

PRISON-ASHRAM PROJECT

A LITTLE NEWS

SPRING 1989

FEARLESS ADVENTURE VERSUS ENDLESS STRUGGLE

This is transcribed from a talk Bo gave in October '88 at the Church of Religious Science in Salt Lake City, Utah. Everyone there felt it was very special, so we want to share it with you. The tape of this 20-minute talk is available upon request. Prisoners, please be sure you have permission to receive a tape before you request it. Non-prisoners, please try to send a donation to help cover our costs.

Also, please pay special attention to our "Other News" section in this newsletter, where we describe our book-banning conflict with the Texas Department of Corrections. We could use your help in the form of a letter of protest to the TDC.

Bo is taking some time now to do his own inner work, to keep quieting his mind to become more and more an example of what he teaches. For the time being, he's not speaking or giving workshops, and trying to answer as little personal mail as possible. I hope you're inspired by the following talk. We both love you all very much.

-- Sita Lozoff

If we accept two essential facts which are incontrovertible -- facts which know no turning -- then the doorway to a kind of spiritual liberation is opened, which takes full advantage of the Great Adventure, the Great Mystery. Not the kind of spiritual life which is just about being "nice," and about trying to insulate ourselves from negative experiences by having affirmations posted all over our refrigerators. But a kind of spiritual freedom which Christ displayed on the cross, which Buddha displayed under the Bodhi tree; a kind of spiritual freedom which is far beyond our wildest imaginings when we think of living a good life. Those two essential facts are,

- 1) Our mortal selves -- our bodies and egos -- are going to die. We're all going to die. Some of us are going to die as children and some of us are going to die as very old people, and a lot of us are going to die in-between, but we're all going to die. So we don't have anything to lose in that regard. If you eat good food, you're going to die. Eat junk food, you're going to die. That's one incontrovertible fact.
- 2) The other is -- and this may offend some of you -- we're all saved. Already. We don't have to do a damn thing for God's sake. We don't have to earn our salvation, we don't have to earn our immortality, we don't have to earn brownie points for Heaven; We are all saved. Christ did that. Buddha did that. Many beings have done that. We are saved.

Those two simple facts -- we're all going to die, and we're all saved -- open up a certain doorway, that for a lot of us takes away all of the reasoning which has led us onto the spiritual path. Because the vast majority of us, in a religious or spiritual path, are there because we want to in some way or other deny our death. We want to insulate ourselves from sickness, disease, old age, essential loneliness. We want to surround ourselves with positive statements and positive people and pretend that it's a long way off that all that other stuff's going to happen. That's a motive of fear as a basis for religion or spirituality. And some fundamentalist religions even go much further, until the entire religion is based on fear.

So if we accept those two facts, the first one of which is "we're all going to die," a lot of the motive for religious life begins to be eroded. And if we accept the other one, "we're all already saved," then it's like 99% of our other motivation goes down the tubes. "Why do I have to get up early on Sunday?" "If I'm saved, why can't I be as much of a lecher, as much of a glutton, as much of a greedy slob or pig, and unkind to my neighbors, as I want to be?" And guess what? You *can* be! And you're still as saved as I am. You're still as saved as Mother Theresa. The Divine Mother does not love you any less if you're a greedy, gluttonous, unkind pig and you die that way.

So why do any of it? Why do your Science of Mind treatments? Why read the books? Why wake up early on a Sunday? Why meditate? The only valid reason -- if we accept that we're all going to die and we're all already saved -- is that each of us, in our deepest hearts, houses an unbearable pain of feeling separate from God. God does not care if we unearth that pain, if we open to it and conquer that illusion, like Christ conquered it on the cross. We do it because we can't bear the pain of feeling separate from God. Notice that I'm not saying "*being* separate from God." I'm saying "*feeling* separate from God."

