 1790, Ashburn, VA 20146-1790. Please also write “I give Prison Fellowship permission to publish my submission” somewhere on your letter. **NOTE:** Submissions may be edited for content or space. Not all submissions will be printed. If selected, your works will be printed with your first name only; no last name or personal information will be included.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL TEAR-OUT

by Rose Shannon

Tear out this daily devotional and then start each morning and/or end each night saying it and praying over it. You’ll be amazed by how a healthy spiritual habit like this can bring encouragement and focus to each day!

Promises That Keep

JOSHUA 21:45 SAYS:

“Not a single one of all the good promises the LORD had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything he had spoken came true.”

Have you ever waited on a promise? Have you ever clung to what feels like the last piece of hope you have left? Maybe you’re holding onto that hope right now. Perhaps it’s the promise of a visit from a loved one, or an answer to a prayer you’ve whispered to God time and time again.

Just like a chef takes time to carefully prepare and gather all the best ingredients before cooking and serving a delicious meal, God takes time to prepare our hearts so we can really taste and appreciate the goodness of His promises to us. His timing is perfect, and sometimes His timing involves waiting.

The Bible tells us the story of one of the biggest promises ever made: the arrival of a Savior who would pay for the sins of the world.

The people of Israel waited hundreds of years, through persecution and slavery, to see the proof of what God had promised.

While they waited, God’s people assumed He would send a Savior in the form of a strong ruler who would destroy their enemies with the sword and free them through political revolution.

Instead, God sent Jesus—a helpless little baby born in a small town. Although the fulfilled promise looked different, God’s way was far better than what they could have imagined.

Think about that for a moment. Instead of sending a tough military giant, God sent His only Son, a tender, loving human who walked among His creation and intimately understood human suffering. Jesus, God in the flesh, desired a deep relationship with each one of His followers. Best of all, this compassionate and kind Jesus was still all-powerful, defeating sin and death through His eventual crucifixion and resurrection.

At Christmas, we celebrate the promised gift of eternal life through Jesus: the ultimate display of hope.

As you think about what you are hoping for right now, remember that God’s promises, and His timing, are perfect and reliable. He is not like the people who have left you disappointed or empty-handed. God is ready to provide for you beyond your wildest dreams of hope. You need only to trust in Him.



RomoloTavani/Getty Images

Managing Anger Continued from page 1

3. Identify potential solutions.

Don’t focus on who’s right or wrong; focus on a solution. Instead of stewing in anger over your unanswered calls to your wife, maybe you and your wife can agree to write each other weekly. That way, feelings won’t run wild when you can’t call or when she’s unable to answer. Just remember not to overreact if her letter is ever running late.

4. Rely on God for your worth and security.

You may feel anxious, weak, or worthless when you believe the ugly things people say about you. Don’t let unkind people have power over you. Your worth is not based on whether someone treats you with respect. Your worth is established by God, and He values you. As you grow in your relationship with Him, you’ll stop making other people responsible for your feelings.

5. Be willing to forgive.

Forgiveness pours cool water on wounds and begins healing. It doesn’t mean you’re allowing yourself to be a doormat. Forgiveness is about refusing to allow your pain to make you bitter.

The prison environment breeds anger. But when your thoughts are raging and you feel like lashing out, remember you have options. Take the energy you would have spent on anger and use it toward being at peace with yourself. ■

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ANGER GOES UNCHECKED?

Anger issues can lead to undesirable outcomes—restrictive housing, loss of privileges, revenge from peers, and more. And when you allow your anger to build, your mental and physical health can suffer, too. Severe anger can cause the following ailments:

1. Headaches
2. Digestion Issues
3. Insomnia
4. High Blood Pressure
5. Skin Rashes
6. Depression
7. Heart Attack
8. Stroke

2023 CALENDAR

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” —John 16:33

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
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HOLIDAYS

JAN. 1 – New Year's Day
JAN. 16 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
FEB. 14 – Valentine's Day
FEB. 20 – Presidents Day
APRIL 9 – Easter
MAY 14 – Mother's Day
MAY 29 – Memorial Day
JUNE – Ask your chaplain for an Angel Tree participation form.

JUNE 18 – Father's Day
JULY 4 – Independence Day
AUGUST – Don't forget to submit your Angel Tree participation form.
SEPT. 4 – Labor Day
NOV. 11 – Veterans Day
NOV. 23 – Thanksgiving Day
DEC. 25 – Christmas Day

IMPORTANT DATES:

NEWS + NOTES

by E.G. Andrews

Civil Rights Restored to Virginians

The Decarceration and Community Reentry Clinic* at the University of Virginia (UVA) School of Law is shedding light on the issues people face after prison. Recently, clinic student Meredith Kilburn helped restore a man's civil rights by submitting a petition to the Charlottesville, Virginia, circuit court on his behalf.

