

HUMAN KINDNESS FOUNDATION

A Little News Magazine

Spring 1990

EVEN "THE ONE" IS ONE TOO MANY

This is condensed from a tape of Bo Lozoff at the Church of Religious Science in Seattle, Washington, in November, 1989. The full unedited talk is now on the same tape which includes Bo's '88 talk, "Life as Adventure Instead of Struggle," and also includes one whole side of questions and answers. The tape, previously 20 minutes, is now over 90 minutes, but is still available for \$5 (free to prisoners, and it's a clear, shrink-wrapped no-screw tape to comply with most prison regulations).

What is it? What is the Supreme Truth behind the mystery of life? That's the question we have all our lives. We do all sorts of things to find the answer, and we call it the Spiritual Journey, or Inner Journey. But frankly, 99% of the time, what we're calling "inner" doesn't even come close. It's just part of the outer. It may be the noblest, gentlest, nicest and most Spiritual reaches of the outer, but it's not the inner. The *real* Inner Truth is unchanging, like a generator room inside of us. In that room, which powers the whole thing, our whole created universe, what's going on is just OMMMMMMMMM.... The generator is just humming. That's the Unchanging, the Eternal, the Immortal; That which was never born; That which can never die; That which is beyond all form; G-D, we can't even spell it. That's Inner Truth. So the Inner Journey is about opening up to that Truth.

The inner journey is not about "becoming" Spiritual people. The inner is not about doing good. The inner is not about living a happy, compassionate life. Those are great goals, they're the most constructive parts of our outer, worldly lives. I'm not knocking any of it. I mean, I try to be a nice guy and recycle my trash and do good works; I love my family. You may want to finish your education, get a good job, travel, etc. Nothing wrong with any of it. The outer is very sweet and important in its own context. But let's not confuse it with the inner journey.

How do we know whether something is connected to the inner journey or to the outer? Well, if it has a beginning or an end, a subject or an object, if it changes or grows or develops, if it can be analyzed or described, it's in the outer. It's still in time. The inner is not within time and space. Even those of you who relate to reincarnation; somebody asked me last week in Calgary, "Are you saying that our souls don't develop? Our souls

don't learn and grow over many lifetimes?" And I said, "that's exactly what I'm saying." The *mind* may learn and grow, the *personality* may learn and grow, but the soul is just pure *Being*, humming along like OMMMMMMMMMM. It's infinite and perfect already. Time and space arise out of it and dissolve back into it, mysteriously and endlessly. So what can it grow into -- a bigger infinite? It's beyond both creation and change, so there's nothing to do to it, for it, or with it.

So if everyone's soul is already the One Soul, and we're all already complete and perfect, then what's the difference between an enlightened being and the rest of us? The difference is simply that an enlightened being has dismantled the roadblocks we erect between our conscious minds and the Incredible, Infinite, Unchanging Goodness of our soul. So the journey to the inner is just clearing stuff away; it's a process of opening. It's not the process of *getting* or *developing* anything. It's a process of gradually surrendering every tiny difference between *my will* and *Thy Will*.

God has a very warped sense of humor, really. The purpose of free will turns out to be to offer it back out of our own free will. That's pretty twisted. However, God does give us as much time as we want to exercise and enjoy our free will, until we see how much our desires and fears keep screwing up our lives. And then we get so tired of the gap between *my will* and *Thy Will*, that we say, "Please, take it back. I've forgotten how to give back my free will. I really want to be in perfect harmony."

For example, this plant is sitting on the rug. It's not sitting there thinking, "I've got to keep on the rug. I've got to stay on the rug." And it's not thinking, "Man, I sure look cool sitting on this rug." It's simply sitting on the rug, perfectly *being* a plant sitting on the rug. Life works, or it can, in a way where we could be going about our lives with such

un-self-conscious harmony. And I don't mean that you don't get flat tires or hemorrhoids. I don't mean any of that. This plant can get mealybugs and then it's perfectly being a plant with mealybugs. If it's not watered, its systems will struggle to survive and then it will either get watered or it will shrivel and die, but all in perfect harmony, being what it is called to be, doing what it is called to do, dying as it is called to die. And then the essence that powered the plant moves on. The essence didn't really do, be, or die; it just powered a plant for a while. That's how it can be for our lives as well.

