



Spotlight On Recovery

“Giving a Voice to The Therapeutic Community”

BROTHER, CAN WE TALK?

PART 3

IF YOU CAN CONQUER THE
ENEMY THAT RESIDES
INSIDE OF YOU, YOU CAN
CONQUER THE ENEMY THAT
RESIDES OUTSIDE OF YOU.

BROTHER, WE HAVE SO MUCH TO TALK ABOUT.
ONCE WE TALK, WE CAN BEGIN TO HEAL.

CHAPTER 2



CEASE

By Abdul S. Kareem and Robin Graham



Brother, Can We Talk?
It's not about being strong or weak.
I've sent my prayers to the skies to
prevent us from leaving blood on the streets.

Brother, Can We Talk?
If it were up to me, we would communicate about peace.
To give us hope that Black on Black crime
will one day, decrease and eventually cease.

Brother, Can We Talk?
There's so much we need to discuss
to create a change in this cycle
of unchecked trauma.
Sure, as men we tend to ignore medical
and mental health drama.
But, it's the silence that's killing us Brother.

Brother, Can We Talk?
I feel I offended you as well.
Would it help if I apologized to you?
No arguing or loud yell,
just communication and
understanding, to soften that shell.

Brother, Can We Talk?
Because right now, I'm willing to listen.
I believe with strife comes hope,
but with unity, we'll make a difference.
As we stand tall in this prison,
our mutual respect will bring us peace.

So, Brother, Can We Talk?
Let's talk about ending the division,
because if you really looked around;
into each other's eyes, you will know
we are all in search of that vision
that Dr. King spoke of, with such wisdom.

Brother, Can We Talk?
You are my brothers.
You are not my enemy.
By all accounts, we are stronger
when we work together.
The truth is we only have each other.

SPOTLIGHT ON RECOVERY SAYS SAVE THE DATE

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N A T I O N A L



PTSD AWARENESS DAY

JUNE 2026

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

BROTHER, CAN WE TALK? PART 3 – CHAPTER 2

Dear Brothers,

We have a lot to talk about with our brothers, uncles, fathers, sons, and grandfathers. We are losing you at such speed, that I was compelled to open up a discussion on “Breaking the Spin Cycle” you are currently going through.

In this chapter, we will discuss **“Breaking the Spin Cycle of Mental Incarceration.”** Sometimes, people imprison their minds and hearts with darkness, like hate, negativity, and vengeance. If you relive these scenarios day in and day out, you cannot see the light that surrounds you. If your hands are in fists, your hands are not free to embrace new positive energy. If your heart is cold, you cannot feel the warmth of those closest to you.

Brother Joseph Jones wrote that some brothers (and sisters), may be suffering from the following: The Willie Lynch Syndrome, The Peter Pan Syndrome, The Baby King Syndrome, or The Stockholm Syndrome. I know, I only heard of one of these syndromes, but I provided footnotes at the end of his article for you to reference. If the ‘syndrome shoe’ fits, take it off.

Next, we will talk about **“Improving Conversations and Communications.”** Words hurt. No one wants to be at the mercy of a verbal beat down from a parent, friend, sibling, enemy or internally. Brothers (and sisters) this is a tough one. Especially if you are groomed to downgrade yourself verbally, figuratively and fashionably, thinking it uplifts you. The harsh words on social media are degrading the content we take in daily. Therefore, we breathe it in, spit out, and recycle it over, and over, generation to generation that spin cycle goes on. Where will it stop?

This chapter will also discuss, **“Speaking Your Truth.”** Stopping the ‘spin cycle’ begins with you pressing your ‘voice on’ button. You know what you feel. You know what’s bothering you. You know where it all went wrong. Say it, write it, and create the space to stand in your truth. No one can help you if you are not willing to help yourself.

“Are You Ready to Step Out of the ‘Spin Cycle?’ Only you can answer that question. However, Brother Donald E. Ward, Brother Jonathan Green and Brother Joseph Fritz, has provided some insights and tools for you to utilize as you work on stopping your ‘spin cycle.’

Sincerely,

Robin Graham

Robin Graham

Founder/Publisher

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BREAKING THE 'SPIN CYCLE' OF MENTAL INCARCERATION

FREE YOUR MIND, AND BODY

By Nas'Juan East

How can we stop the 'spin cycle' that keeps our mind, body, and soul in bondage?

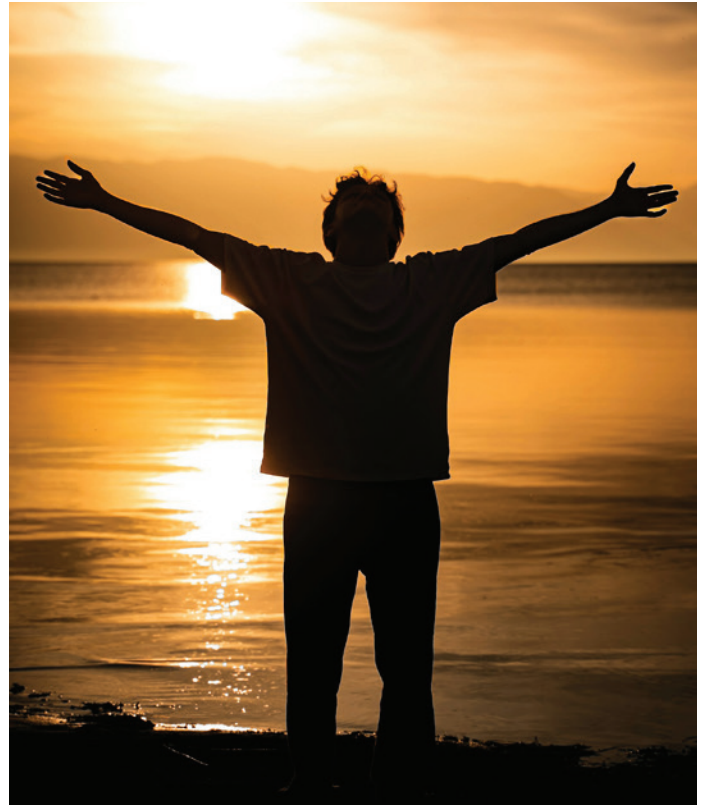
As a man who is currently, incarcerated, my perspective for finding a good way to free your mind, body, and soul is through communication. I don't use communication alone; I also use journaling as well. It's okay to open up and talk about the way you are feeling, however, if you are not comfortable talking with others, you can write it down in a journal. Humans need a way to express themselves, instead of holding things in that can build stress.

A prime example: a tire with too much air pressure will bust. Imagine a person with too much stress. Don't be that person, open up, communicate, and express yourself in positive ways. In a journal, write down your thoughts, ideas, and plans to become successful, not only for yourself, but to help others around you find peace and success as well.

If you have family on the outside, connect with them. If you have a significant other, or spouse, you can express your thoughts with them also. Another way to decrease your stress is through exercising, playing basketball, and drawing. Don't forget to feed your soul, by reading any spiritual text available to you.

A good source for books and journaling books is Edward R. Hamilton's bookseller company, www.hamiltonbook.com. This company has a good selection of spiritual books. There is a book on health called, "Natural and Home Remedies for Aging Well." It talks about men and women looking to make the most out of their lives whether you are hoping to stay fit and lean, looking to avoid or treat a condition, or simply wanting occasional substitutes to traditional medical options. This resource helps you take charge of your health.

If you are in prison, and your facility has a hobby and a crafts program, you may be able to join. Through arts and crafts, you can learn how to make bags, cups, furniture, and other things. If you don't have hobby and a crafts program at your unit, you can go to the library and find drawing books or you can have your family and friends order you drawing books on the same website I mentioned before.



If you have no family, spouse, or significant other you can talk to about stress, reach out to the mental health center or a therapist. Therapy will help you open up about what you are going through inside. You can also contact NAMI Help-line (National Alliance on Mental Illness) at 1800-950-6264. If you don't feel comfortable talking to a therapist, you can talk to a close friend you trust.

Now let's talk about which healthy foods can help the brain, heart, and gut. When it comes to the brain strawberries and magnesium meats (salmon, halibut, mackerel, chicken, and turkey) are good to eat. When it comes to the heart, beets are good to consume because they help the heart generate and pump blood throughout our bodies. When it comes to the gut, greens are good to eat because they help pass food better and release nutrients throughout our bodies. All of those food products are also good to eat when one utilizes working out in their daily routine. These foods changed my image for life, so take note and imagine what they would do for you.

BROTHERS, CAN WE TALK?

By Joseph Jones

Brothers, can we talk?

Right now, as you read this, another black man is making a decision that could land him behind bars. In the next sixty-seconds, will he choose the streets or will he choose life?

Every 36 hours another black man kills a black man between the ages of 18-24. Every eight minutes, one of us, is placed under arrest.

Brothers, we are literally destroying ourselves. I know that we are trained to project an image of a gangster, tough guy, or certified street dude, trust me I get it. I grew up under that same ideology, now I am in this Florida penal system, fighting for my life. If you were like me, you probably grew up in a disenfranchised world where our mind, body, and soul seemed to be trapped in bondage by the streets, because we allowed it to dictate our rational decision-making.

Hosea 4:6 says that people perish for the lack of knowledge. (*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* Hosea 4:6 KJV)

An African proverb says, *'If you can conquer the enemy that resides inside of you, you can conquer the enemy that resides outside of you.'*

We must teach this vital concept in our communities, to our young Kings and Queens. We need to learn how to communicate with each other without using derogatory language, because you can build a person

up with some powerful words, or you can tear a person down, by using negative words. We must learn to trust each other.

In geometry, the whole is no greater than the part. When we internalize that concept, we will be able to aid brothers and sisters who suffer from syndromes, such as the Willie Lynch Syndrome¹, The Stockholm Syndrome², and The King Baby Syndrome³, and The Peter Pan Syndrome⁴.

It takes a village to raise a child. Our Kings and Queens have to be held accountable for their children, and the children in the neighborhood, whose fathers and mothers are not there. A chain is stronger than its weakest link.

Our Kings also need the support of their Queens. Sisters, we need you to motivate us, believe in us, even when it seems as though the odds are stacked against us. Please, sisters, do not turn from your brothers who are in prison because we need you for mental support. It is very important for incarcerated Kings to have support from our loved ones.

Brothers, we must break the mental chains that are stopping us from being the Kings God has made us to be. Our survival depends on us seeking mental health support, holding each other accountable, and measuring how we speak to one another. We can agree to disagree, and we can look each other in the eye, and recognize that we are brothers, and not each other's enemy.

¹ Willie Lynch syndrome is not a medical or psychiatric diagnosis. It's a cultural concept, used to describe patterns of division, distrust, and self-destructive behavior within Black communities that some attribute to the psychological legacy of slavery. When people reference Willie Lynch syndrome, they're typically pointing to behaviors like colorism (preference for lighter skin within Black communities), distrust between Black men and women, generational conflicts, internalized racism, and a tendency to undermine collective progress. The argument is that slavery didn't just cause physical suffering; it created psychological patterns that were passed down through families and communities long after emancipation. <https://scienceinsights.org/what-is-willie-lynch-syndrome-and-is-it-real>.

