

## "AMUSEMENT PARK"

I would like to begin with tipping my hat to Mr. Norman Brown. Mr. Brown is the gentleman who composed "Amusement Bondage", which I read in a 1999 newsletter from a private prison in Oklahoma. I will admit, after reading "Amusement Bondage", it lit a fire under me which compelled me to compose this essay.

"Amusement Park" will invoke the spirit, and give birth to an awareness that so many seem to be devoid of. The awareness of self-consciousness. The awareness of a zenith that so proudly shines above us all. The awareness that we can no longer afford to be asleep in this day and age. Yes, this is a must read for all prisoners throughout these great states of America.

I spent a lot of time contemplating how I would write this essay. Before I read "Amusement Bondage", I had my sights set on something similar. I see young and old alike, doing the same things every day. I thought of Michael Jacksons' Neverland ranch, and how I could compare such a site with this prison. It wasn't very complicated at all. I see human souls that won't take advantage of the vast opportunities to better themselves with the academic and vocational tools that are afforded them by the state.

I see mental enslavement. I see all of the games that are played day in and day out: checkers, chess, cards, scrabble, risk, monopoly, jenga, baseball, basketball, soccer, horseshoes, cribbage, and of course, the many more games on t.v. that awaits

them after sunset.

I noticed that the library closes here at the Racine Correctional Institution at 4:00 p.m., except on Mondays. However, the gym stays open seven days a week, all day until 8:30 p.m.. Is this by design? When an inmate spends hours upon hours playing games every day, and they know that there are other things they can do towards betterment of self, I'd have to conclude that if by design, it's by way of subliminal seduction, even though these inmates are being seduced into a state of mind beyond the threshold of conscious perception and awareness. They have been seduced to a point where even the subconscious is unconscious. Now they can't even receive help from that part of their minds that is below the level of conscious perception.

They are surrounded by so much prison paraphernalia so-to-speak, and this paraphernalia has weaved a nasty web around their minds. It's almost like they are mentally intoxicated. This is what I would classify as a sleeping giant.

I watched a guy roll a cart into the unit a couple of weeks ago. The cart was full of new paraphernalia, all sorts of games. The inmates were following the cart like it was Christmas, and daddy had new toys for everyone. I got a headache after watching this charade.

I listen to conversations about this and that. Everybody seems to be looking for that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. I will assure you that all you'll find at the end of the rainbow, will be your attributions, nothing more, nothing

less. There is no more excuses or shirking responsibility. In this "Amusement Park", you have consciously slid into the abyss, knowingly, and willfully. The only thing left is to try to figure out how you can return to a normal state of mind.

If I can reach just a few people with this, then I will have accomplished a milestone. I ask that you reject this smorgasbord of games and gadgets. I ask that you recognize and understand the mere fact that life is not a game. With these games and gadgets around here, it seems like the only thing missing is party hats and balloons.

I see inmates gang up and do what they call a rappers session. I just wonder how many of them can read and write? They think that it's cool to gang up and rap. If you listen to them, you'll hear that they all have the same message. It kind of reminds me of the ole' spiritual negro songs our ancestors use to sing while working on the railroad tracks, or out in the fields.

I see how quickly the inmates are willing to fight each other over something very trivial, but if you ask them if they fought their cases they'd tell you no. Also, I've never seen so many happy prisoners. These inmates are content and comfortable with their situations. Is it because they can play games all day? I hear a lot of them talking about going home. I was always taught that home is where the heart is. When you are content and comfortable in your environment, and when you go home and things get rough for you, you will have no problem returning to the now direction. After all, you're content and

comfortable here, and that is where your heart is. If your heart is evil and wicked above all things, as Jeremiah 17:9 reads, you'll become a wayward within your own home. Evil and wicked hearts create undesirables. Is that what you want for your life?

Well, now that you have a glimpse into what lies ahead for you if you continue on a path of self-destruction, the following should provide you with a beacon of hope.

It took me many years to recognize my potential. It is not an easy process, but you need to reverse the negative conditioning. Just as you conditioned yourself for so long to be caught up in the rapture, you must now reverse this. I will tell you a little story that is very true. I was in an alcohol/drug treatment program in 2001. I had a drug counselor named Mr. Chambers. I use to sit in the front of the class and cling to every word that he said, as if my life depended on it. He taught us a program titled "Self vs. Self". In this program he pointed out four things that needed to be done in order for us to honestly change our lives. The four things are: Surrender, Acceptance, Choice, and Change.

I questioned surrender immediately, and he explained it to me very well. He said, "You must stop fighting yourself." What I am about to share with you had a profound effect on my life, and the direction my life would take from that point on. It is imperative that you take your time and read this well. I can't express enough the dangers of what this "Amusement Park" holds in store for you. I will offer you a viable and conducive alternative.

