

# THE LOOP

TEAMWORK







At Shining Light, we believe each one of us has the potential to shine light wherever we are, regardless of our circumstances. Through human connection, creativity, and mutual learning, we can unlock this potential in ourselves and maintain - even brighten - that light in ourselves and in our community. The more lights in the room, the brighter the collective light can shine, until the whole environment of prison is changed from the inside out.

The Loop is more than a magazine; it's how our community of light bearers communicates with each other. It's a source of belonging to something positive, creative inspiration, a reminder that we're not alone, a push to keep going, and a compass to guide the way. It can even be a touchpoint for meaningful connection with loved ones! (Every issue can be viewed online at [shining-light.com/theloop](http://shining-light.com/theloop))

If you are new to The Loop, we'd love to consider you part of the Shining Light community. One way is to "subscribe" by sending in the card on the back, so you can start receiving your own (free!) copy with your name on it. And when you're ready to join in our ongoing conversation, know that we're always glad to hear from you!

It is you, the readers, who make The Loop so special. Your stories of engagement with exercises and the impact it is having, your creativity and insight, and your willingness to invite your peers to subscribe, is what keeps momentum going.

With limited space and a growing number of contributors, we are selective in what we publish. As a community focused on unlocking the potential for good in each other, and the environments and systems we find ourselves in, all content is filtered through the "Community Codes" we seek to live by. These codes are sent to everyone who requests a copy of The Loop, and we encourage readers to refer to them often.

In addition, please review these guidelines so you know what we're looking for:

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- We will credit contributions with first name, last initial, and state, unless you clearly indicate otherwise.
- If you write anything in a letter that you do NOT want to be shared in The Loop or other Shining Light communications, please note that clearly.
- We reserve the right to edit your contribution as needed to fit space and/or theme.

#### CONTENT

- Submissions should have a positive intention, which may include creative expression, encouraging words, or a constructive release of negative emotion.
- Remember to be inclusive of people of all faiths and backgrounds.
- Avoid details of your case and keep criticism of the institution/DOC constructive, focused on ways to create something better.

#### FORMATTING

- Write as legibly as possible (or type) so we can all read what you wrote!
- If possible, submit artwork and writings on blank paper.
- Be concise. Featured writings must fit legibly on 1 page. Responses to activities, questions, prompts, etc should be limited to a short paragraph or two so we can include more people!

*PLEASE NOTE: We are limited in the practical services we can provide at this time, and therefore cannot fulfill requests for legal or reentry support, penpal relationships, or assistance with publishing creative work.*

## WELCOME, READERS!

As I watch the FIFA Women's World Cup, it's clear that being part of a team can be fun, thrilling and beneficial, even - *or especially* - when the losses come. Watch any awards show and the winners always have a crew of people they recognize as essential to their success. Teamwork truly does "make the dream work." Yet I know for me, the impulse to "go it alone" can be a real problem! Why is that?! Being part of a team takes humility. It sometimes means letting go of the way I think things should be done; it means I might have to share the spotlight; I might have to work alongside someone who rubs me the wrong way; someone might drop the ball and let me down - I might let my team down... As uncomfortable and risky as teamwork can be, science and our own intuition tell us that joining with others for a common goal contributes to our wellbeing. So then the question is, how do we "team-work" well?



*Kelly*  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

**IN THIS ISSUE:** We'll be looking at the concepts of "team" and "teamwork" from all kinds of angles, starting right at home within the community of Shining Light on pages 3 and 8. Pages 13 and 20 include a variety of inspiring examples where you are contributing to teams in your own communities. On page 15, SL alum & reentry advocate Kurt Danysh helps us consider how "reentry is a team sport." Key members of the Loop Group in the character dorm at MacDougall CI (SC) - where teamwork is a daily focus - shared Community Code insights with us on page 16. And on page 10, we celebrate Freedom & Lee who are taking on new roles in SL after two wonderful years contributing to our team's success.


Congratulations to **Raymond Rowe** (PA) for your 1st Place entry in our brand new Cover Art Contest! Page 7 has the 2nd & 3rd place entries, with other great pieces spread throughout.

Many thanks to all 97 readers who submitted artwork, writings and other responses to this issue! *Reminder: We will be awarding Certificates of Achievement to anyone who has submitted content by mail to each of the 5 issues from this year.*

*I read your magazine a couple of times but this is my first time requesting my own copy and trying to submit stuff...I really like your magazine. It's very positive and uplifting-Something that's hard to find in here. So everyone who makes this magazine happen and contributes, thank you.* -Sonyella P (PA)

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Look for the  that notes the various prompts and activities. Then write to us about your experience so we can keep the conversation going!



TO: YOU  
FROM: JEFF



Jeff

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings to the Shining Light community! In this issue we look at Teamwork - something central to Shining Light since we began 27 years ago.

In the early days, we took teams of young people into correctional facilities as part of our mission to do performing arts presentations about hope in challenging places. I still remember crossing the bridge to Rikers Island with 80 young people, wondering, "What am I doing? Is this crazy?!" But as a result of facing those challenges together, our team became very supportive of each other and felt empowered to do more than any of us could have done on our own.

I was personally very dependent on the team in those situations. For instance, at Rikers Island we would present to audiences of about 300 adolescent males fresh off the streets of NYC. I knew as a middle-aged white guy they would probably have very little interest in what I had to say. But when a group of their peers did music, drama, and dance on a stage with professional lighting, sound, and video, they got engaged - which opened the door to surprising, positive interactions. My job was to organize the event, then step aside and rely on others to do their part.

In 2015, we were invited to work with a group of incarcerated women with a similar goal - to form a supportive team that would serve their peers by bringing hope through a performing arts production. We only had a week to accomplish this, so our expectations were low. But we were amazed at the results of their willingness to support one another and their community inside. As we did more "Workshops" in men's and women's facilities, we saw teams like this making a difference everywhere we went.

While the pandemic stopped those programs, we now have a new kind of team that spans from coast to coast. As a reader of this magazine, we consider you a part of this team!

People on the SL team are creating supportive, positive spaces in their cells, blocks, and prison yards everywhere. Some participate in, promote, or facilitate Loop Groups. Others engage in our tablet courses or SL Academy. Some are intentionally changing their approach to other people to help create more constructive interactions. I recently met a group of young men supporting each other as they make lifestyle changes their peers might ridicule. Many individuals are finding ways to walk alongside other individuals in their time of need - sometimes literally.

Shining Light is all about empowering people to discover and reach for their potential. A vital part of that is considering how you can support positive change in people and communities inside prison. Whether it is a structured effort or just a kind word, we want to encourage you to step into your role in this nationwide team, right where you are today.



The SL Workshop team at Riverside CF (Philadelphia, PA) in 2018

At Shining Light, we want to be a community that helps each other focus on the positive in the midst of the challenges and painful situations we can't avoid. (We're not ignoring the bad; we're just finding a way to rise above it!) This page is all about celebrating accomplishments and good news, so tell us...

WHAT WENT RIGHT?

- What accomplishments are you proud of?
- What good news are you excited about?
- Are you or someone you know coming up on your release date?