A lot of you start thinking, "He's talking about being totally passive, just sitting around and letting anything happen." But it's quite the opposite. I'm saying that as we stop getting in our own way, our lives can flow powerfully and joyfully on their own. Do we tell our bodies how to digest food? Do we command our eyes to transmit images to the brain? Of course not. Yet our digestion performs miracles converting food into energy. Our eyes bring us breathtaking sights and brilliant colors, they adjust immediately to darkness or brightness, they protect themselves by blinking, they clean themselves with tears. Our bodies function in precise, elaborate, spontaneous ways without ego or self-consciousness.

Well, our minds and personalities can be just as effortless, so that we are not struggling emotionally and second-guessing ourselves all the time. Believe me, our minds and hearts know how to live a productive, enjoyable life like our organs know how to digest food and circulate blood.

So how do we discover this natural state of being? How do we move from self-consciousness to easy harmony, from my will to Thy Will? Can we achieve it through complicated philosophies which make our minds even busier? Doesn't it make more sense to narrow our sights just to the one moment we find ourselves in; to being a wide-open, in-tune, powerful human being right now?

But even so, how do we do *that*? It comes back to the inner/outer balance; to silencing the mind through practices such as meditation. We don't have to "deserve" anything. There's nothing to *earn* in the Unchanging; it just IS; it already IS. So the inner journey is simply to touch the Inner Truth in some way; just to *touch* the Unchanging, Eternal, Immortal Soul which IS right now.

Since most religions have fallen away from such internal quieting practices and have become mostly group- and activity-oriented, they have gradually re-defined the inner as the highest, most ethical and lofty reaches of outer behavior. But I assure you, the loftiest heaven still implies hell. It is only in the Unchanging, the Eternal, that which was never created, and that which cannot be uncreated, the

OMMMMMMMMMM; it is only in that, out of which every thing and every moment arises, and falls back; in that which is beyond all good and evil; in that place where Charles Manson and Mother Theresa are both dissolved in the same OMMMMMMMMM; that the inner is experienced.

You could have a ten year period in your life which is just the greatest. You've gotten that degree you always wanted, you're doing good works in the community, all your friends love you. You look good and you feel good and your kids are great, and you go into meditation or you go to retreat or something, that door into the generator room opens slightly and you notice it's going OMMMMMMMMM. Ten years later in your life you look back.... "Oh my God,...How did my life come to this? Everything has gone rotten for ten years. I've lost everyone I love, both my parents died in the same year, I was raped in New York, my house burned down." You feel like the book of Job all came down on you, and you just can't take the pain of watching the news and reading the newspaper and seeing how much terrible cruelty is going on in this world. Then you meditate or take a walk or something happens and the door to your soul opens slightly again and you notice it's still going OMMMMMMMMM. And it's only then that you begin to have the true understanding of what "beyond change" is really about.

When that understanding finally begins to seep through all of the levels of your psyche, like water filtering through charcoal, that's the basis of what you might call Spiritual Confidence, which enables you to do the "right" things, to be on the side of "good" as opposed to the side of "bad", but without self-righteousness, without a sense of crisis or urgency. You can try to save the planet, work for peace, do prayers and affirmations, yet with an overall sense of humor, and the awareness that most of the time life doesn't happen the way you want it to happen, and it's perfectly fine with you.

It's that Spiritual confidence in the *beyond* change, *beyond* time, that is the basis of being able to do the outer world stuff without being taken in by the illusion. What you see around you is *not* the Spiritual Reality. Anything -- including the planet -- which can be made better or worse, destroyed or saved, is not the Inner Journey.

That's why it's hard for me to be interested in all the channelers, disembodied sages, gurus and even supposedly alien beings who say things like "This is a crucial time for you people of Earth, to bring about a new dawn of humanity before you destroy yourselves..." and all of that stuff. That's mixing up the inner and outer in ways which reflect a lack of wisdom. World peace or a Golden Age

are not the Inner Journey. There is nothing ever urgent or crucial about the Inner Journey, because what is Real is already at peace, and is beyond threat or destruction.

What the mystical tradition of every religion is about; the reason that Science of Mind and Yoga and Buddhism and all these Spiritual traditions have *practices* instead of just reading and thinking; the mystical basis that begins to awaken in us when we quiet our minds down from all of the outside activity, is that there are links between the outer world and the inner Unchanging Soul. The secret link between the inner and the outer is the breath. It's a key. In each breath creation occurs, and life comes out of the formless. And it's everything we see, even all our memories of who we are and the history of the world, etc. In each breath it's all of it. And in each cessation of the breath, it's none of it. It's the OMMMMMMMMM. And that's why in a lot of traditions people learn to work with their breath in some way. Even common folklore says "Take ten deep breaths to calm down," etc.