We explore the spiritual life because something in us is churning like a nuclear reactor, and no matter what we do or how successful we are, no matter how many treatments we do or how many affirmations we have on our refrigerators, no matter how kind our friends are, or the great degree of longevity that runs in our genes; in our aloneness, in the quiet of the night, there's something nagging. Something's missing. That's the Buddha's First Noble Truth: Something's missing. It's never going to be fully satiated in a church service. It's never going to be fully satiated by speaking gently or doing this or that. What each of us is on the journey of doing at some time or other, is what Christ and Buddha, and countless other beings whose names we may know or not know, have done - - which is to open. Instead of trying to become like happy horses in a pasture, finding just the best grasses and the safest places, hoping that death doesn't see us if we're under the shade of a certain tree, hoping that loneliness, pain, grief, somehow spare us if we're doing the right things and we're prancing around in the right areas of the meadow; instead of being like that, which comes from having no idea how BIG we are, we can open up to that "bigness," which we tend to feel a lot more comfortable worshipping than becoming.

Fortunately, we can worship it for many, many lifetimes, but at some point we *are* going to become it, because it's going to bother us -- that unbearable pain of feeling separate from God. The unbearable pain of not being fully enlightened. The unbearable pain of pushing away what we call "negative," and clinging so fearfully to what we call "positive." The unbearable pain of keeping up all of this activity based on an illusion -- that we're small, that we're separate. That pain becomes too much for us. Then we say, "Okay God, I want the real thing, I want the Big Enchilada. And I know it's going to hurt."

I had a surprise experience this morning, just a normal day -- I mean, this doesn't happen to me every day, but it was just on a normal morning. I woke up, beginning to get ready to come here, and I picked up the guitar somebody here was kind enough to loan me for my hotel room, and I sang a song to God; I sang a song to the Divine Mother. And at the end of the song, a couple of faces from yesterday's prison workshops began appearing in my mind. Especially one young woman, a beautiful young woman, last night at the women's prison who talked with me afterward, was talking about feeling guilt from having murdered somebody. So I was doing my normal kind of prayer this morning -- which loosely translated is, "God, please help!" -- that's my normal waking prayer -- and I began to feel this young woman's pain. Then the face of a guy from the men's prison joined hers, and I began to feel his pain, for having killed his best friend. And, in my practice, my personal practice, what it's about is opening rather than closing; that's the key image. Because when we contact pain in some way, when we contact what we call negativity, the instinctive reaction is, "shut it out." It's "Okay, let's tighten up all our affirmations, let's tighten up all our positive thoughts, because we don't want to get into this."

But the genuine spiritual path has never been for people who want that comfortable way. I'm not here to tell you something comfortable. I'm not here for you to like me. I'm here to share my spiritual journey with you, because it's one journey we're all on. I'm a revolutionary. And I'm as straight with myself as I'm being with you right now. So when I began to feel that pain this morning, I said to myself, "Don't close down!" And I kept opening, widening my embrace like the Divine Mother widens her embrace. You come to the Divine Mother and say, "Oh yeah, well how's this for evil: I raped my three-year-old daughter, forced her to drink tabasco sauce, and then cut her limbs off and put her in a trunk!" The Divine Mother doesn't close up and say, "Oh no!!!" The Divine Mother goes, "I gotta get BIGGER to hold that one." That's the meaning of "resist not evil;" "I'm big enough. I'm big enough to feel it. I'm big enough to allow it to be *exactly* what it is, without sugarcoating it, without distorting it, without 'transforming' it in some fictitious new-age way in my mind."

My God, it hurts to be that big. My God, could there be this much pain in the spiritual journey? You mean it's not just a matter of feeling a little better every day? You cry, "I don't think I can bear that pain!" And you hear the voice of God inside of you beginning to chuckle, saying "That's why it's called an *unbearable* pain, schmuck!" Do you think Christ could bear it? Christ cried out like a man. Christ cried out the unbearability of that pain. Then three days later, He said, "Here I am. We did it. We did it. It is accomplished."