I have just completed a cognitive thinking program called the "Streets Don't Love You Back". Where I was able to introduce the class to the "loop"; as well as our program staff monitors; in which I hope will expand our facilities to even more programs & of course loop participation... Daniel M. [MI]

Getting my GED, then getting accepted to the Sinclair college program and getting my book titled Neon Prime. My second book is coming out in a few months, called The Merc, and in two semesters, I'll have an associates degree in business management. -Shaquille D. (OH)

After 30+ long years, I am finally coming up on my Merit Review hearing on August 3rd I am excited AND NERVOUS AT THE SAME TIME. I NEED ALL THE PRAYERS AND WELL WISHES ANYONE CAN SHARE. THANK YOU. -Loni K. (PA)

I GOT A NEW ROOMMATE AND WE ARE GREAT FRIENDS AND SINCE BEING IN SHINING LIGHT I LEARNED THAT I HAD GREAT LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND I'VE STARTED TO TEACH MY OWN CLASS CALLED RESTART AND RETURN WITH YOUR MONEY AND IT IS GOING GREAT. -Hunter H. (ND)

"Sunflower seeds in the canteen!" -Drew (NC)  
I'm IN my second program About To Finish IT, Then one more To go. Have Now done over 30 Bible studies, Helping people in here get Bibles. I am excited About Seeing parole in 2024 Hoping to go home 1-2-25, Going To a great Halfway house. Been AT The Same Job For 18 months Making .46 Per hour. -Paul B. (PA)

After an 18-year hiatus, my sister and I are healing our sibling relationship! Also, I'm now entering my final year toward a bachelor's degree. It's been tough, but well worth the effort! -Albert R (NC)

"I earned my visits back and I was able to hug my mom for the first time in 13 years." -Nate H. (NC)

I am a pagan and for the first time in my incarceration I have a pagan friend as a cellie. We are now doing daily self-transformation rituals/studies together. My ability to keep a positive view of everything around me is life changing. Being involved in the Shining Light community has had a big impact on my life. -Richard H (OH)

Two volumes of my poetry, Into The Abyss and Confering With The Moon (which also contains my own original artwork) have been published by Living With Convictions Press. -Gary F. (SC)

Me and my husband have had alot of downs but we are working on it to make it better. And we both are a team each giving 100% to have real love. -Aryella P (PA)

"My son is at an age (18 months) where he is learning to speak so he can communicate HIS good news to ME." -Michael M. (MT)

I completed my hospice class, my CPS training, plus I'm learning sign language. Also they're having bus trips to the prison again so we can see our families without all the hassle #very happy -Nadera .B (PA)

"I'm apart of a awesome Bee Keeping program and I'm learning new things about myself as well as bee keeping." -Enoch T. (TX)

"I finished the Edwin's culinary course on the tablet!" -Anonymous (PA)

I'm very proud that my daughter graduated high school at the beginning of June! Also, I'm starting to delve more into my Spirituality, as well as doing more writing - wanting to get published! -Wendy D. (PA)

I AM PLEASED THAT I HAVE BEEN CONSISTANTLY SHOWING UP, BOTH IN SHINING LIGHT CLASSES AND IN MY CHOSEN FAITH WALK. -JAKE (ND)

"My case was overturned." -Shark K (WY)







## PROGRAM UPDATES



**NORTH DAKOTA:** Congratulations to the four men in segregation at NDSP who completed the Foundations Course in June! Two other groups at NDSP are still in process, as is one at JRCC. Congrats also to the 11 recent graduates at JRCC - 7 in the Foundations Course and 4 in the Playwriting Extension.

**OHIO:** Hats off to the 10 graduates of Belmont CI's 4th cohort, as well. And welcome aboard to the group of trailblazers at Noble CI who started in mid-July.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** A group in the Veterans Service Unit (VSU) at SCI Dallas is well underway in their first Foundations Course, while groups at SCI Coal Township and SCI Waymart ramp up for their second course in the fall.

Congratulations to everyone who completed the following video courses through Edovo so far:



Like all free educational courses in Edovo, completion automatically merits you a certificate through the app and credits are added to your transcript. If you complete any of these courses and write to us with a demonstration of your work, we'll be glad to send you a certificate of completion directly from our office as well!

Be sure to also check out other free resources from Shining Light, like "Creative Expressions from The Loop", "Creations of a Caged Bird," and the 2022 Writer's CoLab Anthology Collection

The 2023 Writer's CoLab Anthology is projected to be published in late August, featuring full or excerpted pieces from 17 different participants! Look for it on tablets (Edovo) or on our website at [www.shining-light.com/writers-colab](http://www.shining-light.com/writers-colab)



*All across the country, groups of readers ("Loopers") are getting together to discuss the content of The Loop and encouraging each other to respond in ways that are meaningful to them. Formally or informally, these gatherings are proving to be really positive experiences that are having ripple effects throughout the facility and beyond.*

### HERE ARE THE GROUPS WE KNOW OF SO FAR:

ND - North Dakota State Penitentiary  
OH - Belmont CI, Grafton CI, London CI Horizon unit, Ross CI, Trumbull CI  
PA - Lebanon County CF (informally), SCI Dallas Veterans Service Unit  
SC - Allendale CI, MacDougall CI Character Building Unit

**Let us know if you're part of a formal or informal group so we can celebrate with you and get new ideas for what's working!**

**The SL Academy offers space for participants to practice using character strengths in real time through intentionally challenging scenarios.**

**Let's hear how a group of young men at North Dakota State Penitentiary unknowingly seized the opportunity for teamwork in writing a play together.**

It's 6pm on a Wednesday evening when 9 personalities pour into the room for a session at the center-point of the 14-week SL Academy Foundations Course. They've previously been given an unconventional task: create a group-written play from scratch that can be presented to an audience after five 2-hour sessions. Working it out for a while now - some coming straight from work or a parenting session, all willingly sacrificing their time in the yard - it's the second to last session before performance, and one might say the group is still stuck in brainstorming mode.

**But here's what they did have:**

- Setting: a bridge.
- A mix of characters from DC comics, the Bible, and a popular soap opera,
- With as many ideas as there are voices,
- And mounting frustration

Still, twice a week they would keep showing up - some chose to press through the blockage of differing ideas, keeping the conversation lively, while others' presence on the outskirts communicated in its own way a willingness to fight against the palpable discouragement in the room.

Finally, there emerged a title for their collective work: 'The 11th Hour of Revelation.'

This motivated the men, still uneasy, to commit more fully to one another knowing that whatever the result, they were in it together. They returned to the sixth and final session to flesh out details of what the pop culture icon would say to the biblical character, and so on. Once they were on a roll, the facilitators stepped back to allow ideas to take hold and watch the group lift-off.

With only one hour for final rehearsal, the easiest "win" would have been to simply read the script aloud as a team. This is the basic expected outcome of the Playwriting module, and the audience of Shining Light staff celebrates the accomplishment of such a task. But at this point, the group decided it's go big or go home. They performed their piece with fully staged entrances & exits, changes in scenic design & a bow at the end!

Now, with the experience of collective success, their feelings about the process changed:

***"It was all of us just coming together in the end." // "It's important to ask for help."  
"I've learned to practice patience when an idea isn't accepted by the group."***

The Academy Assistants - mentors who had been through the program before - added:

***"I commend these guys for perseverance, even when it was rough they still showed up."  
"Now that they've been through these aspects of the Academy, Shining Light is really family now."***

Through most of the process for this group - the youngest (on average) of any Academy so far - it seemed like ideas were disjointed, bodies were scattered and time was slipping away. But the guys were in the thick of teamwork without even realizing it. And with their commitment to one another, they accomplished far more, and felt more pride and joy, than they would've imagined on their own.



