

shininglight

# THE LOOP

JULY/AUGUST 2021

*Life in the Past*

*Flying to the future*



Neisha

**TO: YOU**  
**FROM: JEFF**

*Greetings! We hope summer is treating you well.  
Everyone at Shining Light is doing well as we slowly move past the pandemic.  
We have lots of exciting things to share with you...*

The new SL Academy is underway in two North Dakota prisons! In late July, four of our staff traveled to kick things off at the North Dakota State Penitentiary and James River Correctional Center. A highlight for the men we visited was hearing directly from one of our staff, Ms. Naomi, about her successful re-entry into society after 37 years in prison. It was also a highlight for her as it was her first plane flight ever! The Academy continues by video conference with 2-hour sessions twice a week for 14 weeks. The participatory sessions will include identifying and using personal strengths, creative writing, character development, collaborative playwriting, and the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP). We are also talking to administrators in Ohio, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania about bringing the Academy to those states as well.

To help make this happen, we are very excited to announce that Dennis and Lee Horton have joined Shining Light's staff. (*Read their story on p.5*) These brothers are examples of what it means to make a difference in your community wherever you are. During their time in prison they developed and led large theatre productions that helped men discover their potential and even brought the outside community into the prison to see what was possible. They also taught the WRAP seminar to help hundreds of men discover constructive ways to be prepared for any obstacles in life. Since their release in February, they have been busy working as campaign managers in Philadelphia for PA Lt. Governor Fetterman's bid for US Senate.



*Jeff*  
FOUNDER &  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We encourage you to also join the effort to expand the Shining Light community by inviting your peers to subscribe to The Loop. Our goal with this newsletter is to help men and women in prisons throughout the United States use their unique gifts and experiences to uplift others inside. When we all seek to be positive influences wherever we are, it is surprising to see what can happen! There are many ways to do that through this newsletter. You have great stories, experiences and artistic abilities. Please share them with everyone in The Loop!

Welcome to The Loop - our newly titled Interactive Newsletter. Where did this title come from, you ask? While we attempted a more democratic process of inviting people to submit titles and cast votes, only a small handful of our readers voted and there was no clear winner. As our staff discussed a solution, a suggestion for "The Loop" was offered, and we unanimously agreed that it really speaks to what this publication is all about - in a few different ways. We hope you think so, too!

As always, our goal is that you find at least some of this content uplifting, fun, or informative. And we hope that you are inspired to "keep the loop going" by sending us a response to an activity or a contribution of your own for future newsletters - artwork, a story, a corny joke, or whatever! (Keep an eye out for the 🗳️ and just remember to check our guidelines on the back page.)

EXPLORING THE THEME:  
*self-regulation*

This issue will be focused on the character strength of SELF-REGULATION. (*Think: self-discipline or self-control*) Did you know that self-regulation shows up as the lowest character strength more frequently than any other... across all genders, ages and cultures? So if you think you could use some work in this area, that only means you're human!

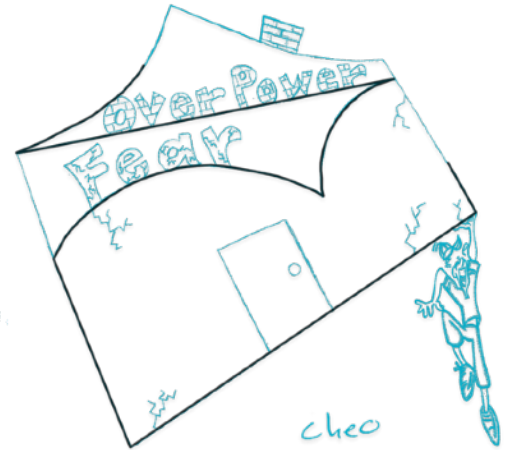
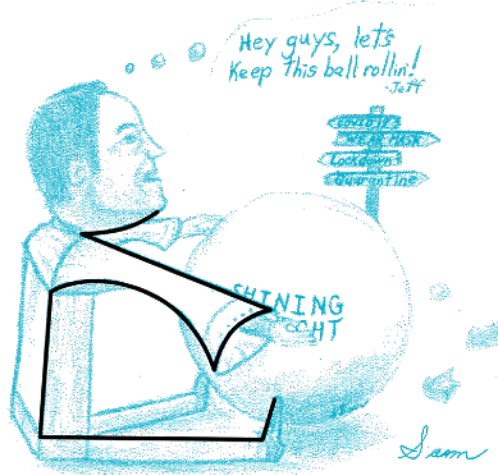
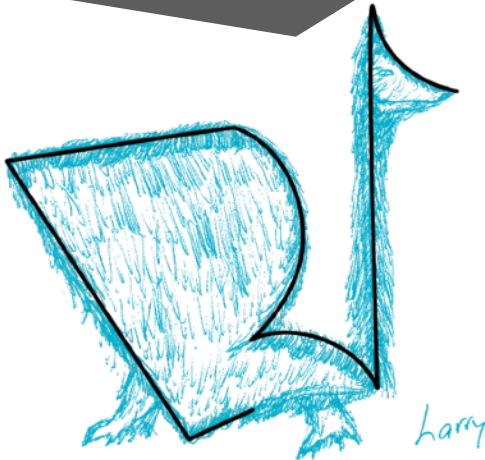
One last thing - some have asked about sharing this newsletter with loved ones on the outside, and we love that idea. Unfortunately, we're not set up to be able to mail extra printed copies, but there are 2 ways folks can access the different issues digitally.