So I found myself this morning in my hotel room, opening, opening... One part of my mind was saying "Oh no, John's picking me up in fifteen minutes and I'm starting to have a mystical experience." These things are so inconvenient. And I started crying like a baby. I cried like I haven't cried in a couple of years. I was just sitting in the University Park Hotel, crying my eyes out, and then got to a point where I couldn't even -- I wasn't even able to sob, I was just sort of gagging because the pain was getting so bad. By that point it wasn't just the woman's pain and the man's pain from the prison yesterday; it was my own pain, it was your pain, it was the pain of all of us suffering this delusion of separateness from God. It was the pain of feeling our separation, it was the pain of being cast out of the Garden of Eden. And I recognize by this point in my journey, the only way to be what I really need to be; the only way to be a gift for you, to make it worthwhile for you to wake up early this morning, the only way, as hard as it is -- as unbearable as it is -- is to keep opening; to go through it all, instead of directing solely toward positive, instead of pretending the negative is something other than what it is.

The punch line of it turns out to be, that while "agony" and "ecstasy" are two separate words, they're not two separate experiences. Because when the pain goes past the bearability stage, when it becomes literally *unbearable* pain, you're in the ecstasy of the Christ as well; which is also what happened this morning. Because you realize, even at that depth of pain, there's something within that -- it's hard to find words for -- which is ecstatic because it's so *pure*, it's so full, it's so intense. Something inside of you is almost saying, *You feel this pain because you are God, and you have so much Love. There is so much Love, that it breaks your heart into pieces to see yourself and all of these people on this planet in so much pain! It breaks your heart because you have so much Love.*

I just wanted to share that experience with you since it happened here in Salt Lake City. This spiritual path is about becoming free enough that, like the Divine Mother's embrace, *everything* fits within it. That's how I can go into prisons without being burned out. That's how I can meet with people who have done unspeakable things. Because your "envelope" becomes wide enough, and then that person sitting with you and looking in your eyes, doesn't feel like you're sitting there feeling so separate, like "Of course, I have compassion for you, but you did something I could never do, and I don't understand how you could do that to somebody." Instead, somebody looks in your eyes and they see, "My God, I don't know how, but he *does* understand, and he's not judging me." And they can feel comfortable.

It's a wonderful experience to accept those two essential truths -- one that we're all going to die, and very quickly, by the way. If you don't think it's quickly, ask somebody on his death bed whether it seems too soon. And the other, that we're already saved. Because from those two truths, we can cultivate a fearlessness, realizing... Well, like a wonderful line from the *Mahabharata*, the Hindu holy book which the *Bhagavad Gita* comes from, where this very virtuous and righteous king, this really great spiritual king named Yudhishthira, is challenged by an evil king to throw crooked dice, and the whole kingdom is at stake, and this great king is going to be banished, with his brothers, into the forests for thirteen years if he loses. And he already knows it's a crooked game, it's a rigged game. But it's not virtuous of him to deny the challenge. And somebody says to him, "Why are you doing this?" And he says, "Kingdom or forest, what's the difference? Over the next thirteen years, I'm going to experience happiness and misery, tragedy and beauty, good times and bad times, whether I roll the dice or not."

We are all at the tables in Vegas with unlimited chips, because we're all going to die and we're all saved already. There's nothing to lose and there's nothing to shoot for. There's this direct experience within us that is unsatisfied feeling separate from God. It's not somebody convincing you that you have to become this or that, that you have to develop this or that, to be a good girl, to be a good boy. There's a direct experience in us that is unsatisfied. We don't have to earn anything. Grace is free. And that gives a wonderful fearlessness to us, the understanding that we can all go through life like Yudhishthira, that king, and our hands don't even have to be shaking on the dice.

Suzuki Roshi, a Zen master, said, "Life is like stepping on a boat which is about to set sail and sink." That's a *liberating* feeling! Because now, we can do anything with our lives that we feel directed to do, to open up further; to get at this pain of separateness; to open up to our power, our **BIGNESS**, our incredible Godliness. We can do it without fear, because there is nothing at stake. When we walk into a church or a spiritual path like a gambler with his mortgage in his back pocket, and our hands trembling on the dice, and there's so much at stake, because we're unhappy, and we feel like our lives are passing us by and we really want to become better people before we die because we're afraid of what's going to happen to us then -- when there's all that fear, you know that's the person who always loses at the table.

