

Antioch Jail for Women: Core Health and Heart Forgiveness

14 Month Progress Report

I received a plaque from the Sheriff's office honoring me for my volunteer service with the "Women of Excellence" at the Antioch Jail, Nashville, Tennessee. I will recount all I can about my work with women in jail. Thank you for being in my Core Health transformed life.

I started a book drive for inmates during February. My goal: collecting 500 books for the library. Before February *started* I already had 500 books! Now we have upped the count to 5,000 books for the library. When I delivered the first 500, it didn't even make a dent in the empty shelves -- so I am going to keep asking until I see piles of books waiting to be placed on shelves too full to hold them. The Sheriff initiated 4 new jobs for inmates in the library. Six women meet us every Friday to mark and ready the books to go on the shelves. It is so exciting to be part of creating changes in the lives of people with a lot of time on their hands.

The book drive was a God thing, just as Core Health is a God thing. When you turn it over to a Higher Power things get done in a God sort of 'BIG' way. This book drive took on a life of its own, and Core Health is the catalyst. Core Health has taken on a life of it's own in a 'BIG' God way with the "Women of Excellence" at the jail. I started working with them on Friday afternoons in January 2006. We have been through three Heart Forgiveness series and two Core Health series. We have held three graduations with the "Women of Excellence". We now go through the complete Heart Forgiveness *and* Core Health before they graduate.

The first graduation was for Heart Forgiveness only, and we had six graduates. These six became my assistants as the next class got a lot bigger with over twenty women attending. Word got out about Heart Forgiveness and how it helped them with their lives. They can also feel my love for them.

I have witnessed changes in their faces as we meet week after week. Seeing the light return to their eyes and seeing it reflect back to me -- when before they were an empty pool of anger -- lets me know Heart Forgiveness is taking place. This is such a blessing to witness shifts after weeks of working with them to release their hidden angers, and when you see them really use the meditation time to relax and connect to the Core of their Being.

Working with inmates in jail is different from prison. In jail they are waiting to be released in 3-6 months or waiting to be sentenced and sent to prison. I have a large turn over of women coming and going in class. We start with 20 and wind up with 12 - 14 at graduation. I give them certificates of completion as they finish certain levels. This way they have something to show to the judge that could reduce their jail time if the judge feels they have changed behavior patterns. Other directors are giving graduation certificates also.

Hillary, an inmate in my classes since I started, told me she was leading the meditation and using DTQ testing in other classes! She is very proud of herself and I am delighted with her. This lady lacked confidence in her self to the extent of no visible self-worth and the epitome of shyness. She was almost impossible to test because her arm was so spongy. Now she is testing others and leading a meditation. WOW! That is a miracle.

After Hillary's first graduation from Core Health series, she was made one of six assistants to help me weekly in class. Two of the original assistants remain, due to releases and transfers.

Rosy is another Woman of Excellence that sticks out in my mind. She had a lot of gang energies around her and wanted to dominate others with just a glance. She was an impressive size being close to six feet. Although I never feared her, I felt she was a person that liked to be in control. After three months in Core Health she is a changed woman. Laughing at her self and learning about her life and how she has choices. I could always count on Rosy to have everybody quite down and pay attention. Rosy improved so much that she had an early release. I am eager to hear about her soon as she continues her life on the outside.

The last time I asked about Core Health Graduates, I was told **none have returned to jail**. I saw in the faces of these women how they were determined to change. They knew they had choices and they were responsible for those choices. I saw unresponsive angry women soften into beautiful examples of Love.

Tonya comes to mind. Her heart was quite hard from all that had happened in her life. Over the months that she came to class she became my best student. At her second Graduation (she was also an assistant), I was shocked as she stepped forward to receive her certificate. She glowed like a light bulb and looked like a movie star. I couldn't believe my eyes! The transformation had occurred – she was absolutely beautiful. She is now in a more dedicated section at the jail that guarantees early release. I am so proud of her! You could tell she got it; she made the choice to change.

Learning you have a Perfect Moment to call on when life gets tough changes perceptions. This is a worthy tool for everyone's toolbox, especially when you are in jail. I laughed when one woman wanted to know if it would work on a lie detector test. She was serious! I could see the light bulb go on. I told her that was not a good incentive for using it!

To sum it all up: I now know we can make a difference in this world by opening the door of Core Health for everyone, whether they are locked up or free. Some people are just as locked up by their thoughts as the "Women of Excellence" locked in jail. Core Health is the most valuable experience in my whole life . . . and I've been experiencing life for over sixty years! Come out of your self-imposed prisons and into Freedom.

Alexandra

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PS Two students at Vanderbilt University talked to me yesterday about doing a documentary on my work at the jail, and my teaching at Magical Journey. I told them I was an artist too. I forgot to tell them I am a gourmet chef. I will remember to pass that along.

PPS The guys doing the documentary just called. They are coming tomorrow to film!