Artwork by Eugene B. (PA)





## FREEDOM & LEE HORTON

Commuted Lifers & Activists

Written By Rebecca,  
SL Correspondance Manager



The mantra “grow where you’re planted,” can be a challenge to live out, especially if you’re in a difficult space, but brothers Freedom (Dennis) and Lee Horton are proof that, even in prison, one can step into their purpose and bloom.

While serving a life sentence in Pennsylvania for a crime they didn’t commit, Freedom and Lee decided they would try to live productive lives on the inside that positively impacted the men around them. This led to the Horton brothers creating programming for their facility, writing for publications, and becoming certified peer support specialists and W.R.A.P. (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) facilitators. After decades inside, Freedom and Lee applied for commutation, which they were ultimately granted. On February 12, 2021, after serving 28 years, the Horton brothers were finally released.

Soon after, Freedom and Lee facilitated a W.R.A.P. seminar for Shining Light, which led to a job with Shining Light that involved the brothers in every aspect of building what our organization is today, from helping develop and facilitate Academy courses to writing their column “End of the Tunnel” for The Loop. Now Freedom and Lee have stepped into a new role with Shining Light, recently joining Shining Light’s board of directors.

In another exciting development, the Horton brothers have accepted an opportunity to work full-time for the Pennsylvania-based organization Step By Step, Inc., which works to provide community support resources to individuals with intellectual disabilities, mental health challenges, and autism spectrum disorders. As Program Development Coordinators, Freedom and Lee head a department that oversees Step By Step’s programming across the entire state of Pennsylvania, determining what current programming is working and what programming needs to be changed.

While Freedom and Lee will no longer be contributing in a regular capacity to The Loop or the Academy, they are still very supportive of and invested in Shining Light and will be serving on the Board of Directors. Here are their words of encouragement to you as they transition:

**From Freedom:** “Take the opportunity to really reflect over the course of your life and everything that led you to where you are, and begin the process of changing that narrative ... You can be whatever you want to be. It’s up to you to decide. You can ... [chart] a new course forward of positivity ... and positive outcomes will follow.”



**From Lee:** “Take your life seriously now, in the moment. Take advantage of every opportunity to do something to make your life better ... When people play cards, checkers, chess and all that, ... before they move, they’ll look at the board and they’ll see what options they have ... People don’t do that enough in real life. And so my biggest encouragement would be to take your time right now to look at the board and see what options you have in your life right now, and then decide which way you want to go.”



## STRENGTH SPOTTING

### JUDGMENT

(Critical Thinking)

“Strength spotting” is the intentional act of noticing when someone uses one of the character strengths. It can be a helpful way to become more aware of strengths in both oneself and others, and especially when it is shared with the person using the strength, that can be incredibly encouraging.

Judgment has Many Faces good and bad. I see Men around Me gaining the Proper knowledge to break free of the false influences and Judgment that held them down for Many years Using the good Judgment to Choose Peace, hope, Faith and Prayer to build a new found understanding of who they are and what they want in life

~ Wayne G. McCoy

“I see some men listen to another man talk about an issue he is having, and rather than blow it off, or rush to criticize either person involved, they try to get the man to see his issue through a different lens. Sometimes this helps the man calm down, or see it in a better light. They are showing the strength of judgment.”

- Jared M (OH)

“I have a dear friend that has a little over 15 months left of her time to do and she is already preparing herself for the day she leaves. She knows that she is going to face a lot of temptations. She knows who she doesn’t want to pick her up, and how she is going to deal with things once she leaves. I’m really proud of her. She uses the judgment character strength to determine her outcome. When she first came in she didn’t.”

- Ashley V (NC)

“I have to use John who just saw the parole board for the final time after thirty-five years. This hearing he had it together in every way. He had taken several programs lately and was ready to answer their questions. I believe his judgment preparing for this hearing was right on point, and it paid off big dividend’s for him.”

- G.E.S. (OH)

I’m a tutor for a lady who is getting her GED. I’m always seeing both teamwork and judgment (critical thinking) being used in the classroom setting.

- Wendy D. (PA)



**For the next issue, tell us where you spot people around you using**  
**TEAMWORK**

Last issue, we asked which strengths you think of when considering the definition of judgment (critical thinking) and below are some of the responses:

- **Jake Lampl (ND)** - While I see judgment in all character strengths, the two “loudest” for me were perspective and self-regulation. To have the big picture to make wise counsel hasty decisions cannot override sound judgment.
- **A. Redd (SC)** - I use judgment (critical thinking) with the following strengths: forgiveness, teamwork, fairness, perseverance, zest, perspective, and leadership. All these strengths have to be used with an open mind and not based on emotions or feelings.
- **Joy H. (OH)** - Honesty is a character strength that aligns with judgment. Hold your own mirror. Judge not!
- **Roger B. (OH)** - When I think of “Leadership”, I can’t help but see the importance and connection of judgment. Without using proper judgment, you could never be a positive, effective leader.



**LAST ISSUE – “CLOUDED JUDGMENT”** // We had many thought-provoking submissions in response to our last prompt. **Johnny B** (NC) and **Robert H** (FL) wrote about growing wiser in how we respond to others. In a long poem called “No More Victims,” Johnny describes coming to a newfound and deep respect for women: “I allowed lust to cloud my judgment,” he wrote. “And never gave any thought / To the definition of consent.” Robert wrote about changing his “poor judgment of the homeless and needy.” After observing his own brother’s struggles, he says, “I’ve had a complete change of heart and decided that when I get released, I plan...to help the needy with necessities and shelter.” **Juan R** (PA) and **Mya M** (PA) wrote powerful pieces about the importance of not judging people or situations too quickly, or on the basis of stereotypes or past experiences. “You see my charges, not me,” Mya begins her eloquent and heartfelt piece; “you see my color, not me.” And **Austin “Zen” K** (PA) wrote a beautiful poem addressed to himself, with a reminder to “come in from the rain clouds / You don’t have to be ashamed now.”

\*Watch for these and other fine works in the “Creative Expressions from The Loop” resource on Edovo!

This issue’s featured poem, “New Get Down” by **Jerimie M** (ND), uses wonderful, playful rhythm and rhyme to make a serious point. It is a call to action, a call to change, and a reminder that others are there to support us as we work our way to clear and positive decisions.



Joyce

PROGRAM FACILITATOR

### “New Get Down.”

it's crazy  
All the things we continue to put our selves through  
The Definition of insanity  
yet we proceed to do the things we do  
Take a look at Humanity  
Do it for me, No Do it for you  
Is there anything you would change  
would you rather Re-create and Re-live the pain  
Talk to me

Tell me your Reason again  
you Can do it  
Just learn to live with the stain  
Reach out when you begin to slip  
you don't want to be amongst those put in the ground  
leaving your mother with trembling lip  
you Can Do this no matter if your black, white or brown  
Let your sobriety be your New Get Down.

By: Jerimie R. M



### NEW PROMPT CHOOSING OUR TEAMS

Recent submissions, along with discussions with my Shining Light team members, have me thinking about the importance of good critical judgment when we choose our “teams.” When and how can I serve a group that will also serve me well? How does our good judgment help us to make wise decisions about group membership, relationships with family members, and more? See if you can write a poem or brief essay that brings together the character strengths of judgment and teamwork.