But if we walk through life understanding that everybody, from sleaze to divine, is already saved, and we're all going to die; and we chart our course based on the wholeness that we want to feel directly -- not for any conceptual reason at all -- directly, because not feeling whole, not feeling free, not feeling fearless, is unsatisfactory to us. Then we become what is called, in many cultures, a "Spiritual Warrior," who is not clinging so hard to the positive and happy experiences and not pushing away so hard the sickness and misery. Then, when we do a healing, for example -- well, it's a natural instinct that if you're sick you want to get better. We don't do it because we feel that sickness is negative, that sickness is bad, sickness is uncool spiritually, whatever. You know, like many of us are blaming ourselves for cancer these days. Everybody's going to die. Sickness is all right. But it's natural to want to feel better. So *without fear*, *without* those conceptual models of embarrassment for being sick, we use whatever skills we have, which include a lot of power in our minds -- like Science of Mind. We use them as well as we can, but not because we're so attached to getting well, not because that's so important -- after all, we know that at some point we're not going to get well -- but because this is what we're here to do: To live passionately and fully, as spiritual warriors, using all the tools we have, but without fear, and without denial, and with that full embrace of the Divine Mother.

That's about all I can say to you in twenty minutes. Thank you.

RESOURCES

The PEN American Center Prison Writing Program administers an annual writing competition for incarcerated writers, and provides information and referrals to inmates about writing and publishing.

PEN PRISON WRITING PROGRAM
568 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10012

The Insider -- for prisoners by prisoners -- is an inmate news magazine from Riverfront State Prison seeking original material of relevance to prisoners. Poetry, articles on drugs, health issues, complaints about a particular prison or the system in general, or any topic of interest to prisoners and their loved ones. To submit material or for information on subscribing, write:

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OTHER NEWS

Book-banning in Texas...

Bo's latest book, *Lineage and Other Stories*, has been declared contraband by the Director's Review Committee of the Texas Department of Corrections. Noting that the second story, *The Slowest Way*, "describes in detail an inmate's attempt to escape," the TDC claims that Bo wrote the story "solely for the purpose of communicating information designed to achieve a breakdown of prisons through inmate disruption such as strikes or riots."

It's hard to imagine that the TDC actually read the story -- since the main character winds up realizing that the only real escape is within himself, and he doesn't escape the institution at all! Of course, most Texas inmates feel the story is merely an excuse to mask the TDC's discomfort over Bo's spiritual teachings. Besides banning *Lineage and Other Stories*, they have long censored *We're All Doing Time* by ripping out four pages of the letters section before allowing inmates to receive the book.

Although we try to steer clear of politics and legal battles, we can't in good conscience allow the TDC to prevent Texas prisoners from receiving our books. Texas is the only prison system in the world -- out of all fifty states and over thirty countries -- to censor our materials in any way. We pledge to the 1,000+ Texas inmates on our mailing list to do whatever we need to do to change the TDC's decision.

How about you? Whether you're in prison or not, no matter where you live, if you feel that Bo's writings are valuable, please consider letting the TDC know how you feel about their censorship and book-banning. Write them at the address below and send us a copy of your letter.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
DIRECTOR'S REVIEW COMMITTEE
BOX 99
HUNTSVILLE TX 77340

Spanish Edition of *We're All Doing Time*...

We're still on track; the book is now typeset and being prepared for printing. Copies will be available within the next couple of months, so if you know of anyone who needs this complete Spanish edition (translated masterfully by federal prisoner Ricardo Beas), let us know. We're compiling a waiting list now.

Bo's British Adventure...

A Prison Ashram Project is alive and well in England, under the leadership of Ann Wetherall and Nicholas Colloff. Bo visited there in November/December and gave prison workshops, public talks, and radio and tv interviews as well as "having tea" with the Chaplain-General of the country's prison system. English weather aside, he had a great time and was very moved by the devoted work of Ann, Nicholas and other people he had the good fortune to meet. A longer return trip is planned for later this year or next.