Now, back to Self vs. Self. Surrendering was a challenge for me because of old habits and bad habits. Anything within you that is not good is bad, and that part of you needs destroying, that part of you needs reconditioning. When you destroy that which needs destroying, it is a part of self that you don't ever want to see again, such as criminal intent. The best part of you will allow you to discard such thoughts, simply by surrendering. Telling yourself you just can't live that way anymore. Telling yourself it's not right to live that way. Always reminding yourself that you destroy others when you live that way.

Some people interpret surrendering with literally laying down, but it's not that at all. I hadn't realized how long I had been fighting myself. I was so wrapped up in being someone other than myself. Not knowing who you are is frightening. What is even more frightening is wasting all those years trying to be someone other than who you are.

A man asked me one day, "If you've been around the world once, and you've seen everything twice, and you had another chance to do it again, what would you look for?. I pondered that for hours. He told me that it was one word, "Self". I thought about it and it made sense. You'd look for yourself! I figured it this way, to find one-self is a very difficult task for many people, although once you find yourself, aspects of life are much easier to deal with, mainly because of your heightened awareness and judgment of all things encountered. Your decisiveness is clearer, you know what you want and need

to do in order to be conducive, prosperous, and productive. Your chances of prosperity are much greater than they would have been had you never found yourself.

One thing you must remember is, you can't win the fight between self. That is a self-defeating fight. Surrendering is acknowledgment of your powerlessness. The sooner you realize that you have no power in this fight between self, the quicker you'll begin to see the beauty in what it means to surrender.

Once you surrender you can move on to acceptance. Acceptance was also very hard for me to deal with. Again, it was explained to me in simple terms. I had to raise my level of acceptance above my unreasonable expectations of others. For example; "Let's say that you and a friend were doing laundry at the local laundromat. You had a load of clothes in the dryer and asked your friend to watch the load for you while you run to the corner store, You come back and your friend is gone and your load of laundry is scattered all over the laundromat." Now you are angry at your friend for not watching your laundry. You are frustrated, stressed, and anxiety is building in you. You are experiencing a lot of negative feelings, right? You can stop feeling that way, because your unreasonable expectations of your friend are wrong. You must now learn what acceptance truly means.

You would never have experienced the negative feelings had you come back to the laundromat, and seen the clothes all over the laundromat and told yourself, "I accept this"! You say how can you just accept that, and I say simple, you had

unreasonable expectations of your friend. Had you took care of your own laundry, you wouldn't have experienced all of those negative feelings.

Acceptance is deep because it seems as if you have to accept everything and anything that happens to you. Here's another example; "Let's say that you were involved in a robbery, and you just sat in the car as the getaway driver. You and your cronies got caught and all of you received the same amount of time. You are upset because you weren't directly involved in the robbery and felt that you should have received less time." Well, if you are ever going to learn to be in acceptance and grow in your life, you must understand this, it doesn't matter how small or how large of a role you played in the robbery, you have to accept full responsibility for your actions. When you are able to do this honestly and without self-resistance, you'll grow by leaps and bounds.

This process works, and I know that it does because I've tested it. I know what works for me may not work for you, but I humbly ask that you give it a try. I practice acceptance every day. There are a lot of things I dislike about my situation, but I accept the role that I played in creating this atmosphere for myself. With that knowledge alone, I continue to grow and I'm very vigilant in my daily business.

The next step is choice. I will make this very simple also. The choices that you make will dictate the life that you lead. We are all afforded choices daily, and it's what we do with them that matters. You can't blame anyone other than yourself



for making a bad choice. All I will say to this is, make your choices wisely. Every choice that you make has consequences written all over it. There are good and bad consequences. It's your choice!

The last step is change. In order for the change to occur in your life, you must begin with surrendering. Stop fighting yourself and learn acceptance, and make positive change your choice. Change comes in many forms. However, I stress to you that only positive change is superfluous at this critical juncture in our lives.

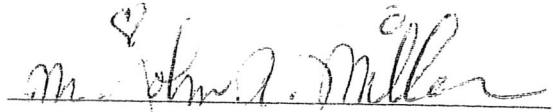
This is a shortened version of what I learned about Self vs. Self, but the keys are all here. I became humble once I surrendered. I look at things totally different than I use to. If you want to get out of this "Amusement Park" for good, stop fighting yourself and practice the keys written within these pages. Apply yourself in all the right ways. Learn how to utilize your inner resources to help you establish and maintain positive directions in your life, and I guarantee that you'll find success and get out of this twilight zone for good.

I believe we have no choice but to make the necessary changes in our lives. We owe it to our victims, loved ones, children, grandchildren, and all of our family and friends. Once these positive changes have been made, the public won't need to worry about us making anymore victims. I include myself in this because there are still a lot of things that I must do in order to stay focused and lead a responsible lifestyle. I hope that you will choose to begin a serious transformation



in your life. I want to thank all of my readers for taking the time to read this, and I wish you all well and happiness in your lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mr. John A. Miller". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mr. John A. Miller

8/04