If you'd like your piece to be considered for publishing in *The Loop*, please keep it to 200 words or less.  
(Longer entries may be considered for the digital “Creative Expressions” collection)

In the last issue on Judgment (Critical Thinking), we asked,

### “WHAT TEAM DO YOU FIND YOURSELF PART OF AT THIS CURRENT MOMENT? WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE TO BE COMMITTED TO THIS TEAM’S SUCCESS?”

**Enoch T.** (TX) is in the jail’s beekeeping club and said, “**Our success is pretty much hard work and trusting each other.**”

**Danielle A.** (IL) was on a team taking care of the prison’s flower garden, herb garden, and vegetable garden. In addition to hard work, she says success required things like communication, everyone having a different role, and people stepping up to help teammates who needed a hand.

**Fay S.** (PA) has been a Certified Peer Support (CPS) Specialist for 7 ½ years, part of the team who actively cares for others inside who are struggling with any range of challenges, from adjusting to prison life, dealing with a traumatic event, or just feeling lost or down. (Shout out to the nationwide team of past/present CPS workers among us!) Below are a few examples Fay shared with us for how she tries to stay committed to her team’s success:

-attending and participating in all team-building exercises/events  
-taking care of myself so I am well and able to fully support my peers.  
-being there WHENEVER I can for my peers

-renewing my certification/license is up to date  
-doing regular check-ins with my co-workers  
-ensuring confidentiality is maintained  
-seeking help when I can't handle or don't know something

**Michael M.** (MT) - “My team is my family. My fiance, her daughter, and our son. Being committed to our team’s success means we will overcome current obstacles and impediments, fulfill our obligations, and move into a happier, healthier life together. Keeping that goal in mind is what helps me make changes internally, and externally. Setting and maintaining short term and long term goals both individually and as a team is what will ensure success in the long run for the entire team.”

**Roger B.** (OH) - “In our dorm there are several of us facilitators taking part in developing and leading programs that will draw guys out and get involved. At the moment we have more programs up and running than this block has seen in quite some time. It is having a positive impact on several guys.”

I'm in a program where it takes teamwork for us to come together as a group to discuss our life's path so we can learn and grow. We have our ups and downs, good times and bad, but we use teamwork. We unite as a family in order to make this learning process of healing work. If everyone doesn't do their part, it could cost someone to shut down and be detrimental to their recovery.

A. Redd (sc)

**Nick R.** (PA) - “Teamwork involves trust, judgment, zest, forgiveness & many other things. Teamwork is growth; if a team doesn’t grow together, they will surely grow apart. I’ve belonged to “teams” most of my life because I’ve always liked the camaraderie and the unity that comes with team-work. Unfortunately I’ve had the bad judgment to choose the wrong “teams.” Thankfully I’m able to forgive them and myself. Now I have the zest to join a team where I feel we could really work together to better ourselves & our community around us.”



RealTalk



Naomi

PROGRAM FACILITATOR  
COMMUTED LIFER & ACTIVIST

*“Especially on the inside, you really need to have teamwork. So many people play against each other instead of realizing that they are in it together. We should all try to show a little loyalty, to be candid with one another, not trying to backstab and hurt each other.*

*A lot of times family and friends fall off when you’re on the inside – the letters stop, the finances stop coming in, and the visits stop, especially if you’re in it for the long haul. So, it’s good to build a team. It’s good to create a family on the inside.*

*Get to know others and let them get to know you for who you are. Talk to someone about how you’re feeling and listen to how their day is going. Choose the people that you want to team up with and say ‘we can do this together.’*

*Look out for your brother and sister. For example, if you know someone whose funds are not great, perhaps on a commissary day you can buy them a bag of coffee or buy them a bag of sugar to show some kindness. Or, if someone else isn’t feeling too well, get the team to chip in and clean the common room so that person doesn’t have to take it by themselves.*

*I think this is how we should look at things: Know that we’re in this together; we are not walking alone. It would make it so much easier if we would all be team players.”*

**ASK ANYTHING** And if I can’t offer any advice, I’ll ask someone who can!

*\*Please note that while we will maintain a professional level of confidentiality, we are legally required to report any information that involves a serious threat or existence of harm to yourself or others.*

**Q: I have a feared experience in prison and I’m going through hell, but is it possible that I could have new friends in prison?**

**MS. NAOMI:** You know a lot of times, people used to say, “Oh, you don’t have friends in prison.” But you know, sometimes you meet some of the most wonderful people that you can ever meet in a lifetime behind those walls. So yes, it is possible that you can have new friends in prison. And perhaps, that’s what you might need - new friends.

**Q: Will it be better to stick with yourself for awhile and not move too quickly as you reenter into society?**

**MS. NAOMI:** I don’t think that it’s better for you to walk alone once you reenter into society because you’ve been away for quite some time now and things have changed and you’re going to need some help. Just be careful and mindful of those who you ask or get help from. We have to be aware of our surroundings. So it’s not good to walk alone. It’s good to walk with somebody, but like I said, be careful of the ones that you walk with.

**Q: How did you deal with the changes in society from the time you were initially incarcerated? What was the biggest culture shock?**

**MS. NAOMI:** I’m still dealing with changes in society from the 37 years I was incarcerated. I’ve been home for four years now (July 5), and I am still trying to adjust... I went to a neighborhood that I used to live in, and I’m telling you, the neighborhood looked so different. It didn’t even look like the same place that I was raised in. You know, when I went to prison they had phone booths. Now everybody’s talking on the phone - that’s all that people do, even the children. In fact, my great-grandson can use my phone better than I can. I go to him to get assistance, now that’s crazy isn’t it? So of course it’s a big culture shock. I don’t think I’ll ever be able to catch up with the times, but I just take it one day at a time. That’s all..... But don’t worry about what may happen or how things have changed or how you’re going to adjust. You’ll be ok. Wish you the best!



*As mentioned on page 10, Freedom & Lee have transitioned to a new role on the SL team and will no longer be sharing their insights on this page. Thank you, Kurt, for stepping in their place!*



Kurt

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
TOMORROW’S NEIGHBORS  
SL ALUM ‘18-’20

*This month (July 2023) marks three years since I walked out of state prison. I am proud of what I’ve been able to achieve, but recognize that none of it would have happened if I decided to “do it on my own.”*

Reentry is a team sport, and teamwork is vital to successful reentry. Not just upon release, but in the days, months, and even years preparing for reentry.

It is said that “no man is an island” but often, while incarcerated, it can feel like we are. Months can pass without a letter, or a visit, or even someone accepting a phone call. In times like these, we may feel abandoned, alone, and even resentful. When we finally regain our freedom in reentry, we may be tempted to wonder “where is my support team?” Loneliness can lead to resentment, resentment to anger, and anger to poor decisions. This emotional reaction cycle can contribute to recidivism ... if we allow it to.

But my experience shows that too often we are asking the wrong question. Did our family, friends, and loved ones truly leave us? Or did we leave them? If we feel that they’ve failed as teammates, is it possible we failed them, too?

It can be tempting to adopt a victim role, but in reality it was most likely our poor decisions that led to our incarceration - unless we are completely innocent. In most cases, we chose to commit crimes instead of prioritizing our team (family, friends, community). Those choices have consequences that go beyond incarceration, and it is our responsibility to repair and heal those relationships. That is the part we need to play.