Update--*The Freedom of Kindness*...

Progress is slow, but the new book is trudging along. We still welcome any information you may have about human-service projects done by prisoners.

LETTERS

Dear Bo & Sita,

Well my friends, since my last letter to y'all, things have went down for me. Ya see, I'm in this Holy house of Hell, on murder in the first, got two life sentences, and discharge at death. They say I executed a judge's family on a revenge kick for placing me in jail for 10 days.

No! I didn't do it, but I knew who did and who lined up the contract. Even though there was no evidence to place me at the scene of the crime, I was railroaded.

Anyhow, since my confinement I've been constantly threatened by guards and the prison administration, harassed, and provoked by guards every day. I thought I had control on this, but that was a mistake; I feel like I'm on the first level of hell. I had requested p.c. in order to be relieved of the harassment, but was refused this, and it's only continued to have gotten worse. I'm now on my fourth day of a hunger strike, till I'm shipped out of the cell house and placed in p.c. More than likely I'll die on this, because they are covering up on this.

I don't know any more, Bo & Sita, I really don't. I've seen inmates beaten in here in full restraints, and all because the guards want to be some kind of tough guys, so to speak. No rehabilitation programs to better oneself, nor do they give a shit about any inmate. It's sick, I know. We're kept locked down almost 24 hours a day; 2 hours yard for g.p., some jobs are offered to some, but for most, it's being in a cell and having nothing to do.

I've learned a lot in life Bo, and seen all things on government and politics, and see it's a sham. Maybe peace will come one day, or in state of mind, but I see it get worse each and every day. The prisons are the hell-holes of our society. Does man really hate himself so much that he needs to have this place to survive in his so-called society?

I just don't know any more, Bo. My past has been a violent course, and I've seen this. And the reason why I wrote you at first and been reading *We're All Doing Time*, I need to get away from my past bullshit of hate and anger. Maybe it's self-pride that causes this? What do you think?

Well my friends, I must go. I'm not making too much sense and the hunger strike I'm on isn't helping any. May the Spirit of Freedom watch y'all, in life and after.

Love ya, KB

Dear KB,

Sorry to hear you're feeling so bad. I don't know what to say to you other than all the things I've written in *We're All Doing Time*. I can't get you out of there, I can't make the administration be fair, or the guards be kinder. All I have to work with is you. You do have a spiritual journey, right where you are, and it includes all the terrible things you wrote about. This is still your spiritual path; it's not some kind of unfair obstacle. This is your spiritual journey.

There is a Great Mystery going on here. Why are people so mean? Why are you doing time for this thing you didn't do? Why is there so much cruelty and violence and suffering in this world? Why do little children die of starvation? These questions occur to every decent person. Some people look at these questions and become negative and cynical: "Yeah, life really sucks!" But some people look at these questions and begin to realize that there is a Great Mystery at work. We don't understand why these things happen the way they do, but in the quietness of our minds and hearts, we can feel that there is still some basic

goodness underneath all the ugliness and sorrow, and some divine plan underneath what seems like chaos.

But your mind and heart are not quiet. You're filled with the idea that you're a "victim" of these many ugly forces. And you're angry, and hurt, and afraid, and you just want it all to change. It's easy to understand why you feel that way, but it doesn't work.

The only help I can offer you is to encourage you to look within; to constantly work on quieting your mind and heart through the kind of practices I described in *We're All Doing Time* (meditation, breathing, prayer, etc.). You can discover a feeling of power and goodness which you've never imagined existed in you. You can find a person inside yourself who is so much bigger than the guards and prison walls, that it hardly matters anymore what they try to do to you. Death itself becomes a minor detail.

These aren't just ideas or words, this is reality. The spiritual path isn't an easy road, brother. It's not as if you can just agree with a lot of good ideas. It takes tremendous work, all the time. And in that work, you have just as much of an opportunity as I do. No one is holding you back.

