

MARYLAND CURE

Maryland CURE
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How to Survive & Develop Yourself Within Prison

Written By: John E. Barba

After some 33-years of incarceration and winning my freedom through the court, I suppose that I have developed a few methods of survival and self-improvement while in the Maryland prison system.

I would like to first point out that:

*Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery.
Today is a gift. That is why it is called present!*

In order to begin to survive, one must decide to *live in the present* and realize that what you did to arrive where you're at now, is ancient history; you can't have one foot in the past and expect to be able to step forward unencumbered. Unless, of course, you want to set yourself up and fail. I figure that's not you, especially if you've read this far.

It's about what you want to do now. Sure, you want to be free, back home, and seeing those familiar faces from yesteryear. Well, isn't that what got you to take the path that led you into this gated community in the first place?

You notice that I said *what got you to take the path...* The other person did not bring you to prison! You did it all by your self, your own free will, your choices led you here!

Ok, now that you realize that you were your own worst enemy, now what are you going to do? The same things over again or blaze a new path; new paths are typically difficult, up hill, requiring patience and drive to succeed. Can you manage *a new path* all by yourself?

This was a somewhat difficult scenario for me to grasp. First, I had to leave the *other guy* outside; the one that let me choose all the wrong paths in life. You know him as my image. My image caused me to lose 33-years, 41-days of my life; how long you will lose, is really up to you.

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This is a picture of John Barba on 12-17-2012, leaving the courthouse a free man after 33+ years of incarceration.



In order to survive *inside the walls* one must want to improve all aspects of one's lifestyle. I suggest that you seriously consider a *higher power*. You may call him God, Allah, Jehovah, or Jesus. You must recognize him and embrace Him with all humility, simply because of the following:

***You are not driving the bus.
God is driving the bus,
and we are riding in the back seat!***

Having trouble with this mental picture? Get over it; this is the reality of existence! You must have a partner and recognize that partner to survive in life, whether inside or out. Sure, you can do it on your own, look where it got you the last time; yeah, surrounded by some 2,000 (+/-) other geniuses! Well, misery does love company.

Are you ready to be happy again? In order to survive this experience within the walls you must *love God as you would yourself*. I am not speaking about loving your *image*; we already set that problem aside [haven't we?!?].

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Lea's Corner

Advocacy Efforts on your behalf

Maryland Cure President Lea Green has been VERY active over the past few months! Here are just a few of the things she has been involved with.

- Lea was there at the Maryland General Assembly when they voted to end Maryland's 375 year history of capital punishment – see article to the right.
- Maryland Cure attended the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland (LBCM) in February. We support the NEW LBCM LAW & JUSTICE COMMITTEE! Topics included Police use of force, police misconduct & civilian review board, transition support including preventing recidivism, access to housing and health care and protecting employment opportunities. Delegate Braveboy & Delegate Jill Carter sponsored HB 1095 and HB 1281. These bills address policies and procedures to address disciplinary actions for law enforcement officers and entrance level and annual training requirements for law enforcement officers.
<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frm1st.aspx?tab=home>
- In February, Lea testified in support of SB 0778, Inmate Welfare Fund, requesting an audit of the profits derived from telephone commissions. This bill was sponsored by Senator Pugh and Delegate Carter.
- Our hope in creating this newsletter is to keep everyone informed of our work in reforming the criminal justice system as well as other changes. Please let us know if you have any suggestions for our newsletter or any other ideas or suggestions.

Maryland CURE's Major 2013 Goals

- ❖ work to establish open communication with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
- ❖ zero in on family visitation opportunities for inmates

Open Letter to the Media

Maryland CURE Supports Death Penalty Repeal

Maryland CURE, a strong supporter of repeal of the death penalty in Maryland, congratulates Maryland CASE, Amnesty International, Equal Justice USA, National Coalition Against the Death Penalty, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and other organizations and advocates for their work to bring about the repeal of the death penalty in Maryland. These advocates have worked tirelessly to ensure that Maryland is among the growing momentum to turn away from the use of the death penalty in our country.

As president of Maryland Cure, I especially thank the murder victims' family members for their support and their continuous struggle to see this through.

Thanks to the legislators for listening to the voices of your constituents. I see that this victory will ensure that there will no longer be a risk in Maryland of an innocent person being convicted and sentenced to death.

Signed by

Lea Green, Maryland CURE President

Maryland's Kirk Bloodworth, the first death row inmate in the nation to be exonerated by DNA evidence, celebrated Friday's historic vote by embracing NAACP President Ben Jealous in the House gallery. MD CURE President Lea Green is behind them.



“Watching the Tally Board at the State House in Annapolis was like watching the SUPERBOWL!” – MD CURE President Lea Green

Continued – How to Survive & Develop Yourself in Prison

I'm speaking about the real you: the one that recognizes his/her hurt deep inside their own heart and the reality that to ask for help is not a weakness; the one that would help others without asking for any compensation; the one that wants to save him or her before it's too late.