I think it's interesting that medical science calls breathing "respiration." The root of respiration is "Spirit". Re-spir-ation. We re-spir-ate -- take in Spirit -- again and again and again, from the moment we're born, and what is it that defines when we die? It's when we stop breathing. Re-spiration, we keep doing it, we keep bringing in Spirit. We keep bringing in life in every breath.

Very simply what the human body is, ideally, is a living factory which converts the raw Unchanging Formless Spirit into compassion, which is the highest virtue of the outer world...loving kindness, whatever you want to call it. It's the human heart that actually does that. And in a reverse way we can also bring in all of the pain that we see in this world of change. Again the human heart and awareness is what converts it and is able to offer it up into the changeless; it's this incredible recycling factory, that's who each of us is, that's what the ideal is: That we can walk this earth recycling raw Spirit into human compassion, recycling human pain into raw Spirit.

And walking in this balance, you can't have too much in the changeless. It's just one toe in that generator room that reminds us of our genuine wisdom, so that we don't get caught up in "Oh, the world is coming to an end, we're destroying the world". Guess what? Whether we destroy it with bombs or pollution, or the sun dies a billion years from now, the world is in time. And if you want to talk about many, many lifetimes, that's still in time. Millions of years of reincarnation in the development of your Spiritual character, that's still in time. The real Inner Journey is just opening, just opening. It's not getting bigger. We're as big as big gets. We've got one soul and it's Unchanging.

I travel a lot, and I see a feeling of *lack* in most people who are striving toward Spiritual aims, and it breaks my heart. I want to put my arm around every one of you and say "That's not it. It's not striving to *get*. It's not striving because you're not *good* enough. It's not striving because you have to *change*. You're already safe and sound and comfortable and infinite in the eternal already. Like the affirmation in the church folder, notice it says we are "committing ourselves to know God." It doesn't say "for God to notice us". We don't have to get God to notice us. Each one of us has that generator room -- the Unchanging Formless Spirit - in full, already, with nothing lacking whatsoever.

You can enjoy *all* of life if you rest in the confidence of the *real* Immortal, Unchanging Soul. You can realize that *all* of life, even prison, disease, death, heartbreak, *everything* we call negative and positive, *all of it is this wondrous, mystical illusion that arises and dissolves in every moment*.

It's this immense feeling of freedom, instead of feeling tiny and being so afraid that "if this happens to me... or if this happens to me..." You can live your entire life, through all your joys and sorrows, ups and downs, resting in the Bigness. And you can do that by narrowing your focus down to right here, right now, just doing the best you can with no sense of urgency, and having Spiritual confidence in the Unchanging Reality.

Mother Goose & Grimm

by Mike Peters



RESOURCES

American Prisoners Abroad is a new group interested in setting up networks of American prisoners in foreign prisons. We'd like to gather and distribute information on legal rights, prisoner transfer treaties, visiting problems, family matters, and emotional support. We want to help you know your rights as a U.S. citizen in a foreign country. We will also help contact your families or friends in the states. We are new; we could use your help too. We're creating this group because one of us was recently released from a foreign prison, and we know how frustrating and confusing it can be. Please write to us and let us know where you are.

AMERICAN PRISONERS ABROAD
BOX 1472
FORT MILL SC 29715

In response to a growing number of prisoners with AIDS who feel isolated, here's a pen-pal link-up with a large AIDS support group on the West Coast. If you're a prisoner with AIDS and want to correspond with AIDS patients who are living fulfilling lives, write:

HAY HOUSE
501 SANTA MONICA BLVD., #602
SANTA MONICA CA 90401

"Why, God - Why Me?" is an exceptional, poignant videotape that introduces the topic of child sexual abuse and serves as a discussion tool for students, professionals, and the general public. By drawing the viewer into experiences and feelings of abused children, the video allows one to begin to share the pain of victims and the amazing strength of their survival. It has been used with great success as a tool to help break down the denial and minimization of offenders and opens up communication with the victims. It ends on a hopeful note that encourages survivors to help each other and heal their wounds. Write us (attn: Janet) for a free brochure.