I send you all my blessings and prayers, brother. Bo

Dear Bo,

Thanks, brother! Your letter brought me encouragement and spiritual strength, something on which I can grow on in truth and knowledge. I can reason with what you related to me; this is something I've been trying to work on all my life.

You see, Bo, I'm at a power struggle with myself. I've lived a very violent life. I killed two men when I was 14. They killed my grandmother, that was the main reason why I done it. Then later when I moved to Chicago, I was involved with many hassles between street gangs and police which landed me in homes, and more abuse to continue. I was starved and beaten while I couldn't fight back, in restraints, which made me mad dog mean. This went on til I was 18. Also being doped up on mind control drugs, and being forced into psychogenic mind games, this has a great effect on me still, emotionally.

After I got your book *We're All Doing Time*, I realized I need to change. Change my way of thought, and get some piece of mind. I see a lot of people who want to cause misfortune, hate and abuse against others. I see that these people really deep down hate themselves, and take that out on others because they can't face what they really are. Maybe at times I've done just the same in my past. But now it's time to learn from the past and learn from the mistakes we do.

As you said, Bo, it's a very sick world we live in, but the Great Mystery is true. I guess we have to learn in this life in order to reach further. We have to build our foundation of knowledge so when the Great Spirit calls us we'll be ready to go. You're right -- spiritual work on our selves is a lot of hard work, all the time.

Well Bo, thanks again, and I'll keep in mind what you said. Maybe some day we'll all find that peace of mind we've been seeking.

Love as always brother, KB

Dear Bo,

In your fall issue newsletter, your letters to the prison systems, society and us inmates had so much meaning to them. I just pray to God people understand that meaning.

I'm only 19 years old and 2 years left on a 5 year sentence. I've been through a lot since I've been down. And definitely have learned a lot. The main thing I have learned, is how to deal with myself. I used to have a "I don't give a shit" attitude. But I've learned to start caring more and more. I've still got one problem though: I will never respect society. I know that's not the way to be, but for those same reasons as in your letters is why I feel this way.

With the system, there is no correction about it. If anything it worsens the matter. Young guys come down for a year and they cop bad attitudes against society, and when they get out, they're a much worse person than before. And even if they start to get it together, then people look down on them and won't give them jobs. They soon go back to their old ways because society won't give them a chance. PLEASE, SOCIETY, will you give this a lot of thought? If you won't give a person a chance, how will he be able to prove to you he's a better man?

May God bless you, DS

Dear DS,

I understand how you feel about not respecting society, but you're missing my point by a mile. The spiritual warrior not only respects society, but respects every experience of his life. Respect is the key word. Respect your strengths and weaknesses, and you won't have to be so hard on yourself. Respect your prison time, and you won't be so quick to make the same bad choices next time you're out on the street. Respect the fact that everyone whom you call "society" is just as confused as you are; confused, frightened, and just struggling to make it through the day.

If you learn an attitude of respectfulness for every moment of your life and everything which exists -- even rocks and trees and every blade of grass -- then you'll begin to tap into the deeper places inside of yourself which are going to make life quite a different experience. You'll always learn something, no matter where you are. You can still stand up for your rights and try to convince people to give an ex-con a break; respectfulness doesn't mean lying down and playing dead at all. Quite the opposite.

You're still caught in your role in the game. I'm trying to help you see the whole game, learn the rules, and then go back to playing your role better than ever. The whole thing hinges on respect. Don't claim you'll "never" respect society. Don't be a chump. There's more going on here.

Love, Bo

Dear Bo,

Your newsletter as always was very inspirational. The "Prisons as Centers of Kindness" article really hit home. After reading it, I felt anxious to write you about the program 47 others and myself are involved in.

The Alabama Department of Corrections has been funded by the federal government to establish a "therapeutic community." It has been placed here at St. Clair, which is maximum security. A 48-man block or "pod" has been set aside as a restricted area for this community. All of us are in on drug-related charges, ranging from a few years to life without parole (I have life, and have done 7

years). We are people with similar problems learning to live and work together. We call each other family. We have created an environment that we can trust in. We can actually go to the dining hall and leave our doors open in the block and nothing will be missing. We have become honest with ourselves and each other. This was our first step in getting in touch with our spiritual feelings.