² Stockholm syndrome, psychological response, wherein a captive begins to identify closely with his or her captors, as well as with their agenda, and demands. Psychologists who have studied the syndrome believe that the bond is initially, created when a captor threatens a captive's life, deliberates, and then chooses not to kill the captive. The captive's relief at the removal of the death threat is transposed into feelings of gratitude toward the captor for giving him or her life. The survival instinct is at the heart of the Stockholm syndrome. Victims live in enforced dependence and interpret rare or small acts of kindness in the midst of horrible conditions as good treatment. They often become hypervigilant to the needs and demands of their captors, making psychological links between the captors' happiness and their own. <https://www.Britannica.com>

³ King Baby syndrome - Sigmund Freud was the first person to use the term "king baby" during the 1930s. It describes a mental condition where a person firmly believes that the whole world revolves around them. It includes a set of personality issues that may potentially lead to dangerous behaviors, such as addictions, in the future for instant gratification and pleasure without putting in any effort. According to psychologists and other mental health experts, the king-baby personality usually manifests as a lost child that is still present somewhere inside an addict. This lost child feels alone and worthless and believes they do not belong. These feelings stem from the deep childhood traumas where drug addicts and alcoholics attempt to seek approval or love they couldn't get as a part of their childhood. They feel insulted when they hear the word "no" as they believe such negative affirmations often lead to drastic consequences. Such lost children also feel safe when they are indulged and pampered. <https://addictioninfo.org/king-baby-syndrome>

⁴ Peter Pan syndrome describes people who have difficulty entering adult life. They may find it challenging to manage typical adult responsibilities, such as keeping a job and maintaining healthy relationships. Peter Pan syndrome is an informal term that some psychologists use to describe this behavior. It is not a formal diagnosis, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition, text revision (DSM5-TR) do not recognize it. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/peter-pan-syndrome>.



MENTAL INCARCERATION

By Damont Ewells

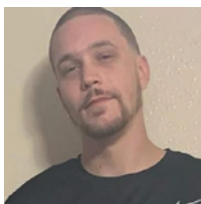


Sitting here,
I think about the way I was living
and the motives behind all my scandalous, dealings.
Sinking deeper into thought, I see how lonely I am.
In my mind, I feel trapped in a land of no man.

Surrounded by four walls and neither one's an exit.
There is misery, anxiety, grief, and then, depression.
Are those voices I hear? I thought I was alone.
I went through the door marked depression
to a scene, similar to home.

Now, I hear the voices clearly
arguing above me.
Bad or good, someone has to
win the argument, who will it be?

I still see no one,
but they both state their cases.
So I asked, how to free myself
from this mental incarceration.



STOP NEGLECTING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

By Chad Henry

How can we break the cycle of men neglecting their medical and mental health?

Mental and medical help are extremely important to keep up with, they have crucial benefits for our well being and health overall.

As a child, I was not properly, taught how to seek help for the mental side of things. Problems occurred and we would just handle them as they came, the best we could. I can remember holding a lot in as a child growing up. I had this fear

of rejection, and embarrassment, if I let people know about problems that were occurring in my life. I felt that it would give people a way to pick on me or bully me. I looked at speaking out on my problems or situations as weak, because that's what the streets often portrayed it to be. Therefore, I held most problems between me, and God. Years later, I can see there is nothing weak about expressing the need for help

mentally, or medically.

I believe that the cycle of not speaking out stems from society's view, and not the view from the educational standpoint. We should educate our youth on the benefits of keeping up with mental health and overall health. Especially men, as there is a bigger problem for men not speaking up primarily, than women. Often times, men find

out health problems when it is too late. Getting routine checkups can catch early signs to problems such as Cancer, disease, illness, etc. In certain instances, the earlier you catch it, the better. Our youth and young adults should be made aware of health benefits, it is an important matter, and in some cases, life, and death related.

Now let's discuss the mental health side for a brief moment. Mental health is extremely important and it should be taken seriously. In 2017, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention shared that "men died by suicide at a rate of 3.4% more than women. Depression and suicide are widely considered the leading cause of death in men. Every year in the United States, at least 6 million, men are affected by depression." We as men have this problem or fear of speaking about our issues due to how we will look, or how the world will view us. We will be labeled as weak or broken, or crazy or too emotional, however, none of that is the case. We were given a voice, and

we must be comfortable using that voice.

There is nothing weak about speaking up. There is nothing weak about seeking help and guidance. The obstacles we face throughout life are plentiful, and we need support. Depression is very real and can become the trigger that leads to other problems. Men are 2-3 times more prone to use substances or alcohol to numb their feelings because of what they are going through. Mental health has become an epidemic over the last 20 years. We need to know the risks that come with the struggles of mental health. Once we learn the consequences of neglecting our mental health, we can then learn how to open up, and speak about our problems and search out ways to cope and improve our mental state.


We also need to teach our youth how to open up and talk about their feelings, and help them understand that it is a healthy habit to have. Establishing that habit early on has a

tremendous benefit as they get older, as it gives them an outlet to use. It is also a way to de-escalate problems they are facing. It also allows men to be heard, and helps us see that there are people who care and that we are not alone.

Search out ways to cope that is beneficial to your mental health. Have a good support system in place and find people who are going through similar situations who are getting help. Find men who are willing to speak about what they are going through and allow yourself to be motivated to seek help. It is important to know that everyone needs help at some point, and time in life.

It is okay to ask for help. It is okay to get help. Getting help for ourselves, allows us to ultimately, help others, as well.

Keep the faith and know you can lean on your brothers and sisters in times of need.



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AIM FOR THE LIGHT!

By Kyle Farmer



Some people are stagnating in the prison system every day. They come into this drab and dark place and end up getting lost in the dread and depression this place breeds. I get it. It is very hard to fight the overwhelming darkness that tries to consume us all in here. The only escape from this darkness is to equip yourself with the light, which is only attained by rehabilitation and becoming a positive influence to those around you.

In order to make your light shine brightly, the three aspects that need development in our lives are the soul, mind, and the body. Failing to aim for growth in all of these aspects will usually lead men and women to be consumed by the darkness and dread. In some cases, it may even result in becoming accustomed to the darkness, and even preferring to stay in it.

If aiming for the light is the goal, however, then the journey is going to be long and arduous, but the benefits

are eternal. Now the question that arises is this----How does someone grow his or her soul, mind, and body? The answers are full with endless decisions, but we will discuss the beginning steps starting with the soul.

How does the soul develop?

The simplest answer is through faith. The faith possessed by someone is what produces obedience to God. This obedience to God causes moral living. In accordance to the Christian faith, a Christian lives in obedience to God, through the power of Christ. This faith and trust produces a “will” to do what is right and proper, according to the authority the Christian is implored to obey. Furthermore, this willingness to submit to this authority is the key in the cognitive patterns that reform the mind.

My faith in Jesus Christ has personally brought me on a path that has allowed me to recognize that I was not living in a manner worthy of God's love, and if I wanted to be loved by Him, I could no longer love or be loved by the ways of the world. To me, this affirms the shaping of the soul and the mind. In order for the soul to properly strengthen and support the mind, it must also be properly developed in order to produce lasting changes in life. The soul strengthens the mind to do the things it learns it should do. In order to evolve the mind, new methods of thinking must be developed.

This is a troublesome task because some people do not consider some of the things they do as wrong, because the society we find ourselves in does not necessarily view what the Bible considers wrong as being wrong. The starting point for most people would be some form of cognitive intervention therapy. Cognitive intervention consists of three basic steps:

- a) Recognize your thought patterns,
- b) See how some of these thought patterns are wrong, and
- c) Integrate new thought patterns to replace the old, faulty thought patterns.

Cognitive intervention has personally helped me evaluate where I was in my life by recognizing how some of my thought patterns were toxic and warped, even though I thought they were for a good cause.

The final part of this process is the body. The body houses the soul and the mind. The body is more than a meat suit used to interact with the world; it is the shell, in which the mind and soul are contained.

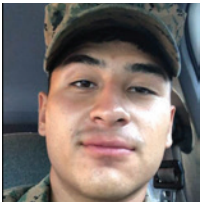
Being the shell that it is, it is plausible to say the body must be shaped as well, in order to ascend the steps of development. This is the easiest to explain, and yet the hardest to perform. To the soul and the mind, the body is a "temple," and it should be treated as such.

In order to maintain this temple, determination in developing it is mandatory. This occurs through physical fitness. This does not necessarily mean weightlifting as may be presupposed, though it is a choice. Any form of exercise is a good first step to elevating the state of the body. They will build up and sculpt the temple, further facilitating the growth of the elements of self.

By going through these transformations, people can become something more, not only for themselves, but for the people in their lives as well. Think about the change that can occur if a father in prison like me can make these changes and be a better influence and inspiration for their children. On the other hand, how about the shift that would no longer generate anger and hatred for one another, this is a source of so much unneeded violence. Instead, we love to express as a general respect for one another. We can change so many things just by changing ourselves, all we have to do is have faith that we can become the lights in the darkness, and get to work!

Therefore, as the development of self, heads for greatness, the soul, mind, and body have all grown together, intermingling with one another on the journey to a better life. This process is a game changer in prison. This journey will produce the brightest lights in the darkest places. Overall, this growth enables someone to escape the darkness within and become more, for him and herself, as well as for God.





VETERANS, CAN WE TALK?

By Juan Vega

As a veteran of 8 years in the Marine Corps infantry, I along with an illustrious lineage of America's strongest fighting force have put extreme and maximum effort into putting everything including quality of life second on the priority list.

This ideology was created to perfect our craft. This way of life is strongly demanded of the armed forces to enhance and promote the capability and overall effectiveness of war fighters defending this great country. Unfortunately, this ideology and practice comes with an underlining effect that is significantly detrimental to the mind, body, and spirit.

Being in a combat MOS (Military operation specialty) the individual is often without the knowledge they are in competition with their peers, subordinates, and senior leaders. The determination and dedication is in likeness to a deer in a rut. Their fulcrum point is legitimately to be the best. They put all the problems that life offers to the rear in order to ensure the mission is met with no casualties, and zero mistakes. The war fighters underlying effect is being truly, apathetic, towards themselves to achieve success.

Mental health, medical attention, and relationships are ultimately neglected at the expense of the individual for something that is commonly, regarded to as "Greater than themselves." I myself have been that individual. Unknowing, that I am a victim of disregarding my health and quality of life. I have been told to "Grieve on your own time.



Showing weakness in front of your squad will make you less respected as a leader." An individual wearing a suicide vest in Kabul, Afghanistan, on August 26, 2021, killed fellow Marines in my company. I understand how it feels to be afflicted, being told to 'push through the pain' and ignore it as though it does not exist. I had neglected my perfect family, not knowing that my pain had caused a ripple that affected my loved ones so heavily. My second eldest child, Wyatt passed away. Soon after, I was incarcerated and endured a divorce, all while battling the trauma my military career gifted me.

I often reflect on the root of my downhill spiral. I acknowledge I had never opened up about my mental anguish to a professional, I never took care of

my actual wounds and bodily damage I had acquired over the years, and I postponed a relationship with my higher power.

We veterans push our family away deliberately, thinking confidently that our job came first. We know full and well, that talking over your trauma will be extremely, difficult. It will anger you and may even raise your blood pressure and core temperature of your body. Such things must happen in order to have a break through. Quality of life is important to us all, every individual is important, YOU are important.