ONLINE AT: [shining-light.com/theloop](http://shining-light.com/theloop) // EMAIL TO SUBSCRIBE: [TheLoop@shining-light.com](mailto:TheLoop@shining-light.com)

# CREATIVE CONNECTION

## WHAT DO YOU SEE?

We loved the submissions for last issue’s Creative Connection! It was incredible to see how people took the simplicity of the line and created a whole story around it. We hope you enjoy these as much as we did! (especially the fun cartoon of Jeff)

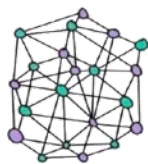


### NEW THE LOOP



**JENNY**  
CREATIVE SERVICES

In most of your title suggestions for this newsletter, we saw a theme of connectedness, which is what we want The Loop to accomplish - keeping everyone connected! For our next cover, we’d love to create a collage of your artwork with the theme of connection and staying in the loop. Each submission will be included, and we want this to represent as many of our readers as possible! Below are some examples:



### BRUSH OFF THE SMALL STUFF



One aspect of self-regulation is the ability to manage your emotions and responses, which is key to this Community Code. How can you practice this when things don’t go the way you had hoped, or when someone does something that gets under your skin?

We recognize that in a context like prison, sometimes “small stuff” may actually be significantly harmful, but the environment or situation doesn’t allow you to dwell on the harm that was caused. Your best option truly is to find a way to “brush it off” in the moment and seek out other ways to cope.

*How have you experienced this in your life?*



*What advice can you give others to help them develop this skill?*



Naomi Blount-Wilson / Commuted Lifer / Commutation Specialist

*"I am sure some of you look in the 'mirror' & self talk... 'How did I get myself in this mess?' or 'I ain't getting out of this place', and on and on. Some of you may have been there for years and think you have the system down pat, but it is never too late for change! Encourage yourself. Let your heart speak to you, and listen! Tell yourself that you are a good person. Tell yourself that you can do anything you put your mind to doing. Tell yourself that you are coming home. Believe it! Receive it! Encourage yourself!!!"*

*Naomi*  
PROGRAM CONSULTANT

## YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

**Q: Once you were released, what was easy about adjusting and what was hard about adjusting?**

**NAOMI:** The easy part about adjusting to life after my release was family and friend support. Without help from those people, I would have definitely had a rough time. The city I am from, (Philadelphia) changed tremendously, and so has technology!!! I have been home for 2 yrs. now, and am still adjusting!

**Q: Have you had any issues producing music with a criminal record?**

**NAOMI:** Your criminal record has nothing to do with you producing music. I am doing some recording right now. Music is meaningful to most people. When people hear good music, they don't ask if the artist has a criminal background! Your music will be a success story. Positive gossip! You'll be fine. If I am not mistaken, I think Johnny Cash was once in prison :)

**Q: Are there obstacles to getting accepted into college?**

**NAOMI:** Not that I've heard of! Most colleges will ask about criminal history when you apply, and you need to be honest and be prepared to answer any questions about it openly. Good housing, health & relationships will go a long way in showing that you're ready. Also, starting in a community college can be a good way to go...and a lot cheaper!

**Q: With a criminal record, how hard is it to find housing? Can an ex-convict get into low-income housing?**

**NAOMI:** Some places don't want ex-felons living in their buildings. They are afraid of us! For the most part though, when you are in search of a place and have the monies they are asking for, they don't care where you came from as long as you have American dollars.

**Q: Do you have information about how to start a non-profit organization?**

**NAOMI:** I asked Jeff, and he recommended this article: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/how-start-nonprofit-step-1-research>



## ASK ANYTHING

With our growing staff, we're now going to assign questions to whoever can answer it best! Remember, anything that has to do with navigating prison life or re-entry is fair game, and we'll keep things anonymous for your protection. So now's your chance - what's that question you've been too afraid to ask?

## CORNY CORNER

CAN'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU...

**How do you follow Will Smith in the snow?**

You follow the fresh prints!

**If a child refuses to nap, are they guilty of resisting a rest?**

**What does a sprinter eat before a race?**

Nothing, they fast!

**What concert costs just 45 cents?**

50 Cent featuring Nickelback.





# STEPPING OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF INCARCERATION INTO THE LIGHT OF REENTRY

## REALITY CHECK

*By Lee and Dennis Horton*

Prison is a vicious cycle,  
In and out and Back in again  
A roller coaster of Human chaos,  
A revolving door to nowhere

You did what you did,  
now you're doing a bid  
No complaining,  
it is what it is

Prison time is real,  
years pass as your life stands still  
Then one day the doors to freedom open,  
Released at last, how does it feel?

Tell me, what's your plan?  
Get a job,  
Go to School,  
Start a business  
Be the man  
or play the fool  
It's up to you to choose

You're on parole  
No CO's  
No Prison Clothes  
No Cell-mates  
No DOC gates  
No Mainline  
No prison numbers  
No lock-down summers  
No cold-cell winters

You just got to remember  
Get high or commit a crime  
And You Are a Repeat Offender  
A stamp on your head that says  
"He couldn't make it. Please Return to sender."



