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WordsUncaged Submission

### Imagine a world without Prisons: Imagination vs. Objective Construction

I can imagine my life without prison. I often imagine the life I could have lived had I not made the poor decisions that put me on the path to prison—this is personal responsibility.

I can imagine my family's life without prison. This would mean all the harm, shame, and disappointment I caused my family by committing terrible crimes against my fellow humans never happened—this is regret and remorse.

Imagine a world without prisons! Imagine alternatives to prison! If we are to breathe life into this progressive vision, we must be able to not only imagine but also work toward the construction of a society that does not need prisons.

Working toward this new society means creating a world that allows the false social constructs of race, gender, and class to be deconstructed and reconstructed around the egalitarian concept of equality for all human beings, even those who have strayed from the path. This means resolving class conflict (powerful vs. powerless, rich vs. poor, etc.). This means creating a world that allows and encourages little girls to think, dream, and achieve as boldly as little boys and have those dreams, thoughts, and achievements facilitated and encouraged at every level! This bold new world is one that does not equate strength with aggression and dominance—a world that does not define success by material acquisition. This means prioritizing communication and pro-social expressions of conflict resolution over violence.

As I imagine, I ask, “Is there a path to this new reality?” Yes, there is a path and it begins with new eyes and a new vision. This means severing the cords that have bound us to the old politics and practices of “Me and I.” As we correct the generational defects of collective character that have brought us to a place that makes prison necessary we acknowledge that criminality is not born, it is built! We must tackle and identify the conditions and influences that ultimately create the need for prisons.

As a society, we must commit ourselves to deconstructing the edifice that builds human beings who hurt and victimize their fellow citizens, thereby *making prisons necessary*. Let us recommit ourselves to the objective construction of a society that builds healthy and whole human beings that make prisons unnecessary. Let us begin with the reconstruction of “self.” Let us identify our negative traits and character defects, thus beginning the internal struggle of change.

If we sincerely endeavor to change our society, it will require a transformation from what we were to what we wish to be (vision). A new society will require new men/new women. Only then can we move beyond our imagination of a world without prison, and into the reality of the objective construction of that world.