The same drive vets or active duty personnel have for the job should transition into taking care of ourselves. Every Marine, SEAL, Soldier, and Airman knows how to maintenance their weapon. The weapon system is merely an extension of the body. If your weapon has a malfunction or is dirty, you fix or clean it to be fully functional, allowing you to continue your operation. The same immediate and remedial actions should be used to maintenance your mind, your body, and your spirit. Is not the individual in control and not the extension of the latter? Consider a computer with a horrible virus, whose code is embedded under encryption. A computer technician runs a diagnosis, troubleshoots, and fixes your problem. The analogy runs hand in hand with a licensed professional whose sole purpose in life, is to help you mentally and physically.

In the Grunt (Infantry) community there is a saying to help you remember what to tend to during your downtime in a field operation. The saying is “Gear, weapon, body,” you maintenance these three things in that exact order. Service your weapon, adjust and organize your gear, then feed your body and tend to its needs to ensure you are ready for the next fight. Usually, this is subconsciously, done. The mind is part of the body, but why isn’t the body, the last part that we prioritize?

Senior leaders and mentors fail to put any emphasis, on how important it is to work on yourself; the same way you continuously improve your fighting position. Brothers, your mind, and your body are your primary fighting position and forever will be. Unfathomable amounts of veterans have fought to protect evils, foreign and domestic. Those veterans, including myself suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, survivor’s

guilt, depression, anxiety, and bodily trauma. However, we continue to push forward at our expense because in our minds, the job is not finished. We fight a war in which you cannot see, a war that is abstract. This is unsatisfactory, it is repulsive, and it must be assessed; now. It is the ones you see at a liquor store buying what they firmly believe to be their cure, but fail to acknowledge that it is only suppressing the mental and physical trauma. If we as a community are willing to give our lives for the man to the left and right of us, we need to love ourselves, the same exact way. We need to love ourselves enough to humble ourselves and fight a new enemy.

We need to fight the stigma of seeking professional help. This new enemy has found a way to successfully, infiltrate and take the lives of our counterparts. I highly encourage you to be the change. Do not allow your loved ones to suffer with you when you have every resource at your disposal to fix yourself. Do not fall victim to being depicted as “Weak.” As a critical skills operator, I will tell you that you need to do a hard reset on your mind and body to complete any task efficiently. Again, you are important and there are people put on this earth to help you navigate through your tempest, whether it is mental or physical. You are not just another number. You are an asset and must treat yourself as such.

Do not think by requesting help that someone else will fill your position, or you will be judged for seeking help you deserve. For those, like me, who strive after glory, you must remember that glory, once given, cannot be stripped from you. Give God his glory by fixing your shortcomings and enjoy the dopamine that comes with prevailing through the War on Self.

There is no guide to life, or an exact way to conduct yourself, however, there are lessons learned and after action reports written by those who learned by looking in retrospect. It is your duty to speak up and request immediate help for yourself. We as veterans of this country gave willingly, as others we knew and love gave the ultimate sacrifice. Therefore, the help that is at our disposal should be willingly, taken.

-Ghost 2-3



THE MASKS WE WEAR

By George Thornock

Depression, a mental health condition that is often invisible on the faces who suffer from its clutches. Yet it is a very, real overwhelming burden. It has been at the forefront of many minds, including mine. It has been a constant pain since childhood, trauma undisclosed.

Prison and the negativity that festers behind penitentiary walls, only make it worse. Instead of dealing with the problem, it forces a man to bury its symptoms because in this hostile environment, much like civilized society, depression and other mental health conditions are often viewed by the less understanding and socially adaptable, as weaknesses.

When I started my sentence, I never cared to wonder what is going on underneath the facial expressions worn by the thousand or so men that would pass me multiple times a day on a breezeway. I was too preoccupied trying to find where I would fit in and hiding my own internal struggles and anxieties. I had not time to care. In fact, caring could also be viewed as a sign of weakness.

When I entered the system, I did what most, young men do. I looked to who was already at the top of the social dynamic and mimicked their behaviors. It is an age-old method. Monkey see, Monkey do. Doing this, I had hoped that I would mean that I could be accepted into the "In" circle.

I watched as the socialites bullied, teased, ridiculed, and assaulted those they deemed weaker, less fortunate, or had severe mental health conditions. Eventually, I took part in it as well. It made me feel included. It made me feel powerful. It made me feel like I was worth something, but only for a moment. It was just an ugly mask.

The despicability of my actions amplified my depression. Sinking

the symptoms like fish hooks into my heart, wrenching my conscience into agony. Already lost, I watched through my own eyes, a man possessed, as my actions hurt other people the same way I was hurting. Unable to stop, it was better to wear a violent mask than be viewed as weak and become the prey.

This was not my behavior before incarceration, it was taught, by those who also suffered and learned it somewhere else. Before prison, I was generally very kind to people, regardless of background or situation. No. Before, I wore a different mask to hide my depression from the world. I wore the mask of self-medication through an insatiable meth addiction. I used to feel something; something other than the soul crushing inadequacies and self-loathing depression poured into me.

Its constant voice, saying, "KILL YOURSELF! YOU'RE WORTHLESS! YOU BREAK EVERYTHING YOU TOUCH! YOU ARE NOTHING! YOU'RE WEAK!" blaring in my head on repeat. It was only silenced, by the needles' rush and the ringing in my ears that followed. Every time I used, I would beg the Lord to wisp me away from this world, and let me die during that high. That way, I could be swept into his arms, in a brief moment of peace, a brief moment where I did not hate myself for my past actions, and the guilt of letting so many people down along the way.

Ironic isn't it? --wanting to die in the free world, then once in prison wanting so desperately, to survive socially, that a man will take drastic measures to do so; trampling others in his path. It is enough to make a man question God's plan.

Behind the penitentiary walls, punishment is uneducated. Most men have nothing positive to occupy their time with, or inspire confidence

within them. Empathy muscles take a vacation and men find their only alternative is to build confidence is at the cost of another's well-being. What a twisted world...a world man created.

In the free world, I wanted to die. In prison, I wanted to survive just so I could die later. When would the emotional torture stop, never, I do not believe in pharmaceutical remedies to my condition. Meth accomplished the same thing. It sprinkled lidocaine on my wounds and slapped a band-aid over it.

Depression is constant, one that everyone on earth struggles with and has since the beginning of time. A hundred years ago, men and women battled the same medicating problem. Alcohol and barbiturates were the doctor's remedy. In my opinion, it is not something where medication is the answer. A man has to find purpose to be content in his life, purpose, which is only found through self-discovery, enlightenment, and ambition. Finding happiness is easy for men and women that are psychologically adaptable. I am proof, that depression can be managed; however, I still deal with its overwhelming burden under a different name.

Ten years into this sentence, I have managed my personal struggle, with self-loathing and inadequacies. What about the people who do not have the cognitive, awareness, to do manage his, or her feelings?

I now feel depression sinks its hooks into my heart when I look at the men passing me on the breezeway, wearing their masks, wishing I could rip the mask off, but knowing I cannot. I feel helpless and I hurt because they are hurting. The same hurt that I used to feel so deep in my soul. I want to help, but I do not know how. All I can do is pray and practice kindness towards them in hopes they find their way and do the same.

BEGINNING WITH WORDS

How we can stop the 'Spin Cycle'

By Eric L. Williams

First, we must face the undeniable fact that to accomplish the Goliath task of stopping the 'Spin Cycle' will not be an overnight achievement. Centuries have gone by with these cycles having grown and evolved into behavioral patterns that have shaped and formed into the most damnable and grotesque kinds, wrecking havoc upon all humans.

Second, we must find the origin of our problem. How did the 'spin cycle' come to be, and what started it? Better yet, who started it?

God, the Creator of everything, said, "Let us make man in our image," Genesis 1:26 (KJV) and man was formed.

It is safe to say that 'The What' is more important than 'The Who,' though it is impossible to have one, without the other. Our 'What' is 'Words.' God Spoke Words! This most powerful gift that was given to human kind, has shaped, and formed the very 'spin cycles' we are plagued



with today. The 'spin cycles' that keeps your mind, body, and soul in bondage. Our men and woman are being swallowed by addictions. They are lacking communicative skills where the use of derogatory language is most preferable. Our men and women not receiving medical or mental health assistance, and our men perpetuating black on black crime in the name of living a 'Hood Life,' Our men and some of our women are leaving their children parentless, each are wrestling with self doubt, and some perpetrate physical, mental, verbal, and sexual abuse on others.

All of these behaviors are direct results of 'spin cycles' formed by the use of 'Words,' a gift and a curse to humankind.

Someone once stated how a certain substance would make one feel good and take one away from the stresses of everyday life. The Listener heard the Words, believed the Words, and acted on the Words, started the cycles of drug addiction, substance abuse, and illegal drug transactions, which have decimated families and communities.

Someone once stated how using derogatory language made one feel powerful, and it was certainly a better way to get their point across. The Listener heard the Words, believed the Words, and acted on the Words, starting the cycles of unrestrained use of vulgar language. There's just about nowhere one can go without hearing the use of derogatory language - whether on TV, movies, music, and even in casual conversations. Even children, as young as three are spitting out vulgar epithets.

Someone once stated that only white people go to psych doctors. That's not for black folks; we work out our own problems. The Listener heard the Words, believed the Words, and acted on the Words, starting the cycles of growth in untreated mental patients who refuse to get proper psychological treatment. As it stands, our low-income and urban communities are flooded with homeless individuals and drug addicts who are suffering from mental health issues.

Someone once stated that the hood is where we must live and die. The

Listener heard the Words, believed the Words, and acted on the Words, starting the cycles of black on black crimes where both young and old individuals are perpetrating perpetual attacks of violence upon one another, all in the name of living the 'Hood Life.'

Someone once stated that a 'real' man doesn't let one woman hold him down. A 'real' man has to conquer as many women as possible. The Listener heard the Words, believed the Words, and acted on the Words, starting the cycles that have influenced males to be irresponsible and insensitive to the plight of getting women pregnant with no intentions of being an in-house and responsible, active father. Single parent homes are at an all time high. Young women are left to fend for themselves, as irresponsible males have abandoned them and their child or children.

Someone once stated that a black man could not amount to anything in this world, so there is no need in him trying. The Listener heard the Words, believed the Words, and acted on the Words, starting the cycles that have caused men to self-sabotage themselves in not reaching for their full potential. They forego education, proper training and accept less than nothing employment, believing that school is not for them, and yet complain under their breath. So many men are working at jobs that are beneath their true qualifications and abilities. Their fears and beliefs have blinded them, and because they cannot see themselves for who they really are or realize what they truly are able to offer, they accept the position they are at in life.

Someone once stated that a 'real' man must make his woman respect him, even if he has to put his hands on her. The Listener heard the Words, believed the Words, and acted on the Words, starting the cycles of physical, mental, verbal, and sexual abuse. Men unrelentingly and unrepentantly abusing woman in the most horrific fashion believe that they are in fact accomplishing their manly duties.

It has always been the 'Words, that 'Someone' had spoken, which in turn, garnered an individual's attention, and has started the treacherous 'spin cycles' as we know them today. Our best course of action to take in alleviating, and annihilating these spin cycles is to STOP speaking Words of death, discouragement, devilment, harm and defeatism into the ears of our Listeners. Build one another up with Words of Life, encouragement, peace, joy, hope, faith, and the encompassing Words of Love.

In conclusion, this task must start now! You need to start right where you are!