When you stand in front of the family and get honest from the heart, it is easy to become emotional. When grown men cry in front of others it is very moving. The image that all of us projected out on the yard has been torn down. Spirituality is the backbone of this program. We have various meetings, groups, and activities to keep our spirit and momentum up -- including an "encounter group" where we are our own therapists and patients.

We've developed goals, objectives, house rules, basic rules, & cardinal rules. Cardinal rules are: No violence or threats of violence (this is very important because a person cannot grow if he is intimidated by someone; also someone may not confront someone else if he fears retaliation). No drugs or intoxicants, no stealing, no sexual acting-out, and no violating confidentiality. Violation of any cardinal rules will result in immediate termination from the community.

This is the fourth time I been to prison and until now I've never even considered changing my lifestyle. This program really opened my eyes.

Your book *We're All Doing Time is my Bible*. I read it over and over. I've introduced people to it from here to Arizona. The "Force" is definitely with you Bo! My mother even had to get a copy after hearing me talk about what it did for me. I also did a seminar on spirituality out of it.

I'm enclosing our community philosophy we developed together by compiling our own thoughts. Y'all take care,

your good friend, AB

New Outlook Therapeutic Community Philosophy

We have awakened and realized that where we are in our lives is not where we want to be. We acknowledge our suffering and the hurt we have brought to those who love us, knowing that the old us must die before we can truly live and maintain our new outlook on life.

We have gathered together on common ground in pursuit of common desires, always striving to better ourselves one day at a time. We believe there is only one race among us: The human race, and that we must re-educate our subconscious mind to look for the good in ourselves, others, and our society. We know that we cannot change the entire world but we must strive to change the person in the mirror and affirm that nothing is permanent except change, and the choice and responsibility to change belongs to us.

We will stand together in unity and be a mirror reflecting ourselves to others so we can see ourselves as others see us. We must stand together in purpose believing that true freedom, peace and happiness come from within and are supplied to us by a force which is greater than ourselves.

We believe that be without dreams is to be without hope; to be without hope is to be without purpose, and our purpose motivates us toward conviction and commitment.

To grow requires honesty and accepting personal responsibility for our actions. We know that being honest can be very painful but through our pain we will gain a new strength which will tear down the walls of denial, guilt, and loneliness so that the doors for personal growth and achieving our highest potential will open. Our past ways of doing things did not work and we are now committed to listening, learning, and applying new principles that we know will work.

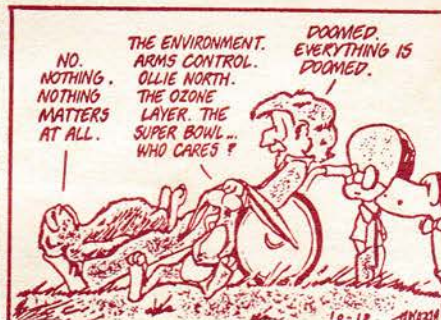
As we search for and find a new outlook and better way of life, we will never forget that we are unique and special and that the only way we can keep what we have is by giving it away.

developed July/August 1988 by New Outlook Therapeutic
Community residents and staff

Life is the sacred mystery singing to itself,
dancing to its drum, telling tales,
improvising, playing;
And we are all that Spirit, our stories all
but one comic story that we are Love indeed,
that perfect Love in me seeks the Love in you,
and if our eyes could ever meet without fear
we would recognize each other and rejoice,
for Love is Life believing in itself.

-- from a Medicine story by Manitonquat

BLOOM COUNTY



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" I saw a stone one day that could fly.
It flew because it felt no weight, while I,
I wait, and wait, and wait for such a state.
So stone-like I sit, stone-like I move, stone-like I may even die.
But what? What's this? What bliss to realize:
'Whatever can fly, let fly.
Whatever can die, let die.'
Now smiling, I feel myself rise."

-- Bo Lozoff