VARIED DIRECTIONS
69 ELM STREET
CAMDEN, MAINE 04843

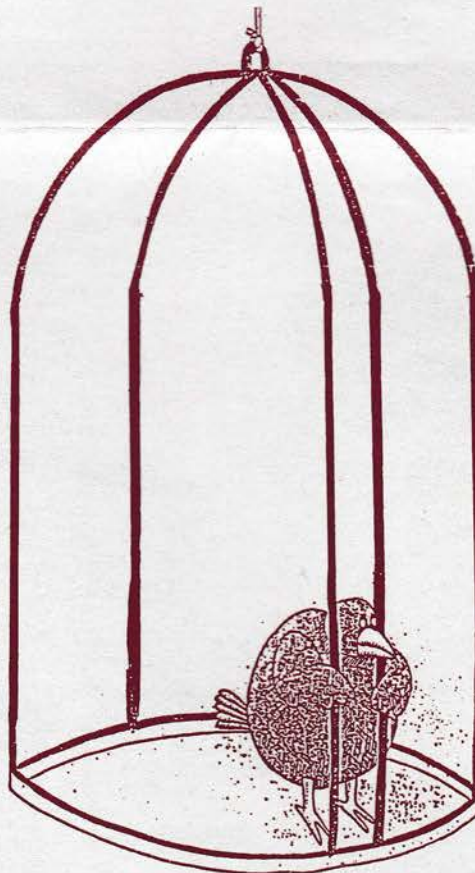
The Center of Support is a non-profit organization for sex offenders (particularly pedophiles) and their parents. The ultimate goal of C.O.S. is to stop sexual abuse through

support, education, and advocacy. Our philosophy says "Using the power of our will to face ourselves and our children honestly and realistically; using the power of our love to heal and create balance and harmony where none may now exist; we will free ourselves to contribute our deeply stirred energies toward the eradication of sexual abuse from our families, our communities, and our country." For more information on our support groups for parents, and our pen-pal program, contact:

CENTER OF SUPPORT
BOX 460126
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94146

For more information and support about resources and hope for sex offenders, contact:

MALCOLM SCOTT
CENTER OF SUPPORT
1920 MEMORIAL DRIVE #606
CHICOPEE MA 01020



OTHER NEWS

Bad Times in Prison Mailrooms

In all the years we've been sending books and newsletters to prisoners through the mail, we've never seen a worse time than now. The Reagan/Bush conservative Supreme Court has given more local authority than ever before to prison mailrooms, and many of them are using that authority in arbitrary and backward ways.

Some prisons don't allow padded envelopes, others require us to send everything first class (\$2.40!), others require package permits, others have to be sent through a chaplain or other staff member, some allow tapes, others don't, and some seem to change their rules all the time.

Besides our printing costs, we spend about a dollar per package to send our books to prisoners, and when they're refused it costs us another \$1.25 to get them back. We send out five or six hundred packages each month, so you can imagine how much money the refusals can cost!

It also costs us 30¢ each to get newsletters back when they're sent to prisoners who have been transferred or released. After our last newsletter we received about 1,500 returns.

So, what you can do to help us is: 1) Please be sure you know what the rules are in your prison before you ask us to send books, and let us know how it needs to be done. 2) As soon as you're transferred or released, please drop us a line with your change of address. Those two things would save us a lot of time and money.

Update on Texas Book-Banning

As a result of Bo being interviewed on *The Prison Program*, a radio show in Houston, we have linked up with an attorney in Houston to collaborate with, and by the time you read this we will already have filed for immediate relief from TDC's prohibition of *Lineage and Other Stories*. TDC has now received about 400 letters of protest, but refuses to budge.

If you haven't read *Lineage and Other Stories*, it's free to prisoners (or staff) and \$7 to non-prisoners. A new edition, published by Threshold Books, is scheduled for a Spring 1990 release.

Dear Bo,

I called my ex-wife, that I still love very dearly and still consider my wife; anyway I called her the other day and the things that she had to tell me really blew me up.

First she told me that she was getting married with someone that loves her. But Bo, I've known her for twelve years and I know that her love for me is still there, she's just afraid to take the chance with me because she don't believe that I could have changed from the unfaithful, ill emotional, irresponsible, selfish S.O.B. that I once was.

Bo honestly speaking I'm 31 years old now and my eldest child is 10 years old, my baby is 6 years; my life long dream is to raise a family -- my family!