The person sitting beside you needs to hear some Words of Love. Call your children, family, or friends, they need to hear some Words of Love.

When the Words are spoken enough believed enough by people and acted on enough, by enough people we will see those 'spin cycles' lose their velocity and staying power. There is indeed "Life and Death in the power of the tongue." Proverbs 18:21



BROTHER, CAN WE TALK?

By Monique Renee

First, and foremost, allow me to give honor to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Certainly, it is indeed in you, through you, I am alive, well and have my being.

Secondly, let's thank Ms. Robin who is truly committed to the extraordinary work she does. Ms. Robin has diligently shared her platform with us to make sure our voices are heard, especially those of us who are behind bars. Thank you Ms. Robin, for being a solid one, genuine one, and for caring about each of your contributing writers.

Furthermore, to each of us who are transparent and authentic through our art may we remember it is through our words of transformation, things can happen, healing begins, and this is only through God. Continue to let your pen do the winning.

I now introduce to you a piece titled 'Brother, Can We Talk?'

In a world where talking about things seem to be scarce, or absent, even more so, in a world that has become addicted to their phone and social media, we, as people have forgotten the value of communicating verbally, and the value of talking about it. Let's talk about it.

Maybe it is not just that. Maybe it is the mere fact that we have become too sensitive to say the truth to our brothers in LOVE. Today, it is an honor to write to my brothers and brother, may you know it is all in LOVE.

"If she has forgotten that she is a Queen, it is your responsibility as a brother to remind her who she is." ~ Legin

While listening to a podcast, those words echoed so heavily for multiple

reasons. It seems like men have lost the value of how to talk to a woman and how to treat a woman. Let's talk about it.

As a mother, and as a woman who has two brothers, it has been extremely important to let the men inside my life know the essence of how to treat a woman. I boldly say to them, 'Don't call a woman anything that you wouldn't want someone to call your mom or sister.' Why? Well, it was a reminder to them not to treat women any differently than how they want me to be treated by a man. Derogatory language is not the only way of communicating.

Brother, can we talk?

There is so much more to women than our bodies. Every woman should be addressed as the Queen she is, not how she has been labeled. Yes, even if she has forgotten her self-worth.

As Legin stated, *'If she has forgotten that she's a Queen, it is your responsibility as a brother to remind her who she is.'* We can all agree with Legin's perspective. It is indeed a great analogy on how a brother should value a sister.

As the baby girl in the family, raised by both my parents, my dad always and I mean always protected me. I could remember how I always felt protected anytime I went somewhere with my dad.

When I was a high school freshman, I arrived late and I had to go to the Principals office. I entered that office, and found myself with several other students who came late. The Principal looked at each of us. After finding out why we were there, he said "What are you, some morons?"

The other students burst out in laughter as the principle instructed us to return to class. However, I did not find it funny because as a young girl, soon to be turning 14-years old, I did not know what it meant.

I went to my father and asked him "What is a moron? He asked, "Who called you a moron?"

That is the mild version of his words. I explained to him what the principal had said to us. My dad only word was, okay. Without telling me what the word meant. The next day my dad went to my school, signed me out, and addressed the principal. Although the principal denied ever using the word moron, my dad knew he was being dishonest because I did not know the meaning.

What I wanted to relay with my personal story was that our youth need you. We will take your presence in any shape, or form, a letter, a drawing, or a phone call.

Brother, if you want, I am always willing to talk as a sister, mother, and woman who want more for our brothers. You can reach me @ securus.emessaging or P.O.Box 26 St.Gabriel, La 70776

There are some men who made an impact. He is just like you, He once walked down the same path and now he has become the change he wanted to see. His name is Kendall Taylor, CEO of Salute 1st on The Legin podcast.

You all matter my brothers.

SPEAKING YOUR TRUTH



METAMORPHIC

By Jemadari Williams

I was an acolyte of darkness
a python in the marshes.
A ravenous zombie carcass
ravaging my own carnage.
No tears for the departed,
having no fear, got me applauded.
When you grow up under attack,
it's "#facts," you are always guarded.

Leaving tragedy in my wake,
Am I majesty or a mistake?
Constantly calculating the capacity of calamity, I can take,
'cause "Supreme" is built to last,
but Jemadari just might break.
We both just trying to make it,
"w" "t" "f" 'bout that fake?

Pour my heart out thru a pen,
when evil lurks, my grin pretends.
Then every time I get to tripping,
they like, "here we go again!"
Concrete blocks and iron bars are elements, which I blend in.
Searched far and wide, but still can't manage to find a faithful friend,
except off in the mirror - my companion is clearly here.

The camaraderie I craved was always "closer than appears,"
I've been "pedal to the metal," maybe it's time that I switch gears,
'cause I'm stuck here, only clutching on a criminal career.
I'm still way too aggressive, inquisitive, and intrepid,
misdirected steps led to some serious self-reflections.

Did I merely miss the message?
Or burn up all my blessings,
by putting it in the air?
I care enough to ask these questions,
to the scribe when she comes, we both vibe to the drum.
When she says 'the sky's the limit,' it makes me rise like the sun.
Looking over the horizon, I appraise the course I've run.

Both victory and defeat are like two sides of really one,
that is, with one life to live, I got more light to give,
and a legacy to leave despite no wife and kids.
It's a blessing just to breathe. Therefore, I'm so appreciative,
because the consequence of greed, is just too high a price to bid.

Every moment I will cherish choosing to honor both my parents.
The absurdity of words is only verbs deserve the merit.
I'll practice what I preach instead of lecturing a parish,
and demonstrate this doctrine from Johannesburg to Paris!



BROTHER, CAN WE TALK?

By Antwan D. Cooper

Throughout this journey of experiencing another world inside a world of itself, was expeditiously a mix of emotions: sadness, pain, strife, hurt, love, broken-hearted, etc.

It is not an easy life to live, yet we make the best of what we are subject to having. Ambivalent thoughts are likely to result in an unnecessary impulsive action. Then we add addiction on top of the parade of feelings, which eventually rips open the core characters of humankind.

Am I getting hotter?

Brother, can we talk?

Never once in my small time of existence would I have prepared myself for the wave of mentally disturbing thoughts and events that flip the human mind from normal to nocturnal. A series of conversations inside our minds that will turn a sane man crazy; I am talking Spiritual Attunement.

I know... I have been there too.

As a custodian working in Administration Segregation, I am able to reach out to young men and direct their heart towards Christ. There are men that hear voices and attempt to kill themselves in order to not live with this condition.

Let me start by saying I have 18 years on the inside, coming in at the age of 15-years young, yes, I was a follower. Yes! I was a gang member. Yes! I sold drugs. Yes! I smoked K-2. Yes! I got addicted. Yes! I surrendered my life to Christ, Jesus!

Been there, done that! The so-called quote/unquote "Game" is exactly that, "A Game," you either win or lose. Eventually, you lose, and the part about losing in prison comes with consequences. The effects of prison consequences hit differently from the day we were arrested, and sent to prison.

Therefore, here I am in prison, practicing a career of repetitiveness; criminality behavior, thinking I have gotten better at doing wrong, over, and over again. (SMH)

This type of struggle had given me the endurance to carry on a mission I felt God had placed on my heart.

I am a former addict with a family background of addicts; whether it was drugs or liquor, I have seen it, experienced it, and overcame it. I did research and requested material that correlated to what was going on inside of me. I went on a spiritual journey. The book I needed was sitting in front of me the whole time, The Holy Bible.

Now, I do not want to talk to you about the mighty works of God.

What worked for me may not work for you. Maybe, just maybe you are just like me, maybe this conversation will encourage you to stop trying to solve all your problems with self-infliction; harming not only yourself, but also by including everyone that's connected to you.

I really stopped caring about myself!

Maybe it is time to start caring about others. I mean the type of care we so typically hide behind; I am talking about that inner-voice of "change."

Why are we so afraid of "change?" I always felt good when people would say, "I got some "CHANGE" in my pocket." (LOL) However, only if I knew that the value of a quarter equals the first quarter of a human beings life. CHANGE is significantly worth much more, if we accumulate more of it.

How much "CHANGE" would you have if you acquired, borrowed, or saved?

I think it is time we start using it in the right places.

I look forward to talking with you another time.

I love you, brother.

Peace and Blessings.

Shalom, Shalom,

Your Brother, Sauce

BROTHER, CAN WE TALK?

By Kenny L. Danner, Jr.

Understanding is the best thing to have.

How can we get on the same page if we are not even in the same book?

The first thing we have to come to terms with is that hurt people, hurt people. When two groups of people become enemies, most of the time, they were once neighbors. Some were considered friends, maybe even family. Nothing ever splits 50/50 in real life. Both sides will take losses somewhere down the line and those losses will definitely hurt.

When someone is hurt badly enough, he or she might want to pass that pain along. They say, 'you are judged by the company you keep.' People

tend to pay attention to the who's who, and if they cannot get to you, they will more often than not get to someone that is close enough to you, so that you feel it too. I do not agree with it, but that is the truth of it. Karma does not fight fair. It is just our natural response to tearing down anything and anyone standing in our way. If there is nothing to tear down, there is nothing to tear down. The buck has to stop somewhere.

No man wants to appear to be a coward amongst other men, therefore, no one is willing to walk away first. Women are mostly gentle, kinder of heart, mind, body, and spirit. It takes women to save their men from destroying the world. What I suggest is for the women

and children, the real treasures of a man's heart to come to those men and speak. When warriors are in the field, all they think about is making it back home. If the women from one side could come to terms with the women from the other, and stand firm in their peace, I am sure the men would follow suit. No man actually WANTS war.

A true Queen would have to save her King, even if that means saving him from himself. Tell the man what he risks losing, because half of the time, we do not know, until it is too late.

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MY SON SHINE

By Stanton "SRT" Trent



They call my hood 'Broadway,'
Guess I thought I was a star.
I sold hard, hand-to-hand outta foreign cars.
Now, I'm behind bars.
I just wanted another run.
Now, it's 60 minutes at a time
visits with my son.
What have I done?

I remember sitting in his seat,
looking at my Pops in my seat,
for selling the same rocks
on the same blocks and
my heart stops and drops
to the floor,
the same way I prostrate to my Lord.

I make Salah,
Praying the cycle stops, 5 times a day.
They gave me 10 years,
but I'm hoping I'm less than 5 years away
until the day, I can see my son shine,
like the sunshine I long for that day,
that moment
to own it.

My heart is in the dark
like a night with no moon
or a calendar with no June
or July, why lie?
How could they learn?
The same way you teach 'em
'If you touch the stove, it will burn.'

Why should you go through the same pain,
trying to live up to the same name,
playing the same game.
Yes, you are the one; you are my son!
I'll trade my life today
to know that you would flourish with knowledge,
faith, wisdom, and courage.
He's the real star, sun, and the moon.
Look at my June.
Daddy loves you!



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05.2026



BROTHERS, CAN WE TALK?

By Brandon Moore

Dear Brothers Everywhere,

It saddens me to write you all with such heavy burdens on our hearts. However, unfortunately, we have reached a stage of unhealthy repetition. We have come to a point of dependence instead of being independent. We must change our coping mechanisms into more fruitful and healthy alternatives, not just for ourselves, but for our children, our families, the young men and women to come, who will look to us for answers in the time of their own sorrows and trouble.