Our names are Lee and Dennis Horton and we want to welcome you to End of the Tunnel, our interactive page on reentry. In each edition we will address the issue of reentry from the perspective of two men who have lived experience in the criminal justice system. In 1993 we were arrested and sentenced to life in prison for a crime we did not commit. We spent 28 years in prison but now are released and on our own journeys of reentry.

When we were first told we would be released after serving 28 years, our first reaction was fear, anxiety, and nervousness. Like so many of you we questioned ourselves: Where am I going to live? Where will I work? How will I feed myself? What about my children, will they accept me? Am I going to be able to make it out there or will I become a return to sender statistic?

At some point your prison sentence too will end and you will be released, and as returning citizens and confronted with these same questions. In every edition, "End of the Tunnel" will give useful tips on how to execute an effective reentry not only from us but others who have gotten out.

So until the next time we leave you with this very important statement on reentry:

**Reentry starts today, not tomorrow.**

**Don't wait until right before your release  
to start preparing for reentry.**

**Grow where you are planted right now because  
'the future depends on what we do today'**

*There is an online database of resources for re-reentry  
that can be found at: [fairshake.net](http://fairshake.net)*



I have three more years to see parole after doing 18 years in prison. I am now in school and doing good in taking my GED and I have been taking a program called Pathway to Success, it's about helping prisoners get a job and a good one too. It also helped me get ready for my target jobs which are: Brick Mason, Electrician and art. After doing 60 hours in the program I finally got my certificate.

*cheo*

I'm writing more than ever. Poem after poem, Play after play. Screenplay after screenplay. I'm going beyond the razor wire with my writings. I'm truly grateful for that.

Larry

### RECENT RELEASES

We would really love to know if there's anyone you know who's recently been released or with an upcoming release, because we'd love to celebrate that as a community! Send us their first name, state/facility and release date (if known).

I've been blessed by a literature ministry that I'd like to share with others. They send out free bibles, devotionals, study books, and also offer correspondence courses/pen pals. Just write a request to Prison Literature Evangelism, 40 Wood Corner Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522. We have started a study on the book "Set Free" and study guide they sent in. Very relevant!

*- Sam*

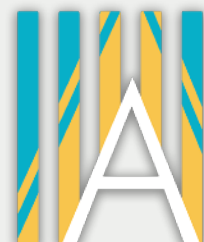
## WE HAVE TWO NEW PROGRAMS IN THE WORKS!

Continuing our efforts to produce more video-based creative labs, we're finishing a Spoken Word Lab, led by SL Teaching Artist Brandon Allen! It will be a 5-part series, and should be available on tablets soon!

Additionally, as Jeff mentioned in his letter, we've partnered with North Dakota to launch our first ever SL Academy!

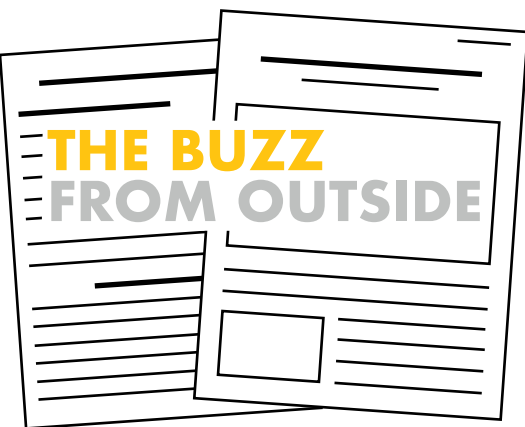


*spoken word*  
LAB



shininglight  
ACADEMY

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: KURT DANYSH



*Kurt was released from prison on July 15, 2020, after 24 1/2 years, incarcerated from age 18 until 43. Today he works as a Certified Peer Specialist, a skill he attained in prison. Kurt has started a reentry organization, Tomorrow's Neighbors, which has received support from local organizations, law enforcement, and even local politicians. He speaks to college students about the need for criminal justice reform and recently enrolled in college to get his degree in Criminal Justice, with hopes of going to law school one day. In his spare time, Kurt hikes, swims, and loves to drive. He is also engaged to his high school sweetheart, Tammy.*

### What were keys to your successful reentry?

Education (formal and informal), preparation, honest and frank conversation with my support system, and realistic expectations.

### Looking back today, is there anything you would have done differently when you were incarcerated?

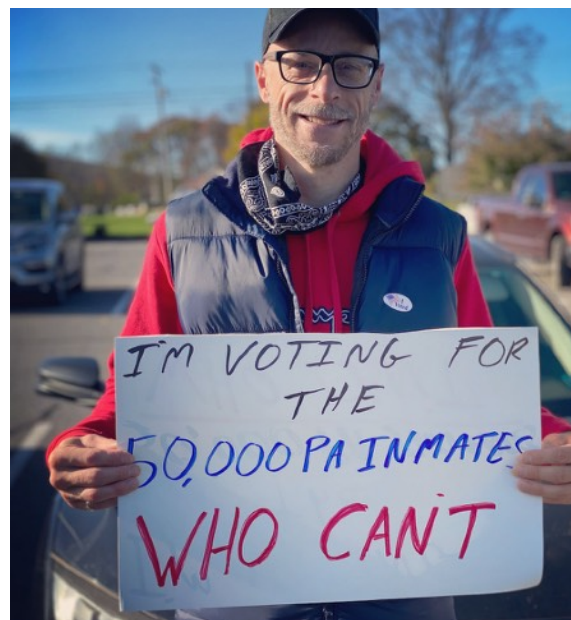
I would have kept a journal, I didn't realize how important those years in prison would be in my life. I also would have stopped blaming others for my problems sooner.