My motto was then and still is now:

What If – Adapt and Overcome!

Only you can decide to change. Only you can decide to be a survivor. Only you can decide to embrace a higher power; that *higher power* can and will guide you through the mine field of prison life! All you *must do* is simply ask! Yes, that's it; just be humble and ask God for help.

Alright, don't get all uptight and righteous on me now; you've read this far, and besides, I know that the dynamic evolutionary process of *adaptation* works, *it worked for me inside, and continues to work for me now!* You can call it what you want, I call it success and enjoy everything God grants me each day! I love living in a Technicolor world, versus the grey tones of a prison existence. Adapt and accept God, it's your own choice. I made mine and it is continuing to work!

Most of us have a *built-in* fear of the unknown; we can't *see* God, we can't seem to *taste or even feel* Him, but make no mistake; He is right here, around us each and every day. I therefore challenge you to accept what you cannot see, feel, or touch and remember this:

Do not fear the winds of adversity.

A kite rises against the wind, rather than with it.

I ran across the following and I feel that each and every one of us can greatly benefit from this axiom:

Are you carrying around extra weight?

A psychologist walked around a room while teaching stress management to an audience. As she raised a glass of water, everyone expected they'd be asked the "half empty or half full" question. Instead, with a smile on her face, she inquired: "*How heavy is this glass of water?*"

The answers called out ranged from 8 ounces to 20 ounces.

She replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, it's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my arm. If I hold it for a day, my arm will feel numb and paralyzed. In each case, the weight of the glass doesn't change, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

She continued, "The stresses and worries in life are like that glass of water. Think about them for a while and nothing happens. Think about them a bit longer and they begin to hurt. And if you think about them all day long, you will feel paralyzed – incapable of doing anything."

It's important to remember to let go of your stresses. As early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down. Don't carry them through the evening and into the night. Remember to put the glass down! To carry around the stress of [incarcerated] life by oneself, is a sure fired way to fail; it is too heavy to carry around and be successful in the *other* goals you need to survive, make release, and be successful in the community.

You already possess the *survival and development techniques*. You only need to walk your way through the mine field of prison life, while obtaining the credentials for success on the outside both without undue stress. In order to allow a smooth transition, all one must do is make a humble application with God to unlock those techniques. You know those skill sets that you need: good vocational education skills, good interview readiness skills, and a good adjustment *while inside*. These things are nothing new to you, perhaps what is new is the Supreme Being application or simply put, acknowledging and asking God for help. If you take the time to accomplish this one rewarding task, the entire world will open up to you in leaps and bounds!

I wish you well on your journey. If you acknowledge God and ask Him for help, you *will* be amazed at the doors that *will open* for you as if by magic. Of course there is no magic in God; He was, is, and always be there for each and everyone of us; *if we only ask Him to be in our lives*

Shalom!

More Thoughts to Reflect on

I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody. -- Bill Cosby

I've come to embrace the notion that I haven't done enough in my life. I've come to confirm that one's title, even a title like President of the United States, says very little about how well one's life has been led. No matter how much you've done or how successful you've been, there's always more to do, always more to learn, and always more to achieve.

-- Barack Obama

Maryland CURE is a Chapter of CURE, a national grass-roots organization dedicated to reducing crime through reform of the criminal justice system.



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New Inmate Telephone Services Contract

Great news! Secretary Gary D. Maynard has informed us that the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services awarded a new inmate telephone services contract to GTL Corporation on December 19, 2012. In the solicitation, they emphasized that a major contributing factor to the award of the contract would be lowering of rates to inmates/inmate families.

Under the new contract, Secretary Maynard anticipates an overall rate reduction of 69.2%!

Next Maryland CURE Meeting
April 27, 2013, Central Branch Library
10375 Little Patuxent Pkwy
Second Floor Room
Columbia, MD
10:30 to 12:30 p.m.

Check website for directions
www.marylandcure.webs.com

Dues for Membership

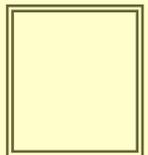
- Prisoners \$2 (or 4 stamps)
- Individual \$10
- Family \$15
- Life \$100

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A 13-year campaign to cut the cost of prison phone calls has finally reached a political dial tone, as inmates and their families have found allies in high places, McClatchy Newspapers report. With prisoners paying as much as \$17 for a 15-minute long-distance call, the Federal Communications Commission has raised the possibility of new regulations. These could range from caps on interstate rates to the elimination of per-call charges. "It's a justice issue, it's a civil liberties issues, it's an issue of trying to keep families as intact as possible," FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn said in an interview. "This is a situation that cries out for attention." Encourage the FCC to take action!

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