Personalizing the horrible situations in this world gave me a much deeper perspective of how much pain and heartache we caused the world by our own poor decisions.

Dear Brother, imagine this:

Say my father never showed me love and affection and because of this, I never showed it to my son, who then grows cold to it, not to mention having a chip on his shoulder. Now, say my son runs across your daughter, many years later and the lack of love he never received from me, he never gives to your daughter. They have a child, your grandchild and that child disrespects his mother and resents his father, then he treats the next young woman poorly.

Do you see the repetitive cycle and how traumatic it could be?

Now, I understand we all struggle in some shape, form, or fashion and many people do not wish to turn to God for a remedy, but if faith in a higher power is not suitable for you, let's think logically. Most of us want to live comfortably. Drugs, alcohol, and violence are only temporary releases that will eventually take that

away from that comfortable life we wish to live. Anger never defuses anger.

Sometimes a moment of silence is the best answer to a problem or situation by recalibrating our thought process to produce better and positive outcomes. I read somewhere "Most people don't need therapy, they need community!"

Try to surround yourself with people who truly wish the best for you, people who give you a safe space to vent all your emotions and thoughts without judgment. Think about how defensive we get when our character, is assassinated.

We yearn to prove our accusers wrong. Now, if those derogatory words can have such an impact on us; then by proxy, wouldn't that mean positive, uplifting words can have a powerful impact as well. Let's flip the narratives and turn "I can't's," into "I can." Imagine if you looked in the mirror and saw a winner, an entrepreneur, a millionaire, or a good father. We cannot change yesterday my brothers, but we most definitely can start a new path today, and make sure tomorrow is different.

Every day we wake up is our second chance to do something different, to be different, and to inspire change in others. I highly recommend speaking life and goodness into our situations, looking to the bright side. Let go of hatred for each other, become self-aware of the kind of legacy we want to leave behind for our children. Let's be the kind of men they write about in history books. One day, at a time, one-step at a time, we can climb mountains!

We Can Do It Brothers!

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BROTHERS, CAN WE TALK?

By Eugene Jones

Hello again everyone. I'm sorry it's been a second since you heard from me, but I have been in the hospital for doing things that we might need to talk about.

Guess what? I found out that I'm human!

Wow! I know! It's truly a mind blower, right?

Let me explain: See, throughout life we as people, from men to women, have tried to take over God's job. For myself, though, I have let the dwellings of this place eat at me so much that I hurt myself again. That is why I feel that brother, we need to talk.

I have learned that I am powerless and I had to go all the way back to step one just to realize that God is the author; the beginning and the ending; the Alpha and the Omega!

So, if you are reading this, I hope that I can gain access to your heart through the reason why I am still living.

Look, I know that the world has changed so much since 2016, and I am scared to death of not being able to accomplish many of my goals that I have set. I am not even sure how the family will take the new me (God-fearing). See, compared to the man I use to be, which was a drinker, smoker, kicking it all the time; running towards the danger,



in a sense, such as: always running to their aid to fix their problems and neglecting my own household obligations. I have done a complete transformation because I can no longer be that man for them or anybody else; and it hurts because that is all I knew. However, I am not God.

So, Brother, can we talk?

I know that when you were young, you heard that words don't hurt, but that is not true; because words alone is the reason why people have depression, low self-esteem, and anger problems. It has even been the death of people on a fatal note. Maybe Romans, Chapter 6, will help explain it better than I can. Remember though, it will be okay because I am walking the same way that I'm telling you about. I use to be in the game and I found out that chasing fast money doesn't lead to any places but county, prison, and the grave yard.

Now, what is it to be a father, brother, lover, son, uncle, or even a grandson that someone looks to you solely for advice? For myself, I have been in below zero weather with snow up to my knees, homeless and having to sleep on the trains in Chicago. I have walked for weeks, and my feet became raw to the point that blood stayed in my shoes and socks. I have lied, I have cheated, I have stolen, and robbed, and for all those things, I am sorry.

They say you will reap what you sow and I believe that is why I am in prison now. If there was something I could say to you to help you change, I would, because I, nor the Father, wants to see you burn in the lake of fire. Also, many of us have children who are being raised by their mothers, grandparents, and the one that hurts the worst is that it can be another man that your sons or daughters are calling Daddy.

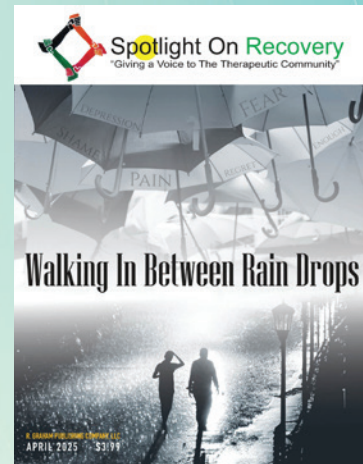
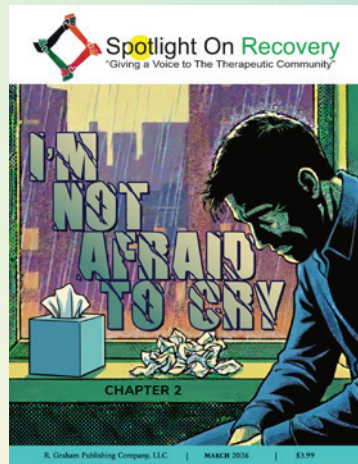
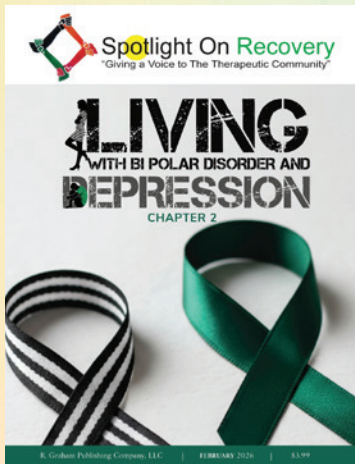
Brother, I know that it hurts to think like this, but it is honest.

Children get afraid in almost everything that they do because they are learning to experience things like bad storms, bullies, and their first everything. Think about your child's first steps or their first heartbreak. Were you there?

Then Brother, can we talk?

Over time, I have found out that I have made some very bad decisions and people ask the same ole question: "If you could turn back time, would you?"

My answer is, "No!" The reason why is because the man that I am now, is so much better than the man that wanted to run the streets.



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ARE YOU READY TO STEP OUTSIDE OF THE SPIN CYCLE?

AN INSIDE LOOK INTO THE ‘SPIN CYCLE’

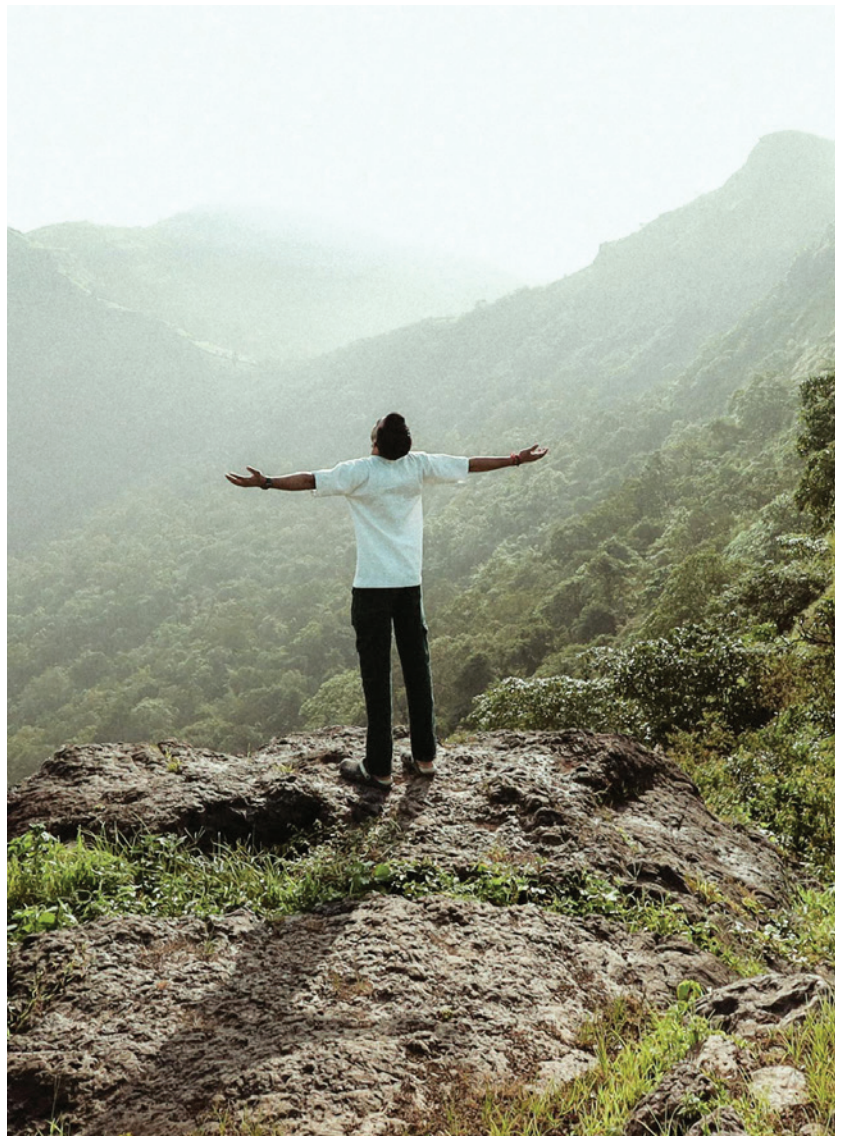
By Donald E. Ward, Jr.

A DEEPER INSIGHT INTO THE “SPIN CYCLE,” IT’S TIME TO GET OUT!

Regardless of what we go through in life, we must remain optimistic. Even when the deck is stacked against us and the Refs aren’t calling the game fair, your job is to minimize your mistakes, stay in control of your drive and move the ball forward for positive yards, because Success is a “down per down, play by play” daily operation of continuous progression. More importantly, you have to be determined to score within the [lifetime] that is regulated for our individual, higher calling.

Unlike the ‘spin cycle,’ our greatness has an expiration date. Timing is essential. There is no such thing as waiting until your situation and circumstances get better before you implement your exodus or devote yourself to higher commitments and standards. **DO IT NOW!!! ESPECIALLY WHILE IT’S ON YOUR MIND! STOP GIVING YOUR FEELINGS MORE PRIORITY THAN YOUR FUTURE!** Do not be afraid to embrace faith, rejection, loneliness, and criticism. All of your haters should inspire you to want to shine that much brighter. Just make sure you get the last laugh when you see their jaws dropping in disbelief of you actually removing yourself from the ‘spin cycle.’

You can overcome anything, or any opposition that challenges you, as long as you can remain focused on your endgame. Stop allowing yourself to get distracted in the middle of a play by overwhelming, and unexpected circumstances. The greater the calling, the greater the sacrifice!



STOP DOUBTING YOURSELF! Too many times, we fumble the ball and fail to put points on the board. The ‘spin cycle’ makes us over sensitive when dealing with insignificant matters, and this pulls our energy away from our inner strengths and personal skills.