My wife and I separated when I was doing time and I figured that given a little time for her to see that I want the same things in life she wants, we'll get back together and raise our two kids and the one that she had while we were separated. I love her now more than ever. I love her, Bo! There's not a woman in the world to compare to her, Bo. I need help! Please help me!

Want my wife back! M

Dear M,

I can feel how painful this is for you, but what you want, I can't give you. People we love leave us. They even die. Life constantly changes. Some of the changes we like, some we hate, but it keeps changing. Your ex-wife's decisions can never be under your control. What can I do about that? By your own admission, you were "unfaithful, ill emotional, irresponsible and selfish," so now she has decided she doesn't want to find out whether you've really changed. We don't always get second chances when we blow it, M. I dozed at the wheel for just a second, and my entire life changed forever when I hit a truck. No second chance. That's just the way it goes sometimes.

But M, I'm not a minister or a social worker. What I'm about is much different than that. There's a big secret about life which I try to help people find. That's all. If your ex-wife loved you and decided to stay with you forever, you'd still need to find out that secret at some time.

That's the only thing I can help with. That's what my life, my books and all my newsletters are about.

The secret is revealed to you in silence, deep within yourself. And when it is revealed, the situation with your ex-wife looks completely different than it looks now. Everything does. But I can't describe it any better, because it's something you have to find out for yourself.

There is definitely a deep, rich, beautiful journey for you to find out about within yourself. Believe it or not, the pain you're feeling can HELP you to find that inner place. Use my books for real; sit perfectly still, and feel ALL THE PAIN without moving. Feel the pain, fear, disappointment, feel your broken heart, in perfect silence and stillness. Then you'll touch the big secret. I can help you find what is real, but I can't help you get what you want. I'm truly sorry.

All my love, Bo

Dear Bo,

Can't you somehow find the time to write a book on raising our children Spiritually? How to teach them meditation, how to be non-violent at the violent playground, how to build up the ego's self-esteem yet lead them further into the heart chakra? Bible stories just don't hack it, and neither does the Ramayana! So much violence and battles.

Thanks for Bo's talk in the Spring '89 newsletter. It's so simple, yet so difficult. It will take many readings to sink in.

Love, K

Dear K,

I couldn't write a book on child-raising because it would only be about a page long. I don't think we have to learn strategies, methods or subtle tricks to lead our children toward the Light. To whatever degree our daily lives are truly about Spirituality, then exactly to that degree our kids will experience it from us. The instant we separate parenting from our own work on ourselves, it becomes manipulative and hypocritical, no matter how sweet the motivation.

My best advice on childraising is almost no advice at all: just do your own work in every part of your life,

including being a parent. It's not important to create an artificial peaceful environment; just an honest Spiritual one, which comes naturally from seeking the truth about yourself.

Our desires to get children into meditation or yoga arise mainly from fear, and fear isn't a good basis for anything. When we truly understand that the whole world is our church, that all are our family, and that every single experience is our Spiritual practice, we can be fearless enough to allow our children to find their own path. When we see who they and we truly are, we can laugh hysterically at how worried we once were about a petty thing like whether or not they would meditate.

This may upset you, but the same holds true for competitiveness and violence. Life is competitive and violent every time we breathe or take a single step. Our work is to poke through the mysteries, not to cling superficially to nonviolence and cooperativeness in order to avoid their opposites. The Bible and Ramayana are profound; don't sell them short. And don't sell your kids short on their abilities to see through the battle scenes to the heart of the matter. Many kids whose parents deny them toy guns simply pretend with sticks when their uptight parents aren't looking. They get the clear message toy guns are "wrong" and yet they feel no evil or harmfulness in their hearts. That can confuse them away from their inner guidance.

The Spiritual seeker can live a life of fearlessness, joy and a great sense of humor once he or she stops trying to make life into a Sunday school class. Spirituality should make us broader, not narrower; able to better handle any situation anywhere, because we embrace and accept the entire world as it is, warts and all.

And children are a great way of showing us we can't rely on our expectations and plans. Instead of giving our children heavy philosophies, we can show them a lightness and dignity of Spirit which can carry them through anything they ever have to face. If we're a walking example of self-honesty, courage, kindness, humor and wonder, what preaching do we need to do at all?