### What was the hardest part of returning to society when you were released?

Getting out of my own head. I thought everyone would judge me, but most people didn't care. A lot of other people helped me get past it! I was very surprised that everyone welcomed me with open arms.

### What would you say to those inside?

That failing to prepare is preparing to fail (*Ben Franklin reference*). Successful reentry - and with it a new chapter of your life - is totally within your power to accomplish, or not. Hope without preparation is just a dream. I'd say you need to learn to forgive yourself, the system, and others - otherwise you just bring it home. Be kind to yourself and forgive others. I also want to encourage people inside to not believe all the horror stories about parole. My experience was that parole can be easy...if you do the right thing.



**CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM UPDATE:** Several important bills to address lengthy probation and prison sentences have been introduced (or will be soon) in the PA state legislature. To become law, these bills must be approved by committees, the House of Delegates, and the Senate and be signed by Governor Wolf. If passed, SB 5 would make numerous reforms to probation sentences in Pennsylvania, including (1) banning the use of consecutive probation sentences; (2) capping probation sentences at 5 years for felonies and 3 years for misdemeanors; (3) banning courts from extending probation sentences because a person cannot pay fines and fees; (4) limiting when people can have their probation revoked and be sent to prison for probation violations; (5) capping the length of time people can be sent back to prison for probation violations, and makes these caps retroactive for people who meet certain criteria; and (6) requiring probation to be terminated after a person has served 18 months of probation with no violations.

### HOLIDAYS/SPECIAL EVENTS COMING UP:

**TOKYO OLYMPICS**

JULY 23 - AUG 8

**LEFT HANDERS' DAY**

AUG 13

**DAY OF REMEMBRANCE**

SEPT 11

472650278378  
8 RESEARCH 32  
3 SAYS 828  
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## FOLLOW-UP: VIA CHARACTER STRENGTHS

Last newsletter we introduced the VIA Character Strengths self-assessment and heard from a couple of individuals who identified their top strengths.

① HUMOR  
② SPIRITUALITY  
③ FORGIVENESS

④ KINDNESS  
⑤ BRAVERY  
-cheo

I chose forgiveness -  
Because I'm quick to forgive. It's taken me decades to begin to forgive myself. Still, I can forgive others because God has forgiven me. Hopefully, as time goes by, I'll fully forgive myself.  
Larry

Larry's example is a wonderful example of how Character Strengths are a process and something that can be practiced in different ways and areas of life.



*We would love to hear from more individuals to learn about which ones you most identify with or if there is another way you are learning more about yourself!*

Last issue, we explored the Character Strength of "Honesty." We continually notice this strength being used in the vulnerability and genuine expressions of truth in so many of your letters. Here are two examples we wanted to highlight:



- Speaking the truth, but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way
- Being without pretense
- Taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions.

Love -

Love

The most powerful emotion that we have in our arsenal, it can hit home when made personal.

One act of kindness at a time, can change the world and make life sublime.

When we choose to love it makes life much simpler and less complex.

So look to your right and to your left, and love on somebody today, because the clouds in life will start to fade to be a brighter day.

Whether a hug, kind word or someone to just listen,

When love is the foundation it glistens.  
Speak Love, speak Truth, speak Honestly,  
and you'll never ever have to be sorry.

Written By: Adam

I've been on a long journey with finding my identity, or sexual identity if you will, and I have to say, now finding my identity along with spiritual journey & freedom now identifying as pansexual, I feel so proud to be a part and connected to the LGBTQ+ community and individuals of the community need immense support "especially" being incarcerated... This is the 1st pride month I've acknowledged myself being a part of since finding my identity and it feels so great and I know if I had a cast of support from resources such as Shining Light, it will help me and many others so much get through this tough time in our lives as well as the outside community.

Sincerely  
SAMIR

P.S BE and stay safe  
and happy pride month to all! 🏳️🌈

June was Pride Month, which, as Samir graciously called out, we unintentionally and regretfully failed to recognize in our previous issue. Shining Light values every human being regardless of sexual orientation, and we are committed to being a supportive space of belonging for the LGBTQ+ community.





Travis

PROGRAM DEVELOPER



## VIA DEFINITION

- Regulating what one feels & does
- Being disciplined
- Controlling one's appetites & emotions

This Newsletter we are looking at self-regulation, the least utilized character strength globally, and luckily something that we all have the ability to work on! We hope we can do that together!

Below we highlight an article that helps to understand self-regulation in greater detail. The article refers to “ego depletion,” which basically means that people have a limited amount of willpower, which can be used up and depleted. It suggests that building self-regulation is similar to strengthening a muscle. Most people can't walk into a gym and start benching 225 lbs - they need to take the time to build up the muscles to be able to bench that much weight. You can think of developing self-regulation in the same way.