The 'spin cycle' causes us to give too much of our personal attention and credit to our present situations, environment and conditions. This will discourage the Best Champions, if they too were to consider, take heed and caution to the astronomical odds that are against them at that moment of transitioning and counter attacking. When you LOOK INSIDE OF YOUR MIND TO FREE YOURSELF, you will have to become tunnel vision, stubborn, and fixed on a passion to manifest your goals from inside to out.

Having this kind of audacity will quickly spring up numerous haters, especially, after they boldly expose their true intentions and feelings of opposition towards you for becoming conscious and wanting better for yourself.

BROTHERS, ALL OF THIS must be clearly, understood before we can discover the answer and the root to a vast majority of our problems caused by the 'spin cycle.'

Therefore, how do we STOP this 'Spin Cycle?'

WE DON'T!

The 'Spin Cycle' is by design. The 'Spin Cycle's' creation and origin goes all the way back to the beginning of humankind's existence. It is a natural phenomenon of negativity that is perpetuated, through pretentious egos, illusions of wealth, lies, ignorance, misconceptions, and inconsistencies. The 'Spin Cycle' strongholds govern the perimeters of failure and death.

We can only stop ourselves from being victimized by the 'Spin Cycle's' impact and side effects. We do this by simply getting out of the 'Spin Cycle.' That's right, we have to take ourselves individually out of the 'spin cycle.' You are the only one with the power to remove yourself from the 'spin cycle. If we try to look for any other remedy, restitution or resolution for relief from the 'spin cycle' (than how I previous mentioned) outside of simply removing ourselves completely from the Spin Cycle Dynamics, we will only be deceiving ourselves and prolonging the inevitable.

Remaining inside of the 'spin cycle' will affect our moral obligations and personal integrity beyond repair. Therefore, how do we set forth the correct efforts in removing ourselves from the 'spin cycle? '

Our first step is identification. You must be able to properly, identify with the problem and conditions of where you stand in the midst of negativity. We have to be brutally honest with ourselves in acknowledging all of our character flaws, triggers and vices that enslaved our mentality. After you can discern all of your weaknesses, you must immediately place your personal accountability in the right areas in your life. This will increase the morale of responsibilities and need, endowed to your release and recovery.

Your ability to use your identification also deals with you having a VISION. Can you SEE a realistic version of your Higher Self? Can you SEE the Spin Cycle for what it really is? What does the new YOU feel like? Are you tired of SETTLING FOR LESS? What does the new YOU look like?

The next step is considered...“THE POINT OF NO RETURN!” You have to cut off EVERYTHING and EVERYBODY who you previously forged commitments and alliances with INSIDE OF THE 'SPIN CYCLE' who is not trying to GET OUT of the 'spin cycle' with the same type of zeal you are possessing right now. Therefore, you should also be well prepared to accept all of the consequences from your enemies, for forfeiting your loyalty to an environment of individuals who either surrendered to the 'spin cycle' or are still spinning. You cannot fear the intangible death that will cause a mental and physical separation.

BROTHERS, CAN WE TALK? I am pouring out my experiences and success stories to you. I am transferring my inspiration into the words you are reading. I WANT EVERYONE WHO IS READING THIS TO GET OUT OF THE 'SPIN CYCLE' ASAP! I was sincerely blessed to survived the pitfalls and wheels of the 'spin cycle' before I escaped. Now, I am here to forewarn you by sharing my insights and my wisdom with all of you who know you deserve to be free.



BROTHER, CAN WE TALK?

How can we stop the cycle of self-doubt?

By Jonathan Green

*“There can be no construction, as long as demolition is a part of every step of growth.”
– Jonathan Green*



Ever since the beginning of time, the souls of men’s dreams have been scattered across the galaxies; like the stars in the sky. Nevertheless, like the stars, dreams are not lost, they can still be found. We wake up every day conditioned to do the same day-to-day- routine. However, how many times throughout the day do we think on the things we are capable of doing?

The ancients believed that the things we consumed, eventually became a part of us. Therefore, in fact, we should eat, think, and breathe success. Concentrating on the conversations that we hold, as well as the company we entertain, can have a major impact on our motivational integrity.

Negativity is like an infection to your spirit, if you allow it to sit long enough, you lose yourself. If we can

learn how to slow things down, steady ourselves, you can protect yourself from stressful mindsets. Doubts come from a form of depression, which is one of the most common mental health conditions globally.

Training the mind makes us less judgmental as well as negatively, opinionated. It makes us more aware of our tendency to judge, criticize, and become prideful. Spiritual mindfulness allows us to build constructively, and destroy compulsive patterns. Adding layers to our emotional security system with time, trains us to have a sense of emotional stability. This gives us reassurance in ways that we can never imagine. We have to learn to uplift our spirit, by taking the time to practice mindfulness, by taking the time to consciously, meditate on building.

For centuries, the father has taught his son to fish and hunt. However, what good can physical nourishment do to feed the soul? Once we are able to become aware of this, we can start to learn aspiration in its finest context. No one can want anything for us more than we can. We have to learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Instead of being hesitant when faced with uncertainty, we must learn to diversify the unknown, transposing it positively. Greatness is not accomplished easily, it takes time and dedication. Your outer world is merely a manifestation of your inner thoughts and attitudes. We cannot allow our surroundings, a culture, to depict the outcome of our dreams and accomplishments.

When will we start to allow our environment to become a product of us, instead of the other way around?

We do not realize that our perception of our many treasures; our minds, spirit, know how, and strength must be established in order to succeed. Just as a superhero has an evil villain that in turn is his opposite, well, at least that's what most people assume; Batman had the Joker, Superman had Lex Luther, and Spiderman had the Green Goblin.

What would these phenomenal heroes be without a critical threat to society?

In reality, they would cease to hold importance to themselves, as well as others without a greater threat matched by their abilities. Like the moon chases the sun, or a dog chasing its tail, never able to catch it, however, once finally aligned, the moment is not only monumental, but it loses definition in a sense.

Everything is made in a perfect measurement; it is weighed and balanced to a perfect point, and down to the single atom. This is why I say what is success without failure, and what is ambition without doubt? You must master the two, because the taste of victory means nothing, without the setbacks that you overcame.

I was asked a question recently, "What was my definition of a mastermind?" Then, shortly after, I answered, "A mastermind is someone who uses what hinders him to propel him into his greatest achievements, and goals."

This is a form of extreme adaptation, or in fact, a smaller form of evolution. They say insanity is someone doing the same thing repeatedly, expecting different results. Therefore, if we continue to doubt ourselves, and do nothing to defeat the odds of our judgmental expectations, how will we be able to understand what we are capable of doing? Our brain is nothing, but a very large muscle that has a various amount of abilities. Like most muscles in our body, it must be stretched, and conditioned, for it to reach the fullest extent of its capabilities. Meditation heals us from major stress factors such as negative thinking, depressive thoughts, doubtful impulses, and self-criticism. Everything comes at a cost, and the price of high self-esteem must be paid with pure perseverance. You have to want it as the knights of 'King Arthur' wanted valor, or the 'Christian Crusader's,' wanted answers to that which had lied across the sea's edge.

Your motivations should be derived from your morals, and codes of conducts. As my grandfather would say, "A man that doesn't stand for something will fall for everything." Weak ideas and false motives are the poison to the mind of one who wishes to reach success. Purification of the mind and soul will always lead to a righteous path. Just as the seasons change spring, summer, fall, winter, we too will have to meet the time of change. With practice comes a very, fine mastery of the craft you choose to focus on.

Growing up, I dreamed of being a football player, a rapper, a poet, even a superhero. The neighborhood I grew up in did not produce anything but hustlers, prostitutes, janitors, and drug dealers. My expectations began to slim down a lot more to what was realistic in the eyes of those who surrounded me.

I watched my grandmother wake up early in the morning, with her friend, Jacky; just to stand in line for hours at the food bank to get assistance on rent, or just even a care package, that we could use to cook dinner for the night. At that moment, I thought 'we barely had money for the light bill, how would we afford football cleats, recording material, or a college education to attempt to be something I was not promised to be.

I allowed the unspoken words of my environment to dictate the choices that I made, instead of motivating

myself to be the one who made it. We must motivate the youth to motivate themselves, push them to push themselves, because anyone of us can be the one to break the cycle and change the fate and future of many more to come after us.

We are constantly at a battle with not just ourselves, but the welfare offices around us, the mothers breaking back and bone to work overtime to get school supplies. We must fight the poverty, we must fight the pain, we must fight the hatred, we must fight the politics, but most importantly, we must FIGHT OURSELVES.

Everyday given breath is another day to add to our communities, instead of taking from our roots. What is expected from us and our environmen is not what is important. What is expected from us, from those who love us, is important.

The possibility that we can be the one to pave the way for every little boy to become the next cartographer, or the little girl, who wants to be the next paleontologist. We have to grasp the opportunity to make 999, different choices out of 1000, instead of that one that is expected of us (a failure). We must be purpose-driven, and ignited with passion to achieve the dreams of our ancestors before us.

With so much lost and so little gained, it would be a disgrace to settle for the bare minimum which is offered to us. That means that every day we wake up, we have to say

“LETS GET IT, TIME TO SHINE!!”

We have to stop believing that the jokes we make to our friends, or others are the only way we can gain a sense of humor. There can be no construction, as long as demolition is a part of every step of growth.

We must first destroy and build anew. Do not destroy everything we have worked for, just those things that poisons the promise.

The beginning must be fortified from a solid foundation, not weak ideas, and false beliefs. Teach those around you to look inside his or herself every day, to find the person who stands behind the shadows they are looking at. See the royal blood that courses through their veins and we must see the kingdom that is within the Section 8 apartments we live in.

Take the destiny we were promised, not what we were given. No matter the color of your skin, the amount of money in your pocket, or the house you live in, reach yourself, teach yourself, and elevate yourself!

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BROTHER, CAN WE TALK?

By Joseph L. Fritz

As a Texas Field Minister, one of my primary goals relates directly to offering options out of the traps, which keep men enslaved to their old selves. I know the traps because I was one of the trapped men in here, stuck on nonsense.

I am something of an anomaly, a non-Christian Field Minister, who works primarily with the marginalized and overlooked people in the Texas system. I work with people others do not want to deal with. I do this through faithful presence, critical thinking, and truly meeting people where they are.

One of the goals of Field Ministry is to go to the darkest places in the prison and help change the culture. My main haunts are Restrictive Housing (23/7 lockups), and the Safekeeping Custody. Both of these areas are separated from the general population, and they are largely forgotten. I offer alternatives to the old, “easy” way to help break the cycle of the old life, often, a multi-generational cycle in danger of being passed over, yet again.

Faithful presence at its best is showing up constantly, showing through your actions that you truly care. The old maxim of “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” applies here. Exhibiting faithful presence requires one to be a good listener.

People separated from everyone else often desire to vent, rage, expound, etc. At least eighty percent of my work revolves around listening. I



hit the tiers and simply say, “What’s Up, you good?” or something similar. Every time, someone will say “Hell No! I am in Seg./lock up/jail/prison etc. My follow up is “What you got going on?” Then the floodgates open. The main people I work with already know me, and know what I am about in my life. I bring a level of authenticity to the table most do not get from others, because I have been where they are now, for an extended period -of-time. I do not claim to have all the answers, but I listen, and offer help, and solutions where and how I can.