Love, Bo

Dear Bo,

Thank you for sending the latest newsletter. It was WONDERFUL for you to share the story of your son (Fall '89). I am just thrilled to know that you two had the right kind of stuff to share with Josh. The pictures were especially great because the love is just so great to look at. Everything I could have wished for in my life with my son, but reality gave just the opposite. I just hope that some day I can undo the damage, and like to think that we are both good enough people to do so. Sadly, prison just compounds the damage by reinforcing NOT dealing with the issues we need to. Sad, and tragic that we are so locked into such senselessness.

You loving folks never cease to be an inspiration to me. Also, while my step-dad hadn't the slightest idea of what a dad should be, I hope he will stay alive till I get out in '93-'95, so I can visit him and hug him. We had SUCH a horrible relationship. Really tragic when we don't know what to do because we never had "it," or worse yet, never even suspected we shoulda! Odd that we are finally close and I'm doin' 10-40 in Michigan and he still lives in Texas. Sigh!

That's enuf blab. You have better things to do than let me tie you up from important work. Take care, I appreciate that you and yours CARE. I am blessed indeed.

Love ya, R

Dear Bo,

I've got 18 months to do, day for day; three 6-month sentences for assault, all for dealing with my wife! Anyway, her and I try to make things right again, but it just won't work. She's out there whoring around, my oldest daughter, 14, is on crack, my oldest son, 12, is selling drugs and stealing. All of the above and my surroundings is driving me MAD!

I read your book from front to back six times, but yet still all I can think about is how my family is falling apart and how my children need me and how I must do 10 long lonely months before I can rise up from here. And the growing hatred I've got for my wife now (not for me being in here, but for the lack of concern for our children), and all she worries about is her men-friends. Bo I hate to think what I might do to her once I'm released if something

happens to any one of my six children.

And Bo, I still love my wife even though she's a whore now, but my hatred is starting to take me over once again, and I'm looking forward to getting out for all the wrong reasons. I know it's wrong. Mentally I feel I'm getting weak, I'm so far away from home now, and nobody to share or kick my thoughts around to. I feel I must get it out to someone before I slam the fuck out of my mind.

Look forward to hearing from you, R
Dear R,

I feel really bad that you're suffering so much, but I don't know what I can say to you to make things any better. You said you read my book six times, cover to cover. Well, reading it isn't enough. You have to be tired enough of feeling all this hatred and bitterness, that you decide to start doing some of the techniques every day. Techniques like meditation, breathing exercises, etc.

I'm your brother in this struggle, but I can't hold your hand -- and it wouldn't do any good if I could. Every one of us has some hard times in life, and we have to figure out how to keep going without getting so lost in bitterness and self-pity. Look around you. Every guy you see has had a lot of bad shit happen to him. Your wife has had a lot of bad shit happen to her, too. I don't know whether you're going to be able to help her or change her, but I do know that there's no chance of that at all if you don't find your own faith and strength. You ain't gonna help her through your anger or violence or self-pity. And you ain't gonna help your kids that way, either.

There was no inner strength at all in the letter you wrote me; no faith that there's a purpose to life, even though it moves in strange ways; no sense of responsibility -- your own responsibility for what your wife and kids are going through. Don't forget why you're locked up in the first place! All there was, was anger and self-pity. That's not going to help anyone at all, including you.

My very best advice is still to read my book and take it more personally. Do some stuff that works on your head and heart every single day. Pray for help. Become more honest with yourself about your own faults instead of concentrating on

everyone else's. There's just nothing else I can offer you, brother.

Love, Bo

Dear Bo,

You're right! I received your thoughts today, and just like your book, you hit a home run. Damn. Words alone can't express what I want to say to you my brother, but I'm damn sure glad and proud to be on your team.

I'm going to re-read your book, but this time with a open & clear mind & heart. I feel now that even though I read it, all my hatred and bitterness didn't really allow me to understand what I should have.

I heard from my wife yesterday and like always, she wants us to try again. Still telling me a bunch of shit and lies, and like always I'll try again. But Bo, I'm really scared, see I know once I'm released in ten months, the truth will come to light as far as her whoring around and shit, and I'm really scared that the pain, shame and grief might be too much for me to handle at that moment and I could go slam the fuck off, and this time instead of doing 18 months I'll be on death row! This is what scares me; I've dreamed 1,000 times of just th

My mind is telling me to let her totally alone, but my heart won't let me. And after these 18 months, God knows I won't put up with no bullshit, and damn sure don't have the time for it. Bo, I know how she's being and continues to. It seems like every time I feel myself getting strong mentally to deal or not deal with her, I get one of those bullshit letters telling me she loves me and hasn't been screwing anyone. I'm not upset or mad with her because of the affairs, but the lies just tear me up.