It is also important to keep in mind that self-regulation transcends all aspects of life, meaning that the limited willpower I have to start working out is the same limited willpower I have to start a new diet. This is important to remember in order to not bite off more than we can chew if we want to control our responses to things! The next page highlights a specific exercise that can be helpful in building up self-regulation.

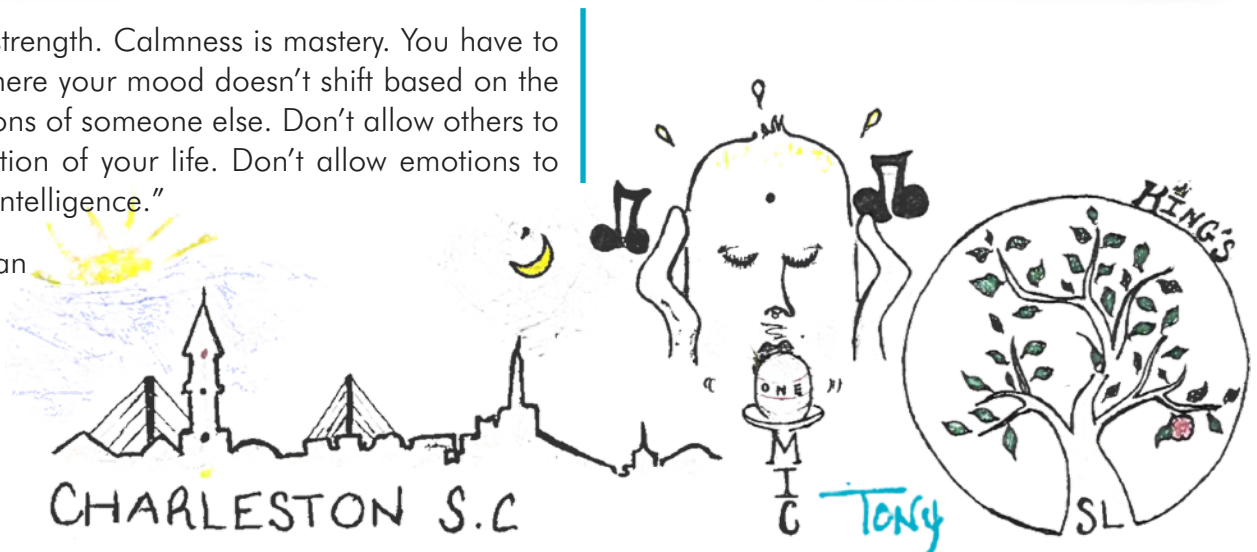
*Reference: Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M., & Tice, D. M. (1998). Ego depletion: Is the active self a limited resource?. Journal of personality and social psychology, 74(5), 1252.*

**ABSTRACT** Self-regulation is a highly adaptive, distinctively human trait that enables people to override and alter their responses, including changing themselves so as to live up to social and other standards. Recent evidence indicates that self-regulation often consumes a limited resource, akin to energy or strength, thereby creating a temporary state of ego depletion. This article summarizes recent evidence indicating that regular exercises in self-regulation can produce broad improvements in self-regulation (like strengthening a muscle), making people less vulnerable to ego depletion. Furthermore, it shows that ego depletion moderates the effects of many traits on behavior, particularly such that wide differences in socially disapproved motivations produce greater differences in behavior when ego depletion weakens the customary inner restraints.

*Source: Baumeister, R. F., Gailliot, M., DeWall, C. N., & Oaten, M. (2006). Self-regulation and personality: How interventions increase regulatory success, and how depletion moderates the effects of traits on behavior. Journal of personality, 74(6), 1773-1802.*

“Self-Control is strength. Calmness is mastery. You have to get to a point where your mood doesn't shift based on the insignificant actions of someone else. Don't allow others to control the direction of your life. Don't allow emotions to overpower your intelligence.”

- Morgan Freeman





One way to put self-regulation into practice is by doing a **WOOP**. It stands for Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, and Plan and is a mental strategy that can help form intentional habits and accomplish goals! WOOP has consistently shown to help people lose weight, reduce stress, and maintain healthy relationships, among other positive outcomes. Lee Horton (p.5) shares an example below:

**Start by thinking of something you wish for, something that is both challenging and possible for you to accomplish.**

**WISH:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Lee's Example: I wish to mend relationships with family members I have harmed or let down. Many in my family don't trust me and consider me a liar.*

**Then think about what the outcome of accomplishing that wish would look like. Consider how it would feel. Take some time to really imagine your outcome.**

**OUTCOME:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Lee's Example: To be able to take my rightful place in the family, to be trusted, respected, and to have my voice valued.*

**Now consider what barriers within you that may prevent you from achieving your outcome. Be sure to focus on you and what you can control. Take some time to really imagine your obstacle.**

**OBSTACLE:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Lee's Example: My biggest obstacle is my thinking, attitude, and the people with whom I surround myself.*

**Think about and write down one action or thought you could have to overcome the obstacle you just identified.**

**PLAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Lee's Example: I Plan to replace my negative thinking with positive thinking and am going to engage in positive activities that take me out of my comfort zone and surround myself with people who are being productive and will tell me the truth about my bad attitude.*