The people themselves are as familiar as an old pair of boots. Slightly worn around the heels, but comfortable to wear, they feel the same about me. I primarily deal with the LGBTQAI+ and others from Safekeeping and elsewhere, individuals with a current or former gang background, or those with addictions. I can think of a dozen examples where all three aspects are found in the same person. It seems unlikely, I know, but prison is full of people who are walking contradictions. I go to people, and many come to me, no matter who they are, what they look like, what habits they have, or anything else. I walk with them, and continue walking with them, exhibiting faithful presence. This opens the door for more in depth conversations, like critical thinking.

“Think like a detective, read to understand, and learn the art of conversation,” are the basic critical thinking principles I use from Paul R. Shockley and Raul Preza’s book, “Thinking with Excellence.”

I start with these principles when dialogue turns from ranting and raving to the desire to do something constructive. Outlining these principles allows for a deeper dive into the ideas as understanding blossoms.

A) “Brandon’s Commentary,” podcast – Further the critical thinking conversation. Most of the people I encounter know how to question however they just do not always ask the right question.

B) In Cognitive Intervention, we learn from the Franklin Reality Model. The phrase “Will this meet my needs overtime?” is a serious life question.

C) Critical Thinking enables a person to see what something is, determine its value, and then apply it properly. This tool may be useful to address problems, hopes, dreams, aspirations, relationships, and more. The better an individual knows how to think, the better off they are in life.

The idea of short-term sacrifices for long-term benefits is often a foreign concept in prison. People are too concerned with now, in a place where one is always waiting for something. Most people in prison want what is fast and easy, rather than what is slower and surer. This mentality got everyone here, yet people persist in it.

Critical thinking remains of paramount importance when considering the question of breaking the negative

cycle. Only when we can think critically and properly examine not just the situation, but also the underlying reasoning, will an individual truly break the cycle of drugs, drama, abuse, and more, and understand who they really are.

Meeting people where they are is something many proclaim to do, yet few actually do so. When one meets someone where he or she is, a person shows the other person that he or she cares for the other as a human being. This model does not mean condoning inherently negative behavior. One must remember, however, that most of these individuals are hurt/damaged themselves, and hurt people, hurt people. No cookie-cutter approach exists when dealing with people. Meeting each, and every individual right where they are, is the best approach.

The ‘easy way’ is not easy. What he or she thinks one is gaining through ease, comfort, and/or convenience, is an illusion. Typically, nothing easy has any lasting value. Consider your options and alternatives as you break the cycle of violence, addiction, abuse, and lack of self-worth. You are someone. You matter. Someone else’s opinion cannot define you.

Use the options you have for help.

Break the cycle; believe in yourself, because the people who care about you; believe in you.



BROTHER, CAN WE TALK?

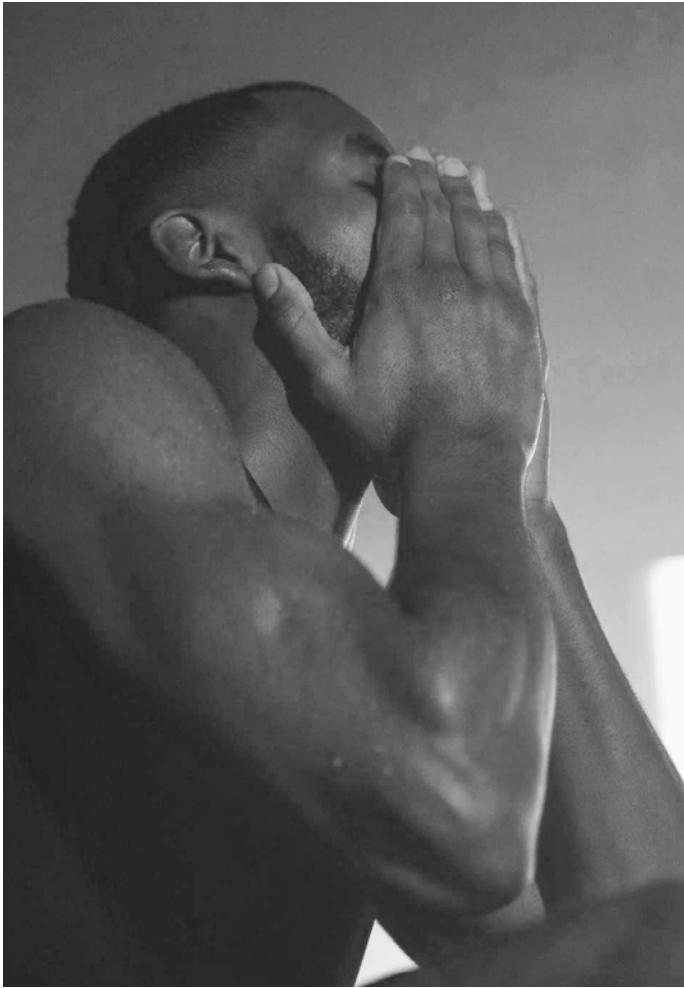
Breaking the Spin Cycle: How Men Reclaim Their Lives

By Tre' Roberts | Author of Man the Ship: Anchored in God

Some decisions don't just change your day — they decide your future.

I remember standing there heart racing, adrenaline pumping, every part of me screaming to respond. I had just been shot and in that moment; everything inside of me wanted to retaliate. Not think, not process, not pray, just react, because that's what the environment teaches you. That's what the streets reward. That's what the culture expects.

You don't pause, you respond. You don't reflect, you strike back and for a split second, that path felt justified. It felt natural. It felt right. However, something else rose up in me. Not fear, not hesitation, but awareness. I thought about my wife, my children, my parents. I thought about everything connected to me — and everything that would be destroyed if I made one decision in that moment. I realized something that changed me:



Retaliation is a reflex, but restraint is a decision.

That day, I didn't just walk away from a moment, I walked away from a cycle.

There's a Cycle Most Men Can't Name.

Most men don't wake up one day planning to destroy their future. They just never learned how to interrupt the cycle. It doesn't always begin with something dramatic. It rarely starts with headlines or handcuffs. It starts quietly; a decision here, a compromise there, a moment of pressure, a moment of pain, and before long, life begins to spin; not forward, but in circles. You wake up in the same patterns. You respond the same way. You fall into the same traps. You promise yourself it will be different, and somehow, it isn't.

This is called the 'spin cycle.'

It is the loop that keeps a man bound mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and often physically. It is a

system of thoughts, habits, environments, and decisions that reinforce each other until a man feels like he's moving, but never actually progressing. You see it in addiction, you see it in anger, you see it in broken relationships and you see it in silence, when a man refuses to speak because somewhere along the way, he learned that his voice didn't matter.

Speaking Your Truth — Even When It's Hard

One of the most powerful things a man can do is open his mouth and tell the truth about where he's been, what he's carrying, and what he needs. However, most of us, were never taught that. We were taught to be strong; to hold it, to handle it alone and so, we go silent. We suppress. We perform strength while privately unraveling. Here's what silence costs you: It keeps you isolated in a story only you can hear and in that isolation, the cycle feeds itself because there's no one to challenge the narrative, no one to speak truth back into you.

Speaking your truth isn't weakness. It is the beginning of freedom. It might be a conversation with a counselor, a letter to someone you've hurt, or a prayer you finally mean, but something has to be said out loud. Healing rarely begins in silence.

Divided We Fall — You Were Not Built to Do This Alone

One of the biggest lies the 'spin cycle' tells a man is this: *Handle it yourself.*

So we isolate. We pull away. We convince ourselves that needing someone else is a sign of weakness, and in that isolation, we become easier to defeat. Look around you. Every man who has ever broken a cycle — really broken it — had someone in his corner, a brother, or a pastor. Someone who refused to let him stay stuck.

Division keeps cycles going, brotherhood breaks them. When men choose to be honest with each other, to hold each other accountable, to refuse to let each other fall back into old patterns, that is when real change happens, not just for one man but, for every person connected to him. You don't have to figure this out alone and the men around you who are watching how you handle this, they need to see you reach out just as much as they need to see you stand up.

Why the Spin Cycle Feels Impossible to Break

The cycle feeds itself. Pain leads to escape. Escape leads to consequences. Consequences create more pain and the cycle tightens. Addictions don't just appear, they attach themselves to unmet needs. Anger isn't random, it's often, unprocessed hurt. Isolation isn't preference, it is protection. Therefore, when people tell men to "just stop," they miss the point entirely. You can't break a cycle you don't understand.

Many men learn how to function inside the cycle. They hold jobs while battling internally. They smile while struggling silently. They appear strong while carrying weight no one sees. However, functioning is not freedom. The cycle always collects a cost. It shows up in your relationships, in your opportunities, in children growing up without the guidance only you can give them, and eventually, what was manageable becomes overwhelming.

Freedom Starts With a Decision, Not a Feeling

Most people think freedom comes from trying harder. It doesn't. Freedom comes from alignment, from rebuilding your life on something that doesn't move when everything else does. There are five anchors I have seen hold men when everything else is unstable:

- Leadership: Taking ownership of your own direction, even when you are not where you want to be yet. You can lead from right where you are.
- Relationship: Changing the voices in your life; who speaks into you matters more than most men realize. Even in confined spaces, you choose who influences your thinking.
- Worship: Centering your life on something bigger than yourself, without a center, pressure will always control you.
- Stewardship: Managing what you have, no matter how little it seems. Discipline in small things builds the muscle for big things.
- Legacy: Thinking beyond today; what you do right now is writing a story that people connected to you will read for generations.

What do you want that story to say?

Are You Ready to Step Out of the Spin Cycle?

Some of us have been spinning for years. We have learned how to survive it, how to hide it, and how to carry it, without showing the weight. However, deep down, we know, something has to change and the real question isn't 'can it change?' The real question is, where does it stop?

I still think about that moment when I was shot; not just because of what happened, but because of what didn't happen. One decision could have taken everything I love and pulled it into a cycle I may have never come back from. Many men never get that pause. They react. They follow the impulse. They stay in the cycle.

However, here is what I know now: **There is always a moment**, a moment where you see it clearly; a moment where you feel the pull. A moment where you know, you can either repeat it, or break it and when that moment comes, the question won't be about your past. It will be about your decision.

Will you react — or will you lead?

Will you follow the pattern, or will you break it?

Because cycles don't end on their own. They end when a man decides:

"It stops with me."

Not half way, not temporarily, completely, because when one man breaks a cycle, he doesn't just change his life, he changes everyone connected to him; his children, his family, the men coming behind him, watching how he handles it.

That's legacy. That's leadership. That's freedom.

And brother, you still have time to choose it.

BROTHER, YOU'RE NOT DONE YET.

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WHEN YOU LEAVE.
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FEATURED WRITERS FOR THIS ISSUE

WELCOME NEW writers - **Kenny L. Danner, Jr., Nas'Juan East, Jonathan Green, Joseph Jones, Tre' Roberts, Juan Vega, Donald Ward, Jr., Eric Williams and Jemadari Williams.**
WELCOME BACK, **Joseph L. Fritz.**

Antwan D. Cooper - is an aspiring book author, an incarcerated Christian Rap Artist, and a man of God. His book, "Voices: the Aftermath of Adam" (is coming soon on Amazon). He is beyond the ordinary and filled with passion and determination.

This isn't just a prison "Thing to Do," as it was once said by an innovative leader of the Dallas, Texas community, "I'm sensitive about my ish!" I enjoy writing and creating ideas for movie scripts.