I spent many years inside trying to rebuild relationships that my offense and prior bad decisions had destroyed. When those efforts failed, even upon my release, I had to reject my own defensiveness and be patient. I thought my 24 years in prison would somehow result in automatic forgiveness from my family, friends and loved ones - “don’t these people know I’m not the same person anymore?” - but that was not a fair expectation. Because while I was serving time, I came to realize, they were still being impacted by the consequences of my negative decisions.

It hasn’t been easy, but I decided that in order to have a team around me, my job was to be consistent in my character and hope that eventually that would build back the trust of those I needed most. Three years out, I am happy to say that I have been able to repair many of the relationships that I feared were lost. Having this team to support me in my transition has made all the difference.



*Does anything in Kurt’s story resonate with you? If you agree that reentry is a team sport, what do you see as your role on the team in this current moment?*

*On May 1, 2023, Kurt signed the lease to open The Cumberland House, which now provides safe, affordable and supportive housing to returning citizens. Read more about his journey to start “Tomorrow’s Neighbors” on p. 12 of the Nov/Dec 2022 issue.*





The Loop Group at MacDougall CI in South Carolina is held in their character Building Unit (nicknamed "Men Achieving Character" or "MAC" for short). We invited them to share reflections on SL's Community Codes as they relate to the recent character strengths. Here's what some of them had to say:

PREVIOUS: TAKE YOUR PICK! On Judgment (Critical Thinking)

Here in the Character Building Unit (CBU) at MacDougall CI, everyone entering the program signs a Social Contract, in which is spelled out responsibilities to ourselves and the community... Virtually every aspect of the S.L. Community Code and the CBU Social Contract requires judgment, critical thinking, and discernment... which is vital in life. Learning to listen, to be open-minded, address issues and not personalities, and doing so with respect for the dignity of fellow humans. Whether holding one another accountable, engaging in community activities, or simply mentoring others, it involves relating to others and using thoughtful judgment.

Gary Farlow, Jr. LOOP GROUP PEER FACILITATOR

NEW ON TEAMWORK

I live in the CBU with 95 other men, and we are responsible for keeping it running smoothly. From laundry and cleaning to classes and conflict resolution, I can't think of a single job that can be adequately done by a single person. Without teamwork, all of our structure and small luxuries would vanish.

Dustin Reif

Unlike so many prisons where it is essentially everyone for him/herself, here it is an atmosphere of teamwork. Everyone, regardless of job or school, pitches in to daily clean the unit. Elderly and handicapped inmates are assisted. Indigent inmates are provided with needed hygiene items through the unit's M.W.R. (Morale, Welfare & Recreation group) that also holds art shows, talent contests, game nights, coffee socials and other activities that build a spirit of unity. Everyone contributes according to their ability and everyone benefits.

Gary's and Dustin's comments highlight the "responsibility" that comes with being part of a team or any other community. This is the idea behind SL's Community Codes overall. The way we see it, taking responsibility for yourself and others is what makes the best team player.



Farlow 23

SHINING LIGHT COMMUNITY CODES

Self-Care

- Be open, Be curious
• Brush Off the Small Stuff
• Accept Non-Resolution
• Start Simple

Care for Others

- "Speak Life"
• One Mic
• Step Forward/Step Back
• Speak from the "I"
• Debate the Topic, Not the Person
• Listen & Learn Before Offering Advice
• Confidentiality

Do you find it more natural to take care of yourself or others? Which of these Community Codes from SL (or one of your own) is the most important to you as a team member?

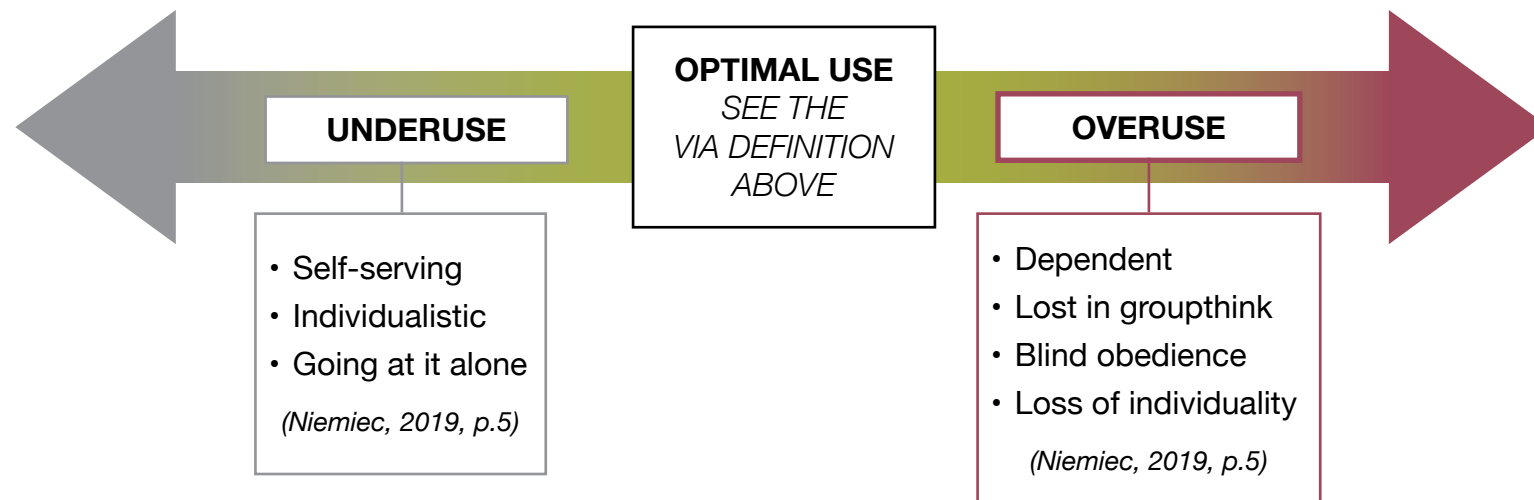
VIA DEFINITION: TEAMWORK

"I am a helpful and contributing group and team member, and feel responsible for helping the team reach its goals."

Teamwork means that in team situations you are committed to contributing to the team's success. The team could be a work group or a sports team, but it could also refer to your family, marriage, or even a group of friends working on a project together. Teamwork extends to being a good citizen of your community or country, and more broadly to a sense of social responsibility for particular groups of people or even all of humanity. In other words, the person high in teamwork applies a certain way of acting in whatever context they consider themselves committed to the good of the group as a whole. Most commonly, however, this strength refers to your being a dedicated, reliable, and contributing member to your small group or team. Teamwork is closely related to 3 other concepts:

- Citizenship: responsibility toward one's community
• Loyalty: unwavering trust for a group
• Patriotism: loyalty toward one's homeland/nation without hostility toward other nations"

(VIA Institute on Character, 2023, para. 1) https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths/teamwork



Travis PROGRAM DEVELOPER

I'm not sure about you, but I can't help but think about the saying "there's no 'I' in team" when I hear the word teamwork. To me, this seems to caution against the underuse of this strength. However, I have never heard a phrase to describe the overuse of teamwork. Have you? You're probably started to think about how there are a variety of "teams" that you find yourself on. As you reflect on this definition of teamwork and the over & underuse of the strength, it may be important to remember that context is important when it comes to considering optimal use. What works to move one group or team toward its goals may look a bit different for another group or team.