**Now, using the information above, make an If, Then plan! Fill in the information below and repeat this to yourself a few times in order to remember it.**

**IF** \_\_\_\_\_  
USE WHAT YOU WROTE FOR OBSTACLE

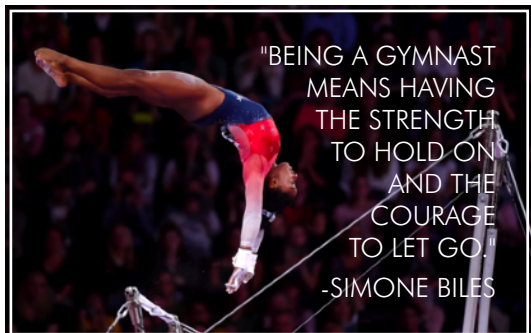
**THEN** \_\_\_\_\_  
USE WHAT YOU WROTE FOR PLAN

*Lee's Example: IF I start to think negatively, have a bad attitude, and/or surround myself with people that pull me down, THEN I plan to replace my negative thinking with positive thinking and am going to engage in positive activities that take me out of my comfort zone and surround myself with people who are being productive and will tell me the truth about my bad attitude.*

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### ADVICE FROM KURT DANYSH (p.7)

Investing in your health inside is an investment in your life outside. Physically, I would encourage people to take advantage of the Activities Department. You don't have to become a power lifter or be the best basketball star, but you should make an effort to move for at least one activities period a day, whether that be walking the track or on a treadmill, working out with weights or cardio equipment, or merely playing a game of horse. I played handball nearly every day for the first 15 years of my sentence, rain or shine. I also began a morning routine where I immediately did push ups to get my mind and body ready for the day. By the end, I could do 100 in one set.



I figured if I was going to spend at least 22 years in prison, I should invest in my health so that I can live 22 years longer. I also figured that upon my release I'd be required to do manual labor of sorts, so I needed to prepare for back breaking work.

It can be hard to find motivation to take care of yourself in prison. Some days it's easier to just lay in bed. Especially in the hole. But self care is not only an investment in your future, it gives you a routine for each day, which helps pass time quicker.

Every morning the first thing that I do is give thanks to God, it helps me with the strenght and knowledge to persevere what comes ahead with doing time. Bad news and disagreement are things I approach with a positive mindset. That's why I'll continue to give thanks to Almighty, and reading S.L.

JOSÉ

## HEALTH & WELLNESS TIPS FROM OTHERS

Anchor breathing  
when I'm stressed out I breathe in and out while in the shining light group I've learned how to breathe and slow down my anger and stress, it's helped me a whole lot. 😊

Thomas

"ANCHOR BREATHING"  
Sometimes when I feel stressed out because of times I don't get an answer on the phone there is one person that always picks up when I really need some one to talk to: My brother always calms me down when I'm upset. Having someone that's there to talk and listen to is a blessing and my Exercise. Once I finish talking to my bro, it's like I can breathe again. Closing my eyes and taking deep breaths and breathing out calms me down all the time.

¡cheo!

**DENNIS & LEE** - "There is an old saying, 'Free your mind and the rest will follow.' As such, the key to having optimal health and wellness starts with a change in thinking and perspective. Start by seeing your prison sentence as an opportunity to become the best you. Stop doing time, start using it to your advantage."



Send us any practices you use to help care for yourself or people around you!

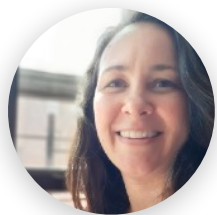
## FEATURED WRITING

Kelsha shared her story after our last newsletter on "Honesty" and we think it fits our theme of "Self-Regulation" too. Thank you, Kelsha, for your inspiration! (and your cover art 😊)

### "SPEAK LIFE"

It seems like the days are getting closer to the time to departure. Each day it gets closer it's like a different test, a different obstacle to go through, but it's a mind over matter type of situation to see if you changed the old habits with new habits, how humble have you become to handle a situation. Before I wouldn't listen to anyone's advice about anything but my own way and look where that got me, here at Sci-Muncy behind a door. I got here Sept 21.18, I was broken, lost, and stuck in my own ways. Everyday I blamed everyone else but myself, I was medicated off of psych medications just to think I was feeling alright. In March of 2019, I went to church here and I was introduced to a different feeling and a weight lifted off of me, the greatest feeling ever. My breath and body went still when Ms. Naomi sang "falling in love with Jesus"... The weight of the world lifted, I went back to my bunk and cried, I stopped my meds and put all my trust in God, I am so humble and I follow my heart, I am still someone, I can and I will accomplish everything I put my heart and mind to do change is possible so as I said my time is almost over so I can show my family and community that transformation is possible. Thank you to the people who cared to stay beside me in the still waters and gave me hope.

Kelsha



Kelly  
PROGRAM  
DIRECTOR

*“All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.” - 1 Corinthians 9:25 (NLT)*

It’s not hard to see the results of strict discipline and training among the best athletes in the world as we watch the Olympic Games. True, many are gifted at birth with special abilities and body types that set them up for such success. But without the self-regulation to consistently make choices that would lead them toward their goals - or eliminate distractions - their bodies would not reach their full potential.

