

Messages from the Mound



In 2007, I began my prison ministry where I facilitated my Relationship First Aid spiritual based personal development classes at Mound Correctional Facility in Detroit. After Mound closed in 2012, I continued to communicate with the inmates through newsletters, birthday cards and attending/speaking at events at various facilities. It is suspected that the facility got its name because of the many ancient mounds that were found all over Detroit, and I believe the most concentrated and/largest ones were along what is now known as Mound Rd.

"Messages from the Mound" is named after the newsletters that I send out to the inmates since that is where we all initially met. Because the classes that I was teaching them focused on spiritual elevation allowing the negativity within them to die, thus ultimately elevating their consciousness, I thought it an appropriate name because a "mound" is defined as: an "elevation" formed of earth overlying ruins, a grave etc., a heap or raised mass. The following articles are from men that are currently incarcerated or released and this serves as an opportunity for the voiceless to have a voice. If you have a loved one that is currently incarcerated and would like for me to send them newsletters, please forward their contact information with a MDOC number to: Relationshipfirstaid@yahoo.com or contact me at: Relationship First Aid, Attn: Ma'at Seba, 15224 W. 7 Mile Rd., Detroit, MI. 48235.

Elevate and Evolve

By Michael Chapple



Many people desire to have success or to be successful at some point in their lives. The meaning of Success varies from person to person and in order for one to obtain this forever changing idea of reality we must first challenge and be sincere with the things that we are Thinking and Feeling.

Dr. William Marsten a prominent psychologist did a two year study where he asked 3000 individuals the following: What have you to live for? What Dr. Marsten found was absolutely shocking. He discovered that 94 percent of those interviewed had no definite purpose. These were men and women who were simply enduring the present while they waited for the future. They waited for something to happen, they waited for tomorrow, waited for the next year, waited for their children to grow up and leave home, waited for someone to die. 94 percent of the overwhelming

majority were men and women who were simply enduring the present, while they waited for more favorable circumstances. Your reality is predicated upon the things that you are Thinking and Feeling and until one Elevates their mind with more meaningful things to learn, experience, share etc. if not then you too will be waiting for.....

Elevating your mind means to go within that private chamber of your imagination and envision the YOU whom you desire to be. Elevating your mind means to pay the debt that you owe to yourself to have a life of enrichment and joy. Elevating your mind means to give yourself the time, effort, patience, and energy to produce a positive and healthy environment that you deserve. When you devote the time to YOU, one then becomes that which he/she gives the time to.

Like the caterpillar that is wrapped in its cocoon (Thoughts) of Purpose to become more. If you trust yourself and your capabilities you will Evolve into the greatest expression of yourself. Allow your next chapter in life to be your best chapter. Peace!

Mass Incarceration: The good, The bad, The ugly

By Raymond L. Carr Jr.



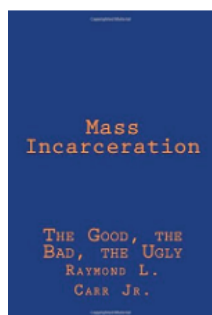
Mass Incarceration, is a big problem in America. Some say it is the new Jim Crow, other say we have gone from slavery to Mass Incarceration. I agree with both statements with proven statistics that show Black people are six times more likely to be sentenced to prison for the same crime as a white person.

One out of three Blacks can expect to spend time in prison during his/her lifespan. I, Raymond L. Carr Jr. give my opinion on what Mass Incarceration means to me. From my viewpoint, while currently serving

twenty-seven consecutive years behind bars within the Michigan Department of Corrections prison system.

I give you The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly. Not to just point out the neglect and abuse of the prison system, but hopefully to spark and create awareness and eventually Reform. Seeking rehabilitation for those men and women who do find themselves becoming a part of the prison system, hoping they once and for all, get the treatment they rightfully deserve.

Raymond L. Carr is an author and blogger. He is the author of "Mass Incarceration; The Good, The Bad, The Ugly" that is available at amazon.com. Read his blog at raymondwrites.blogspot.com



We all come from Mound

(dedicated to Ma'at Seba)

By Frederick McKinney El - 237921



A certified urban Queen
Dressed in a colorful turban theme
One of only a few to, mine diamonds and gold from,
the blasphemous bowels
of a penitentiary salvage yard
Divinity directed her to the misguided and neglected,
Street thugs that felt comfortable enough to
Bear our stark naked selves
In front of her unembarrassed eyes
Because what we got or what we did, ain't like you never seen before
Her remedies to life's questions are the universal penicillin for our contagious ways of thinking
Hypodermic needles of undiluted TRUTH was a vaccination shot to the buttocks
Immunization, inoculation of wisdom added strength to our vulnerable system
Making us less susceptible to the carriers of hatred, slander, lewdness and everything that harms a
creation of God manifested in the flesh
Love transformed tears into living testaments of triumph over tragedy
Discovered treasures in the tattered frays of raggedy
Bodies might be covered in tats, but our thinking is dogmatic
Society's outsiders
Neo-Freedom fighters
Modern day Pharaohs in prison clothes
Despite the way we dress, she loves us no less
Understanding only God can judge us
Almost impossible to budge us
Since life turned so many of us into the pinnacle of cynical
You witnessed the phenomenal death of a prison
The formation of a dozen or more planets called brothers,
nephews, uncles, fathers both grand and great
Constructed from the left over pieces of undiscovered emotions, premature ideas,
along with overripe expectations
All held together by life's universal super glue
Hope and Faith
We are scattered to the four corners of never heard of prison yards
Searching for men with kindred intentions
Contained in souls that resemble what God intended us to look like
No matter where we were born,
WE ALL COME FROM MOUND

Never Forget

By Al Taj Mohammad Ali El



To say that you want change means that you must never forget! We must never forget the sacrifices that were made by those who came before us; also, we must not forget the sacrifices of those who walk with us.

One of the most powerful things one can do is remember. Remember what it took for you to be here, the struggle it took for your love ones to raise you and groom you. Remember those ancestors who gave their lives in order for change to take place. Remember those great warriors here, in Haiti, and back home (Mama-Land) that fought so that we now could be in a better position in the world, never forget.

In the many jails and prisons around this country sit a very disproportionate number of our people (original men and women), we must not forget them. I say that because they are the change that we seek. We must assist them in their transformation the best we can from this side, yes, many have made mistakes, yes. Many have used poor judgment, yes; many have just lost what little mind they may have had. It is always very easy to point the finger and say things from some lofty, artificial point of reference yet know many of our people have not been given the proper information, opportunities, skills, etc. to be effective and reach their high-

est potential, never forget that. I would be remiss if I failed to mention the mental health component of being held in these jails and prisons. Being incarcerated is a very horrible experience indeed; you are faced with extreme challenges every single day, the only thing I would compare it to is living in a war zone day in and day out. Living under such circumstances every single day is mentally trying and exhausting. Many people that are incarcerated have mental issues that existed before their incarceration and so being held captive only amplifies such conditions, while others develop mental issues while being held captive. Many of us simply transfer from one war zone (these streets) to another (these jails/prisons) and never have a chance to live a peaceful life.

We must see ourselves as family, and as family we must be there for one another, systems must be put in place to address these very serious issues. A system can be something as simple as a small group of people determined to assist returning citizens by simply listening to them and steering them to need resources. Sometime just showing that you care can turn a person's whole life around. While being held captive the highlight of my day was the time where mail would be passed out to everyone, mail represented that someone, somewhere was thinking of you, those letters gave hope to me and many others and got me thru some hard times. Never forget to provide that hope to someone, the word is so very powerful. Never Forget!

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