Kenny Lamont Danner, Jr. - My name is Kenny, and I was born on March 24, 1996 in Malvern, Ar.

My story is kind of a tough one and it is a long one, a story within a story, within a story. I have been writing seriously, since 2024. All I have ever really hoped to achieve with anything I have ever done, or with anything that I do, is to leave the world at least, a little brighter. Hopefully, my "little" is a lot to others. Not everybody has the faith to try, especially, after he or she falls. They say, "pressure busts pipes." I say, "pressure makes diamonds and gold bricks. Perception shapes reality."

Whose truth shaped the ugly world we live in now? Hopefully, my truth can reshape it. Make it safe for kids to play outside again.

Nas'Juan East - This is Nas'Juan East's first article for Spotlight on Recovery magazine.

Damont Ewells - I am Damont Ewells, A.K.A. Big Bandit Loc. It took me a while to update my bio because I had to carefully, consider the picture that I painted of myself. To start, I am a 53- year old has been that never was. I am an artist of all cultures, in deed and at heart.

As a member of a gang since my youth, I grew up screwed. On paper, I was a really, bad person, but you wouldn't believe that if you knew me though. I was always a spiritual person, just misguided. Although gifted with a musical talent, I chose the crime life because of a lack of direction. In and out of prison since my teens, I was stuck with what started as a 63-year sentence for drug dealing. The lack of self-control caused me to lose my temper, and I got another 20 years for manslaughter, since the time of my incarceration.

My belief in, and need for God is important to me, because God was what caused me to evolve. I am now a Spiritual man and teacher who plan to use his experiences, to help the youth.

Kyle Farmer is 30 years old and he is currently incarcerated in T.D.C.J. His life has been one with a love of reading and writing from a young age. He is elated that he can now write to contribute to others that may be able to learn from his life experience. He is currently a student in the College of Ministry, working towards his Bachelors of Arts in Applied Ministry. Kyle is expecting to be released in 2036, and he has plans to bring the Word of God and his life experiences to those who are able to grow from it.

For any correspondence, please send letters to:
Kyle Farmer #2135467
T.D.C.J. - Memorial Unit
P.O. Box 660400
Dallas, TX 75266

Joseph L. Fritz is a writer of spiritual, philosophical, and recreational topics. He resides in a non-exclusive gated community somewhere in the middle of Texas. Having earned a B.A. in Applied Ministry, he works as a Field Minister, counseling, consoling, and caring for those in his care. He has served over three decades in Texas prison consecutively since 19913, and looks forward to the day he get to go home to his wife and children.

Joseph is an entrepreneur and writer, melding his creative talents into a successful post-release business and advocacy model. He is easy to find if you are looking, just look on tdcj.gov. He has contributed to Spotlight on Recovery before, and has written for other newsletters, forums, and assorted sources for years, and continues his quest to publish his books, articles, games, and stories.

Robin Graham is the founder and publisher of Spotlight on Recovery magazine. Robin was born and raised in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn and still lives in Brooklyn today. The decision to use "recovery" as a theme for her publication is both personal and global. Fighting through her own issues in search of support, Robin realized that although countless organizations and resources were available to the masses, some people were not willing to step inside the doors of these organizations. The people themselves had to unlock their own doors before they could step into a room, where others understood and did not judge them. In some cases, there are so many issues blocking your senses, that you could not even find the door. Robin says, "Spotlight on Recovery" has no door; you just walk in. Come as you are, bring your baggage, and stay for a while." To contact Robin Graham, send your correspondence to:

R. Graham Publishing Company
10201 Flatlands Avenue, #360111
Brooklyn, New York 11236

Jonathan Green - My name is Jonathon. D. Green, I am from San Diego, California. Currently, I am incarcerated in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, but as the good book says, "This too shall pass."

I have been writing my whole life, the pen is definitely mightier than the sword. I believe in order to achieve success, you must believe in yourself when nobody else will. The power of the tongue is an amazing thing and remember you can do all things through faith in God, who strengthens me. Every day you wake up you have a blank slate to become better than yesterday, so utilize your time, because time waits for no man! The bad times are never as we think they are they pass away like everything else.

Appreciate every second in every moment, because it was never owed to you to begin with. God bless,

Chad Henry - My name is Chad, but most people know me as Southwest. I am 35 years of age. I love to write, sing, and play basketball. I am a father of four, a man of God, and I am on the worship team here at Hughes Unit. I strive to be the best man I can be, and I have a passion for leading people to Christ.

If you would like to know more, you can contact me at:
Chad Henry #02506217, Alfred D. Hughes Unit, P.O. Box 660400, Dallas, Texas 75266-0400
Or you can reach me on my tablet directly at www.securustech.net
TDCJ #02506217

Joseph Jones – This Joseph Jones’ first article for Spotlight on Recovery magazine.

Eugene Jones - Hello everyone, my name is Eugene Jones, and I am originally from Chicago Illinois. I am a crisp 42-year-old and I have just celebrated a birthday the day after Christmas. I have 4 beautiful children and I’m a hard driven, God-loving person who seeks perfection in an imperfect world. I have written 14 books that I believe will impact the world, in the ways needed when they are published.

For a long time though, I believe that the value factors have been disregarded within the households, media, workplace and that’s what helps me write my books, which is why I’ve teamed up pro se with Ms. Robin Graham’s magazine, to bring some of the insight to areas that most have forgotten about or never knew.

I am sure there are many people who are seeking a home, to vent his or her feelings, in hope of helping others. If so, I believe that you have found the right place, because Ms. Robin Graham is legitimate.

Abdul S. Kareem has been a contributing poet and writer since 2023.

Brandon Moore - My name is Brandon Deon Sanders Moore, I am from Little Rock, Arkansas. I was born in June 1992. I was raised by my grandparents; phenomenal people who were also successful entrepreneurs. I am currently serving a 19-year prison sentence for a crime that I committed as a young, ignorant youth. I try to keep my faith in God, and I plan to return to society, in 2028 as an auto mechanic.

I am currently enrolled in college and I have completed peer mentor classes. I will most definitely be the definition of a changed man when I am released. I started writing to escape being trapped in my thoughts. I never thought my words had much meaning, but if a life can be changed or saved from my testimony, I will write until my hands fall off.

The world needs more love and compassion, more Enlightenment, not discipline. It starts with the person in the mirror.

Monique Renee is a 36- year old woman born and raised in Southwest Louisiana. She is a tenacious driven woman of God, a mother who continues to set the best example for her children. She successfully earned her AA in General Studies and BA in Mass Communication, both through Ashland University. Houston also is an active member of Toastmaster’s, an International speaking club where she is harnessing her craft; to not only finesse the art of her writing, but to also continue to speak; efficiently and effectively. Houston is also the author and founder of B.B.U. her first inspirational - motivational book for young girls and women. Houston has worked diligently to build a platform for young girls and women to ensure that our sisterhood remains solid. Houston has continued this movement of empowerment by launching B.B.U. blog, which will launch on Sept 1st. She embodies commitment and consistency, as a woman who not only thrives to make the world a better place. Ms. Houston is leading out a legacy that she knows goes beyond herself.

Tre’ Roberts is a speaker, author, and life strategist dedicated to helping men break generational cycles and walk in purpose. Raised in Mississippi, he has spent years working with men navigating the weight of poor decisions, broken relationships, and the search for identity and direction. His own story; of choosing restraint, over retaliation became the foundation for a message that has resonated with men across the country. He is the founder of “Chain Breakers Enterprise” and the “Man the Ship Movement,” which exists to restore order in men, families, and communities.

Tre’ serves alongside his wife Erika, and together they are committed to reaching men wherever they are with a message of hope, accountability, and transformation. A full bio and additional resources are available at MantheShip.org.

“Man the Ship: Anchored in God,” is available for order directly from the website at MantheShip.org and on Amazon

Stanton “SRT” Trent - I am from Waterbury Connecticut. I am a father, entrepreneur, and student. I have my Liberal Studies associates degree and I am currently working on my BA at Wesleyan University, through the CPE program.

In my spare time, I am working on some for profit and non-profit businesses. I am also creating and facilitating programs in the Cheshire Correctional Institution H.O.N.O.R program.

My Successful Reentry Transition (SRT) programs were created to help empower others and make a collective effort to be active in our rehabilitation. I started writing recently, after coming to prison for the first time during the height of the pandemic, dealing with my own mental health issues, fighting my case and for my life all at the same time, with the ongoing uncertainties in society. I found writing was a tool and a form of expression, to tell my story, and help others avoid the unnecessary pain and suffering we cause ourselves, loved ones, and our communities.

In the future, I plan to continue empowering others by creating more programs for my Successful Reentry Transition catalog to facilitate throughout the facility and in my community upon my release, as well as reentry and sober living environments.

Juan Vega – I was born in July of ‘98 in Corpus Christi, Texas and I grew up in a small town in the Land of Enchantment - Silver City, New Mexico. I am a father to four smart, energetic and charismatic boys, who I am very thankful for.

After graduating high school, I enlisted in the Marine Corps., where I traveled all over the globe and met some amazing people. I am currently in the Arkansas Department of Corrections looking forward to my parole date.

Donald E. Ward, Jr., is currently serving time @ Martin C.I. in Indiantown, Florida. He is deeply involved in different programs as a mentor/facilitator/coordinator and participant. Some of the programs are Faith and Character based, Re-entry, Peer To Peer, The Collective Minds Gavel Club, and is one of the Elders (Holy Hebrew name is Nehemiah) in the Hebrew Israelite Community.

has been incarcerated for the past 27 years, he is serving concurrent life sentences under a reclassification and enhancement sentencing scheme he continues to advocate as being impermissible and unconstitutional, to no avail.

However, in spite of his legal obstacles and setbacks, Mr. Donald E. Ward Jr. has advanced his personal character, education and job skills in the following areas while being incarcerated:

- * Researching and litigating criminal law in post conviction proceedings
- * Receiving certification for Peer Tutor training and becoming a Peer Tutor
- * Helping inmates obtain their G.E.D.
- *Involving himself in facilitating and coordinating a wide variety of personal development curriculums for re-entry, and rehabilitation
- *Mentoring inmates struggling with gang violence, peer pressure, life skills, and recidivism
- * Instrumental in organizing and coordinating national annual events such as Black History Month, Woman’s History Month for general population
- *He holds an executive leadership role in The Collective Minds Gavel Club (a Toast Master affiliation) as the Vice President Public Relations
- *He is a certified barber
- * Writes urban fiction and urban related short stories under his pseudonym “Don Killiy

Mr. Donald E. Ward Jr. uses his lived experiences, self-learned skills, and personal development as tools to help other inmate’s reform, repair, regenerate their way of thinking, and properly prepare their selves to re-enter society a better person.

Eric Williams – This is Eric Williams’ first article for Spotlight on Recovery magazine.

Jemadari Williams – With his roots anchored in the Lawndale Community on Chicago’s West Side, Jemadari came of age in the city of Atlanta, where he attended the historic Booker T. Washington High School.

Now residing in Texas, he has a degree in Automotive Technology. He is a proud graduate of KPM Leadership Academy, and a member of the Lee College Chapter of Alpha Beta Gamma Fraternity.

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MOVED ON!**

**I HAVE MY
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THINK
ABOUT!**

HOW DO YOU EXPECT ME TO TRUST YOU AGAIN?