***What if we used this idea of Olympic training as a metaphor for the spiritual life? What parallels do you see? What differences?***

PHILOSOPHER, DALLAS WILLARD WRITES: “A discipline is an activity within our power - something we can do - which brings us to a point where we can do what we, at present, cannot do by direct effort. Everything from learning a language to weight lifting depends upon it, and its availability in the human makeup is what makes the individual human being responsible for the kind of person they become.

Spiritual disciplines are not primarily for the solving of behavioral problems, though that is one of their effects. ... The aim of disciplines in the spiritual life is the transformation of the total state of the soul. It is the renewal of the whole person from the inside, involving differences in thought, feeling and character that may never be manifest in outward behavior at all...you have to be transformed in the functions of the soul so that the deeds of the law are a natural outflow of who you have become.”

*Excerpts from the article “Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Formation, and the Restoration of the Soul”*

For thousands of years across many faith traditions, people have engaged in a variety of spiritual disciplines or practices that connect them to their Creator and renew their soul (*examples below*). Perhaps you have some practices of your own that you do faithfully. Maybe you used to do something but have gotten away from it, or maybe you have never really thought about it before!

We encourage you to consider trying a new spiritual practice, whatever your faith tradition may be. Draw on your strength of self-regulation to get started, or even to make it a regular part of your day/week.

As you do, know that it’s not the practice itself that brings transformation. (*We all know someone who prays every day but isn't very kind to their neighbor!*) None of these are a magic pill that will automatically change your life. This is not a merit system where your standing with God depends on how much, or little, you do. Rather, these are various pathways to connect with the One who created you, who knows your potential for living in this world and wants to help you live it out.

**Let us know how this new way of connecting with God makes a difference in your life!** 



# GAMES & ACTIVITIES



## KEEP THE SUBMISSIONS COMING!

We'll keep adding any song recommendations, book reviews, and of course puzzles!

## MEME MAKER CONTEST

Submission by Cheo



## JUST FOR FUN

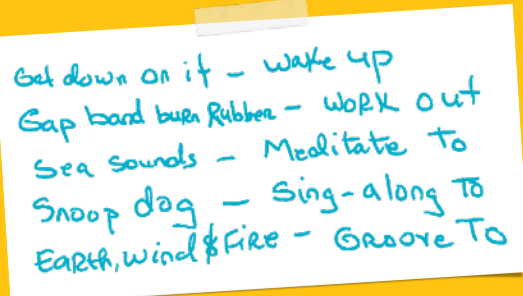


*Angelina*

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

## TABLET MIX-TAPE

Submission by Thomas



## HAVE A RECIPE?

Our featured request this month is for your best recipe. Whether commissary or chow hall...sharing is caring :)



## LONI

The images and words in each box below convey a phrase or thing.

Hint: Look at word placement, size & quantity.

## JOSÉ

Puzzle for a puzzled mind. Enjoy.

Y S Q R B C D F G M Z Z I  
 T T M I N D T P D O W N N  
 P A H S S R W B N N O E Q  
 Y J T G G U I D A N C E V  
 W L I K I P R U V N W X A  
 G R W Y O M Z B A R E K L  
 K N D H F J L R O T I Y O  
 R E I K G H E A C F Z E N  
 U F N L X V I K M R X S E  
 O H Z O E N P J R E D B Z  
 Y O U S O E Q X L V I V Z  
 A M R P O O F I M E R S P  
 R E I Q W X O H T N E H W  
 P L K T T S R T S V U T O

PRAY FOR GUIDANCE AND PERSEVERANCE WHEN FEELING DOWN YOU ARE NEVER ALONE WITH ALMIGHTY IN YOUR MIND

## VISUAL WORD PUZZLES

1 	2 ME REPEAT	3 <u>READ</u>
4 ARREST YOUR	5 Chi MARE NA	6 MILLION
7 <del>Flippers</del>	8 BIRD	9 GROUND FEET FEET FEET FEET
10 LO <sup>HEAD</sup> <del>HEELS</del> VE	11 HEART	12 BAN ANA
13 COSTS	14 FIGHT	15 GGES KGGG SEGG GESG ESGG GEGS

# LONI

## Puzzle - FREE

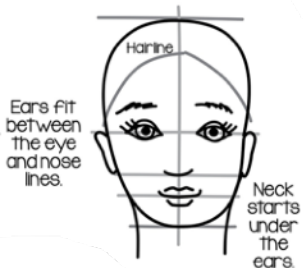
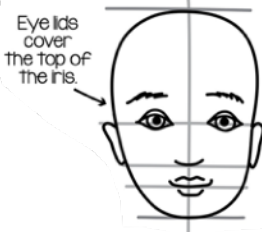
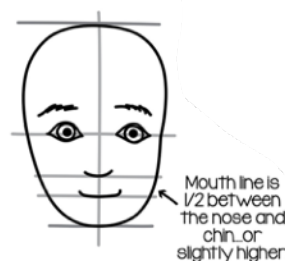
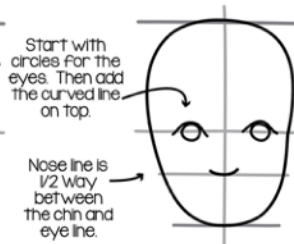
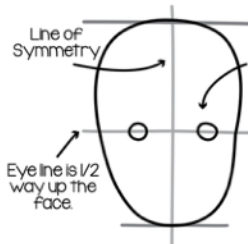
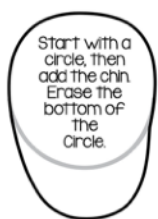
- AUTONOMOUS    RELIEVE
- CLEAR        SEPARATE
- DISBURDEN    SHINE
- DISENGAGE    SOVEREIGN
- DISENTANGLE SPRING
- EMANCIPATE   UNBAR
- EXTRICATE     UNBOUND
- FOOTLOOSE    UNBURDENED
- INDEPENDENT   UNCHAIN
- LIBERATE      UNCONFINED
- LOOSED        UNFETTER
- MANUMIT      UNINHIBITED
- OPEN           UNRESTRAINED
- RELEASE