Those convicted of felonies are often prohibited from carrying, or even being in the presence of, a firearm. If they ride in a car with a gun owner or visit someone who has a gun in their home, for example, they are at risk of being rearrested.

Whitmore Merrick Jr. served time after riding in a car where a gun was found. He now works as a reentry peer navigator helping former prisoners learn how to have a successful reentry.

Merrick has put his justice system experience to use by mentoring others. He also volunteers in his community and founded a movement supporting local returning citizens.

With the help of UVA law students, Merrick's Second Amendment right to possess a firearm was restored May 17.

His colleague Shadee Gilliam's same right was

restored May 26.

Helping restore their civil rights "didn't even feel like a hard issue for me," Kilburn told UVA news, "because it was clear they deserve every right that every other citizen has, because they do just as much—if not more—for Charlottesville and the community than other people who do have all their rights."

**The Decarceration and Reentry Clinic at UVA is not affiliated with or endorsed by Prison Fellowship. Reentry clinics such as this are independently operated, and their policies/procedures vary by state and by organization.*

Sneak Peek: Second Chance Month Is Coming!

Since 2017, Prison Fellowship has led the charge to celebrate April as Second Chance Month®.

This nationwide effort exists to unlock brighter futures for people with a criminal record. In 2022, more than 700 church congregations, businesses, and organizations partnered with Prison Fellowship to celebrate second chances throughout April. The White House even issued an official declaration.

At Prison Fellowship, we believe every person has value and potential to make good on a second chance. Every person should have an

opportunity to succeed once they have paid their debt to society. And the start of a new year is a great time to begin thinking about how you can advocate for second chances all year long—because all of us have a role to play.

Did you know you can celebrate second chances before your release date? Prison Fellowship hosts Second Chance 5K events, as well as prayer walks, to raise awareness and support for returning citizens. You can organize your own Second Chance Month walk on the yard with a friend or two (be sure to comply with your facility's rules and regulations).

Prayer is another powerful tool you can use to support second chances while still incarcerated. You can start with this simple prayer. Perhaps you can say this prayer every evening in April in honor of Second Chance Month:

God, thank You for providing the ultimate second chance through Jesus Christ. Because of His death and resurrection, I have hope for tomorrow. Help me to forgive others as You have forgiven me. Thank You for the promise of redemption!

Successful reentry is the goal when you

READER RECIPES

Not all ingredients will be available at all facilities. Be sure to comply with your facility's rules and regulations whenever cooking.

Mocha's Dippy Dip

Submitted by Jesse in Texas

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 bag of tortilla chips
- 1 bag/container of refried beans
- 1 package of cream cheese
- 1 bottle of hot sauce (amount varies)
- 1 bag of pork skins/rinds
- 1 bottle of squeeze cheese
- 1 pouch of chunky chicken



bhoack2/Getty Images

DIRECTIONS:

Put refried beans in a bowl and microwave to medium consistency. In a separate bowl, mix chunky chicken, cream cheese, and hot sauce (how much depends on how spicy you like it). Make a layer of beans using half the refried beans. Then add a layer of the chicken mix. And finally, top with remaining beans. Sprinkle crushed pork skins/rinds over the top, followed by desired amount of squeeze cheese. Use tortilla chips to scoop the dip. Enjoy! ■

are released. When you get out, you want to stay out! But second chances start before your release. You can prepare for reentry by understanding your parole conditions, getting ready for the job search, finding a potential church to attend, and more. The more prepared you feel before your release, the better off you'll be after you're out. ■



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BEING RELEASED SOON?

Check out the Colson Scholarship started by Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship. The Colson Scholarship is available to eligible returning citizens who want to attend Wheaton College in Illinois (wheaton.edu).

To learn more, visit prisoninstitute.com/colson-scholarship. Or to get more tips and tools for a successful release, ask your chaplain to email us at insidejournal@pfm.org to order our free Inside Journal Reentry specialty edition.

Once you have access to a computer, use this link to go to the Colson Scholarship Page: <https://correctionalministries.org/colson-scholarship/>

Who is eligible? Applicants must:

- Be a Christian
- Be a U.S. citizen
- Have a felony record (Note: Felonies must NOT include sexual offenses, arson, or repeat violent offenses)
- Be out of jail or prison for at least one full year by April 1 of the application year
- Be established in a local church
- Be accepted into Wheaton College undergraduate or graduate school