WHAT MIGHT BE YOUR PHRASE TO DESCRIBE THE OVERUSE OF TEAMWORK?

What are some different teams that you are a part of right now? What are examples of under and overuse when you consider each of these different teams?







So many people wrote with great examples of teamwork in response to our “Better Together” prompt! For example, **Demacian M.** (SC) wrote about working with a team in his dorm to plan and carry out a successful movie night, allowing everyone who attended to “*enjoy a good movie on a big screen, giving them a few hours to feel more like free individuals.*” **Albert R.** (NC) wrote about a time when the blocks that housed kitchen and warehouse workers at his institution were quarantined at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, and a group of volunteers came together to complete those tasks. “*When one person felt overwhelmed by a task,*” Albert wrote, “*one or two more were there to help pick up the slack.*”

As a writer and former teacher of writing, I especially appreciated the experience of teamwork described by **Shaquille D.** (OH), who wrote about the process of getting his book published. “*The work was hard, me being an amateur writer and everyone else already being experienced at what they do.*” It was great to read that “*after a lot of sessions with [his] publisher,*” Shaquille was able to get his project into the proper shape, and that as he stayed with it, this hard work “*began to become second nature.*”

**Peter S.** from IL’s essay is a powerful account of the teamwork of juvenile lifers and their supporters, working for justice throughout the country, both inside and outside prison. There is joy in the community of justice seekers that Peter has found, and hope every time “*a juvenile lifer receives a reprieve.*”

A Team Fighting For Their Life

Being part of a team that spans the United States is quite unique. There are roughly 2,600 people serving Life Sentences in this country, for a crime committed as a juvenile (16 years or younger). This is my team.

We, the juvenile lifers around the nation, have become a small part of our team as the lawyers, advocates, activists and countless supporters continue to grow. Their time, money, sacrifices and efforts speak volumes about the dedication in the pursuit of our justice. Progress has been made with cases like Miller v. Alabama, and the fight will continue until we all receive fair sentences and/or freedom.

Many of our teammates who are now free have joined the likes of The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (CFSY), the Incarcerated Children's Advocacy Network (ICAN), and Restore Justice Illinois. These brothers & sisters are not only the epitome of no man/woman left behind, but they have become the example of who we are today.

My commitment to our team has been to find every platform available to speak the truth of the juvenile lifer, while shedding a light on the many injustices in their plight. After 37 years I have now spent my life in prison, and I'm not the juvenile who committed the crime. Everytime a juvenile lifer receives a reprieve, there is a feeling of success and a glimmer of hope.

- Peter S.(IL)

*Joyce*



The mission of the Prison Journalism Project is “to help you tell stories about your communities using the tools of journalism: gathering and testing facts and writing with nuance, texture and insight to reach a thoughtful audience.”

They accept stories and artwork on a rolling basis and will send a postcard confirming receipt of your work and a copy of the article if they publish it. Submission categories include: Reported news features, essays, op-eds, narrative poetry, art & political cartoons. We encourage you to contact them for more information if you’re interested!

**PRISON MESSAGING**

- Email for Securus, Corrlinks, GTL & general email – [pjp@prisonjournalismproject.org](mailto:pjp@prisonjournalismproject.org)
- JPay messages will come from James Pane at [forwriters@prisonjournalismproject.org](mailto:forwriters@prisonjournalismproject.org)
- Postal address for Written Submissions – Prison Journalism Project, 2093 Philadelphia Pike #1054, Claymont, DE 19703.

This poetic piece from **Collin D** (IL) paints a striking picture of the teamwork involved in completing a roofing project on a hot day in June, with “*Every one and thing in tune.*”

*“Oh the day was sweet the sun was hot but the clouds in the sky they seemed to be caught...just exactly how they needed to be so the shade kept us cool that was key. The guys on the ground kept us fed with cool spring water to cool our heads. The guys on the roof kept em coming so the hammer and nails kept on drumming. Every one and thing in tune. It was a beautiful day puttin on a roof in June.”*



Artwork by Adam K (AZ)

**NEW PROMPT: “ZEST WISH LIST”**

Those of us who work on The Loop have been delighted to read powerful essays by Ashley O., a woman from South Africa who is incarcerated in Thailand, sent to us by her friend Douglas T. (AR), who is a subscriber. One thing that strikes me in Ashley’s writing is her ability to find zest in her life, even while being incarcerated so far from home. She writes about the joy of hearing familiar music played by one of the prison guards, and about admiring the strength and fortitude of other women held in her institution in the past who took action to bring about needed changes there. These experiences clearly inspired her and brought out the character strength of zest—that is, the ability to approach life with excitement, energy, and joy.

To live my life with zest, I know there are some basic things that I need, like a decent night’s sleep; loving support from family and/or friends; and time to slow down, close my eyes, and just breathe for a few minutes each day. **What helps you find zest in your day-to-day life? Try writing a “zest wish list” in the form of a poem, song, or brief essay.**





PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

# CONSTRUCTIVE DEBATE

Welcome to our Constructive Debate Team! One sign of a healthy community or relationship is the ability to disagree respectfully. We want to provide a chance for you to share your differing ideas in a safe, constructive way and practice critical thinking, hearing different perspectives, and carefully crafting a respectful argument. Life throws us situations where we need these skills all the time, so think of this as your practice ground. Last edition we proposed the statement, **"We should make decisions logically, free from emotion."** Here's what our team of thinkers had to say:

AGREE

IT'S COMPLICATED

DISAGREE

"I agree 100%. I wouldn't be in prison right now if I didn't act off my emotions. We tend to make decisions through our emotions and some people don't realize it at times that most of their decisions are from their feelings of emotions which causes the negative behaviors and the bad judgments of their actions."

- Shannon M. (OH)

"I disagree. I believe that although logic is great for simplistic decision making, we have to use empathy in more complex ones."

- Angelo A. (AZ)

*I agree, because if you allow your emotions to make a decision for you, either good or bad, then you're making that decision based on feelings, and it may not be true. By doing this you can hurt or upset someone, and it can become worse in the long run. So just make all your decisions logically, and truthfully to avoid any problems...*

- Jason "K-Town" M. / N.C.

## "WE SHOULD MAKE DECISIONS LOGICALLY, FREE FROM EMOTION."

"That is false, I feel that we as humans need to feel when we make our decisions, it's what separates us from machines! So I disagree because we were blessed with so much, why hold back? Even Spock made wrong decisions thinking logically."

- Shaquille D. (OH)

"Let me tell you something someone told me during my incarceration. 'Emotions will only last you a split second, how you act on those will last you a lifetime'."

- Douglas H. (OH)

*Emotions are one of the gifts bestowed upon humans. Our capacity to not only feel but express our emotions is unique to humans. While logic has much to commend it, logic without feelings can be clinical, cold, and even cruel. So, it's complicated. But the key is to temper logic with compassion.*

- Gary F. (SC)

"I don't like anything that is 100% free of emotions. Being simply logical sometimes causes us to see things in black and white and I've lived my life in the gray area, so I fight

for those who are perpetually in the Gray. A perfect example for me is when you need to go somewhere. Your GPS will tell you the most logical route but your emotions will try to take you on the scenic route. For someone who fights daily with depression, I need the scenic route. For someone who is on a time restraint they may need the most logical route."