U	F	R	M	E	R	E	E	S	O	O	L	T	O	O	F
U	F	L	O	O	S	E	D	R	E	I	E	F	R	E	U
N	F	E	E	E	R	A	F	E	B	E	R	U	F	E	M
I	U	N	R	E	E	F	E	E	R	E	N	U	E	F	C
N	N	I	E	E	M	R	R	L	E	F	F	N	R	T	O
H	F	H	F	R	E	A	F	E	E	R	E	R	N	E	N
I	E	S	R	E	T	F	N	T	R	R	A	E	L	C	E
B	T	E	E	E	G	T	U	R	F	D	S	E	E	I	
I	T	F	A	R	L	E	N	E	M	N	E	T	F	U	N
T	E	R	F	C	R	I	E	I	E	I	E	R	R	N	D
E	R	E	E	F	I	R	E	P	R	E	T	A	E	B	F
D	T	F	E	E	R	R	E	V	R	P	F	I	E	U	R
E	R	A	F	O	E	D	T	E	E	S	N	E	R	D	
S	E	E	P	R	N	L	U	X	E	L	E	E	E	D	E
U	O	E	F	I	E	N	G	R	E	G	F	D	T	E	N
O	N	V	E	F	C	E	U	N	G	N	B	F	A	N	I
M	E	E	E	H	R	N	E	F	A	A	A	E	R	E	F
O	R	F	A	R	B	E	A	R	G	T	H	R	A	D	N
N	F	I	E	A	K	F	E	M	N	N	N	F	P	E	O
O	N	F	R	R	E	I	R	E	E	U	I	E	E	E	C
T	E	E	E	R	F	E	G	E	S	R	N	E	S	R	N
U	N	B	O	U	N	D	E	N	I	F	U	E	F	I	U
A	F	R	E	E	F	R	N	E	D	R	U	B	S	I	D



### DRAWING BASICS FACES

You asked for more tips on drawing and cartoons! Let's start simple and easy, step by step, to practice proportions and free you up to show your style! **Send us your best cartoon-you!**



# FOR THE NEXT ISSUE



## OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE

The Loop Collage - p.3  
 Community Code - p.3  
 Ask Anything - p.4  
 Positive News - p.6

Recent Releases - p.6  
 Character Strengths - p.8  
 WOOP - p.10  
 Health & Wellness - p.11

Prayer & Meditation - p.13  
 Books, Songs, Puzzles - p.14  
 Recipes - p.14  
 Drawing Faces - p.15

SEND IN COVER ART FOR "THE LOOP" FOR A CHANCE TO BE FEATURED!

### VISUAL WORD PUZZLE

#### ANSWERS

1. RING AROUND THE ROSIE
2. REPEAT AFTER ME
3. READ BETWEEN THE LINES
4. YOU'RE UNDER ARREST
5. MADE IN CHINA
6. ONE IN A MILLION
7. TIPTOE THROUGH THE TULIPS
8. BIG BIRD
9. 6 FEET UNDER GROUND
10. HEAD OVER HEELS IN LOVE
11. BROKEN HEART
12. BANANA SPLIT
13. RISING COSTS
14. UPHILL FIGHT
15. SCRAMBLED EGGS

### INVITE A FRIEND TO SUBSCRIBE!

Give them our address and let them know we'd love to hear from them! Make sure they include:

- Name/#
- Facility
- How they heard about us.

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

You are always welcome to write to us and share whatever's on your mind. If you would like to contribute to The Loop specifically, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- Our goal with The Loop is to "Speak Life," so submissions should have a positive feel, which may include creative expression, encouraging words, or a constructive release of negative emotion.
- Remember to be inclusive of people of all ages, faiths and backgrounds. We have a really diverse community!
- If you submit a longer piece, please try and keep it to one page.
- If writing a submission, please try and be as legible as possible so we can all read it!
- Avoid details of your case or criticism of the institution/DOC.
- If there is anything in a letter you do NOT want to be shared in a newsletter, please note that clearly.
- Published submissions will be credited with first name, unless you specifically request to remain anonymous.
- Submissions should be mailed to us by **SEPT 1** in order to be included in the next issue of The Loop.

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue of The Loop.

We look forward to hearing from you soon with new artwork & messages, encouraging comments and stories!

Shining Light | PO Box 267 | Anville, PA 17003