But anyway, I'm going to pray a lot and my faith will grow and things will be as they should be. Take care

Love and peace,

Dear R,

You've got ten months. You've got the choice to use it to save several lives, including your own. I suggest you get down to it, using every inner and outer means you can find. You talk about your wife's lies but say nothing about your own lies to yourself. No outside situation ever forces you to "go slam the fuck off." The truth is, you have a terrible temper and almost no sense of

control or responsibility. Look at these things.

You're not a bad person in your heart, but your heart is buried right now under about a hundred tons of ego, pride, and selfishness. Even your concern about killing your wife is based around you, not her (you winding up on death row). That's very distorted, brother. Use your time as well as you possibly can. Meditate. Pray. Write your feelings down. Talk with counselors or caseworkers. Ten months can bring a lot of change if you're using it right.

Go for it, Bo

Dear Bo,

For many years now, prison has been a great adventure for me. I never had a negative attitude about being here. I accepted my incarceration as being the just reward for my deed. Thus, I looked upon prison as just a different environment in which I would live.

Live here I have done, and learned and grew to boot. Since setting foot in prison I've given no consideration to life on the streets. I've never been homesick and even though I haven't seen any family or friends since I've been here, I haven't allowed myself to miss them. It's not that I don't want to get out, but living outside of prison has for so long just been a vague idea, I really can't relate to it anymore.

Well, I was taken completely by surprise recently by a parole hearing. As it turned out, I was set off for

several years, but the whole experience seems to have marked a major turning point in my incarceration. Having to do more time has nothing to do with it. I suppose I could spend the remainder of this life here without a thought if need be. My concern is HOW (in what state of mind) I will do the coming years.

I feel the question build up in me, "What is the point?" What is the purpose of my spiritual awareness in being a part of the Creator, thereby recognizing my own creativity, if I then cannot create? Yet the thought of letting go of what I've learned and forgetting about the spiritual path now feels...criminal to me.

So what is the point? I suppose finding the answer to that question is enough to keep me struggling on.

Sincerely, L

Dear L,

You asked, "what is the purpose of...awareness in being a part of the creator...if I then cannot create?" Hold it right there. Why can't you create? Many cons have become powerful writers while they were in the joint. The Birdman of Alcatraz became one of the world's greatest authorities on birds. My friend Ray Neal became an accomplished artist. Cons have become playwrights and poets. The guy who wrote the new hit movie *DRUGSTORE COWBOY* is still doing time in Walla Walla. Cons have started wonderful charity programs like corresponding with sick children or raising money for farmers

who are losing their family farms. Why are you assuming you can't be a creative, intelligent human being just because your body is locked up?

Also, when you ask the question "what's the point?," you're forgetting that there are higher states of awareness than the awareness you may be feeling right now. "The point" is revealed in those higher states -- not in words. Life is not just a *Great Adventure*, it's also a *Mystical Adventure*. That's one of the reasons we meditate, do breathing practices, read spiritual books, pray and so forth -- to prepare ourselves for experiencing higher and deeper states. As my Guru once said, "To see God you must have special eyes. Otherwise, you can't bear the shock."

You may have closed off your feelings for many years, but that's not the same as being non-attached. Now you have to start becoming what you always pretended you were -- somebody who accepts where he is and deals with the here and now. By closing yourself off, you've avoided a lot of pain and struggle, but you've also missed out on higher awareness. Try opening up now and see where it takes you. You may go through tremendous pain and loneliness that you've been avoiding, but you'll come out the other end in a much more powerful place than you've settled for all these years.

I wish you nothing but the very best in your adventure within yourself. Don't settle for too little.

All My Blessings, Bo

Seek within. Your own self is your best friend. The false self must be abandoned before the real self can be found. You must be serious, intent, truly interested. You must be full of goodwill for yourself. You are love itself -- when you are not afraid.

-- Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

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You can enjoy all of life if you rest in the confidence of the real Immortal, Unchanging Soul. You can realize that all of life -- even prison, disease, death, heartbreak, everything we call negative and positive -- all of it is this wondrous mystical illusion that arises and dissolves in every moment.

-- Bo Lazoff