- Nate H. (NC)

*(please note: some answers have been abridged for space)*

"I believe that since God created me as an emotional being a lot of my decisions will be emotionally based. But sometimes my emotions have led me to make destructive decisions that have harmed others, myself, and my family. I'm reminded of this every day I wake up in prison. The goal for me is learning how to channel my emotions in a positive way that leads towards making logical and rational decisions that elevate my life and the lives of others."

- Johnny B. (NC)

"I disagree. I think it would be great to make decisions free from emotions, but emotions can bring passion and commitment to a decision. It is harnessing the emotions to not cloud the decision and create a negative situation from it. Emotions are not negative, it's being aware of our own emotions that is important."

- Christopher N. (AZ)

"Yes, if we make logical decisions and think about things first it could prevent a world of chaos and heartache. If you make decisions based off emotions it could end up being something you can't change. Emotions can be very confusing especially with life changing decisions."

- Ashley V. (NC)

Intelligence and how empathy usually requires more than mere logic to have compassion. I still don't understand those who lead with emotional responses, but I can now ask them questions to better help them get some resolution or at least know that someone is listening. :-)"

- G.Allen (OH)

"If people were to make decisions based strictly on logic, would there still be any real fun with wild abandon? Having balance between logical and emotional choices is what will ensure a stable, yet joyful and fun life."

- Michael M. (MT)

*Yes - We should make decisions logically. However that is easier said than done humans are emotional that's what makes us love one another. So try to think logically, & recognize what emotion you're feeling then go from there. 😊*

- Danielle A (IL)

For the next issue, do you agree or disagree about the following statement:



## "HOPE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN GIVE A PERSON"

Send us a few sentences & keep our Community Codes in mind, especially:

- Speak life
- Share ideas, not ID's
- Speak from the "I"



Let's face it - we are social beings. Connecting with others who are on a similar journey can bring about a deeper sense of friendship and belonging, even a greater feeling of purpose and meaning. Meditating in a shared space with others and appropriately talking about the experience may also help to enhance communication, bringing clarity to the expression of thoughts. It can also increase kindness and compassion, even a sense of togetherness and teamwork.

For centuries, spiritual and religious groups have valued the discipline of collective meditation. Collin D (IL) sees the value in it as well:

"I talked to some of the guys here about meditation. I've been meditating for some years but have been slacking lately. They were amazingly eager and had been contemplating it themselves. So tomorrow we are all going to bring our tablets to the "Rec Room" and we are going to participate in a group meditation event. Really looking forward to it."

This concept may be new to you- Group or Team Meditation - but in the spirit of Teamwork, we encourage you to consider this way of connecting with others on a deeper level. You may want to start with one or two others that you trust most, or perhaps you're part of a group that would be open to trying this together.

Below is a 7-minute group meditation of gratitude. (Gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. It helps people feel more positive emotions, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.) We suggest you choose one person to read the following prompts aloud, leaving 30-60 seconds for each step:

1. Sit comfortably and allow yourself to relax, settling into stillness. Feel free to close your eyes or find a neutral spot to fix your gaze, away from others.
2. Inhale & exhale steadily - deeply and slowly - observing each breath.
3. Notice your current state of mind. Try to release any physical tension or negative feelings.
4. Now try to consider the areas in your life you are grateful for. For example,
  - Past experiences or new opportunities
  - Your mind and intellect, abilities and talents
  - People in your life - friends/family or "teammates," peers and mentors
5. Choose one thing or person you feel most grateful for in this moment
6. Allow gratitude to flood your entire mind and body, breathing deeply
7. As you are ready, slowly bring your awareness back into this shared space

To go a step further, you may want to take a few minutes to share something from your meditation experience with each other. And over the next 24 hours, perhaps consider how you might express the appreciation that came to mind.

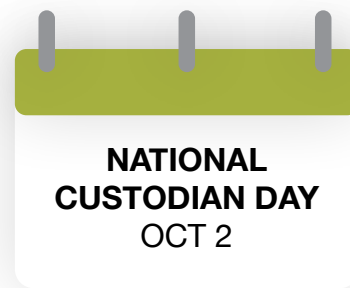
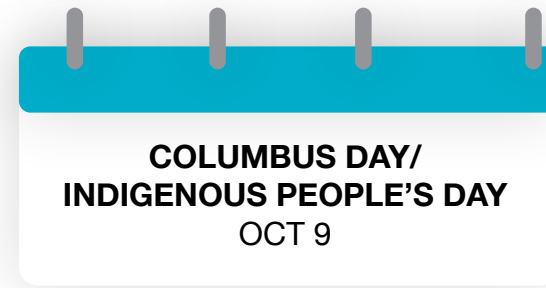
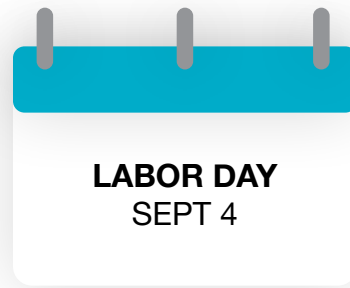


PROGRAM FACILITATOR

- How did you feel about this time of being present and mindful with your team?
- How might this collective experience help to create a further sense of teamwork moving forward?



HOLIDAYS & SPECIAL EVENTS: COMING UP



(Photo: Central Elementary School, Banning Unified School District)

In California last year, Custodian Jack Sanchez was hailed as a hero after saving a student from choking during lunch.

OCTOBER has a lot of "awareness" causes - ADHD, Breast Cancer, Depression/ Mental Health, Domestic Violence, Bullying Prevention, Pregnancy & Infant Loss. Chances are, someone on your "team" is directly impacted by at least one of these.

How can you show your support to them in the month of October (or beyond)? Or if you have been impacted and are suffering alone, who can you reach out to for support?



WHAT WE'RE READING

BIOGRAPHY

THE MASTER PLAN // by: CHRIS WILSON

"Chris received a life sentence and created a Master plan that eventually earned him his freedom. A powerful book about change." Johnny B. / NC

For those with Edovo on tablets, there's a video interview with Chris available from The Compassion Prison Project!

FICTION

MAXWELL'S DEMON // by: STEVEN HALL

"It is an interesting novel about the line between fiction and reality (and how that line can be blurred)." Aaron B. / OH

NONFICTION

INTERESTING STORIES FOR CURIOUS PEOPLE

by: BILL O'NEILL

"Awesome & funny...totally recommend it to everyone to have a good laugh, be amazed or be in total shock in disbelief." Isaac "The Rabbi" S. / CA



# GAMES & ACTIVITIES

"Summertime"  
by K. Daniel O. (MI)



STREAMSTNEMUNOMOVE  
NIRGLLORTROFOREIGN  
OHNELTRESORTDUEENU  
IOEESLLAFRNNGNIVID  
TRHEWEEIRIARPCCAIS  
ASWNTFDRUSSTAACECKR  
CEYICROQUETRSMCASE  
ASKAOASUHASCEPRIRW  
VHNMPNSCNMADSGEREO  
NOKUYCANADASORANTL  
EECSGEIPEWLTROMOAF  
GSREBNLSCSAAQUWTWA  
NCUUGEIWOHSINNETAM  
IHIMNJNTIIKEEDDIDI  
FISHINGTAPADMFMIL  
RLEFKHISTORICALDNI  
UEEBIKINGABUCSGAGE  
SAMAHABSGNIDLUBGS

GLIDE  
HIKING  
HISTORICAL  
HORSESHOES  
ICECREAM  
KITE  
MAINE  
MAPLE  
MONUMENTS  
MOVE  
MUSEUM  
NEWFOUNDLAND  
OAKS  
OCEAN  
PRAIRIE  
REEL  
RESORT  
RIVER  
ROAD  
ROSES

WORD LIST

ALASKA	CRUISE
ASIA	DAYS
BADMITTON	DESERT
BAHAMAS	DIVING
BEACHES	DUNE
BIKING	FALLS
BOATING	FAMILIES
BUILDINGS	FIJI
CAIRN	FISHING
CANADA	FLAG
CANOE	FLEA
CAMPGROUND	FLOWERS
CARS	FOREIGN
CASCADES	FORT
CAVE	FRANCE
CHILE	GAMES
CROQUET	GARDEN
RUNNING	SURFING
SAILING	TAHITI
SAND	TANNING
SCUBA	TENNIS
SHELLS	TONGA
SHIP	TROLL
SHOW	VACATIONS
SIERRAS	WADE
SQUINT	WADING
STARS	WATERSKIING
STREAMS	WEST
	WOODS
	YUKON

# JUST FOR FUN

## RECIPES

"Being in segregation my food is VERY limited so when I want something sweet I take a pack of hot chocolate add just a couple drops of water stir it up until its mixed and spreadable put it on a flour tortilla and ta-da add a pack of peanut butter for a jail 'Reese's Cup.'"  
- Stephanie P. (NC)

### Recipe time! 'JAIL HOUSE TAMALES'

INGREDIENTS:  
1. Two bags of your favorite Chips. (I love using Chicken Spicy Blue Cheese - it gives two flavors at the same time - chicken and spicy blue Cheese)  
2. A 2-pack of your favorite Ramen Noodles. (I used Cajun Chicken, to fully engulf the chicken flavor)

DIRECTIONS:  
Crush the bags of chips into powder like, and combine both in one bag. Then crush the ramen middle into powder like little pieces. And combine them into the bags of chips. Add enough water to just cover the noodles - do not over do it. Then with a spoon we mix everything nicely, well combined, then we tightly close the bag of chips and tightly press forming a cylinder. Let it sit for a few minutes (5 or 10), and gently take it out of the bag, and you will have a delicious spicy chicken blue cheese tamales. Enjoy!  
- Isaac "The Ramen Noodles Scientist" (CA)

## ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE'S PUZZLES

Congrats to Bruce W (IL) for sending his answers for #2 & #4 - Correct!

- ANSWER ONE:** Startling! See below for the breakdown.
- Get rid of the L, and you get: STARTING
  - Get rid of one T, and you get: STARING
  - Get rid of the A, and you gets: STRING
  - Get rid of the R, and you get: STING
  - Get rid of the other T, and you get: SING
  - Get rid of the G, and you get: SIN
  - Get rid of the S, and you get: IN
  - Get rid of the N, and you get: I

**ANSWER TWO:** First, the farmer takes the goat across. The farmer returns alone and then takes the wolf across, but returns with the goat. Then the farmer takes the cabbage across, leaving it with the wolf and returning alone to get the goat.

**ANSWER THREE:** 40 socks. If he takes out 38 socks (adding the two biggest amounts, 21 and 17), although it is very unlikely, it is possible they could all be blue and red. To make 100 percent certain that he also has a pair of black socks he must take out a further two socks.

**ANSWER FOUR:** We know Joyce isn't telling the truth because if she was, there would be two knights; so Joyce could be either the liar or the spy. Angelica also can't be the knight, because then her statement would be a lie. So that must mean Freedom is the knight. Joyce, therefore, must be the spy, since the spy sometimes tells the truth; leaving Angelica as the liar.

**ANSWER FIVE:** Kelly and Lee cross first in two minutes, and Kelly crosses back alone with the torch in one minute. Then the two slowest people, Nina and Travis, cross in eight minutes. Lee returns in two minutes, and Kelly and Lee return in two minutes. They just made it in 15 minutes exactly.



"Magic was, to me, one of the greatest players that you wanted to play with because of his skillset, along with [Steve] Nash, because they got you involved. Jordan came in and the whole narrative changed that you have to be this killer, you have to do it yourself—six-time Defensive Player of the Year, you have to check everyone. When LeBron came in passing...people questioned his heart and soul. What I love about LeBron is that he didn't change his personality, and if kids emulate him they'll have to be a team player. Period. So I put him as probably—I don't like saying this over Magic—but the greatest team player of all time. By far."  
- Chris Webber / Former NBA Player & Current NBA Analyst - (Sports Illustrated - SI WIRE - si.com)

## MS. NAOMI'S CORNY CORNER

WE KNOW YOU CAN'T HELP YOURSELVES

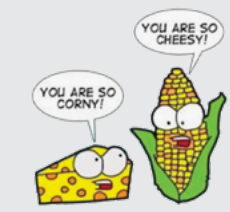
What would happen if worms took over the world?  
**Global worming** - Sarah L. (OH)

What kind of car does Luke Skywalker drive?  
**A Toy-yoda** - T.J. R. (OH)

Why do some fish live in salt water?  
**'Cause pepper water makes them sneeze too much**  
- Terese-Marie M. (AR)

Why didn't the ghost go to the dance?  
**Because he had no body to go with!**  
- Beverly S. (PA)

Want to hear a pizza joke?  
**Nevermind, it's too cheesy.**  
- Anonymous (OH)





**SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE  
62 CONTRIBUTORS:**

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Sommer Bernard (PA) - 2nd  
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Freedom & Lee Horton

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Terese-Marie M.

[AZ] Adam K., Angelo A.,  
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[CA] Isaac S.

[FL] Robert H.

[IL] Bruce W., Danielle A.

[MI] Daniel M., Timothy B.

[MT] Michael M.

[NC] Albert R., Ashley V., Drew,  
Jason M., Johnny B., Nate H.,  
Stephanie P.

[ND] Hunter H., Jake L.

[NJ] Wayne G.

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Richard H., Roger B., Sarah L.,  
Shannon M., Shaquille D., T.J. R.

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Eugene B., Fay S., Juan R., Kelsha B.,  
Larry S., Loni K., Mya M., Nadera B.,  
Nick R., Paul B., Ronald W., Wendy D.

[SC] A. Redd, Gary F., Demacian M.

[TX] Enoch T.

[WY] T. K.

1 Anonymous from PA

*Thank you to everyone else who submitted work we weren't able to include. Please keep writing in!  
We are encouraged and inspired by all of the letters, artwork and other expressions that come our  
way, and we hope that you find something meaningful in the process, too!*

**NEXT ISSUE'S THEME  
ZEST**

**SEND US YOUR BEST COVER ART!**

UPCOMING THEMES: ZEST & HOPE



As summer turns to fall, the temperatures cool and leaves begin to change (depending on where you live!), baseball season winds down and football season ramps up, we might start to realize 2/3 of the year is already behind us. For some, the close of the year is invigorating and ripe with anticipation. For others, this new season may bring a sense of sadness, anxiety or dread. ***How can the strength of Zest - approaching life with excitement and energy - help you, and those around you, end the year on a positive note?***

 **SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT ISSUE DUE BY OCTOBER 1** 

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***"Every time I'm feeling down or missing friends and family, there is a new copy of The Loop to pick me up!"***

***A friend handed me a copy and before I got to the end, I was hooked!"***

***- Ronald W. (PA) -***