

# Introduction

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*"There are simple universal laws of human life which cannot be violated without paying a painful price. Every great spiritual, philosophical and religious tradition has emphasised compassion, reconciliation, forgiveness and responsibility. These are not questions, they are instructions. If we follow them we will thrive, if not we will suffer. The socially sanctioned hatred and rage we express towards criminals in modern times violates these timeless instructions.*

*We are breaking a fundamental spiritual law and the price we are paying for it is increased crime, depravity, hopelessness and, of course, more hatred and rage."*

Bo Lozoff

*We're All Doing Time,  
A Guide for Getting Free  
([www.humankindness.org](http://www.humankindness.org))*

## Why this book?

This book is inspired by my experience of having worked with adult males in prisons, mental health institutions, Young Offenders Institutions and police stations over a ten year period. I believe that how we engage with male prisoners is a useful guide to how we, as a community, engage with modern males in general.

I felt there were similar themes among the men I worked with: alienation, emotional infantilism, addiction, post-traumatic stress disorder and spiritual bankruptcy. Prisons tend to be spiritually bankrupt places. The reason why crime is on the increase, in my opinion, is because these places do not adequately address the fact that most of the men who turn to crime are also *spiritually* sick.

Listening to the prisoners I worked with was enlightening. Most of the men who had turned to crime had been abandoned by their fathers. Most – no matter how big and mean they looked on the outside – were still ‘mummy's little boys’ emotionally. Most had low self-esteem issues. Most of the adult prisoners had mental health issues brought about by post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction issues. It is generally accepted that 80% of crime is due to problems with drink and drugs.

This book is an extension of my work as a Buddhist prison chaplain. I have never met a ‘stupid’ prisoner. However, there were many issues that the prisoners and staff seemed to be ignorant about. This book seeks to address those gaps. As a chaplain, my job was to teach Buddhism to prisoners. I quickly found out from my students that they weren't interested in *religion* as such. Most were interested in spirituality and meditation. This book is for them.

Through the discussions with the prisoners, we debated spiritual practice as well as boyhood to manhood transformation. What does it mean to be spiritual? Why meditate? What is natural manhood? How do we overcome trauma? What is addiction? These were some of the questions we tackled.

There are three parts to Natural Manhood:

## **Part 1: Male Alienation**

Part 1 is about the problems that most Western contemporary urban males face, which makes criminality more likely. Alienation. Alienation leads to isolation, emotional infantilism, guilt and shame around male sexuality, self-hatred and madness.

## **Part 2: Free Your Mind**

Part 2 is an introduction to spirituality. Most prisoners have no idea how to pray and meditate. There is a solution to modern alienation and that is spiritual practice. The solution to alienation is finding a Power greater than ourselves that will restore us to sanity. Free Your Mind includes a chapter on meditation for beginners.

## **Part 3: Natural Manhood**

Alienation within our communities makes criminality more likely. It is the No.1 cancer in the modern era. However, male alienation is different to female alienation. Part 3 is about a solution to male alienation. The six emotional stages towards natural manhood are the guidelines we recommend that modern males take on the journey from prison towards *inner* freedom. A man who is free on the inside is less likely to turn to criminality.

There are four parts to the Appendix:

### **Appendix A: Self-Tests for Compulsive Behaviours**

The destructive consequence of addiction is a theme that runs throughout this book. Prison, religion, psychiatry and prescribed medication (such as methadone) have all failed to provide a cure for the disease of addiction. *Appendix A* contains simple questions for the reader to find out if they might suffer from obsessive compulsive behaviours and where to go to get help.

### **Appendix B: Articles Written for Prisoners and Staff (2008-2010)**

Working as a Buddhist chaplain inspired me to write about what I had seen and experienced in prisons. These articles tackled some of the issues explored in more detail in this book. *Appendix B* contains five articles written for prisoners and staff between 2008 and 2010.

### **Appendix C: Find your Brothers!**

*Appendix C* has three parts:

- **Guidelines for Spiritual Fathers**

Many of the men who read this book will be inspired to work with other males to alleviate alienation. This is for those who wish to do their own part in guiding adolescent males towards natural manhood.

- **Men & Women**

Women do not come from Venus and men do not come from Mars. Men and women come from planet earth and it is right here that we need to end the gender war. It is just as important for men to form bonds of affection, intimacy, friendship and love with other males as it is with other females.

- **How to Start Your Own Men's Group**

Men that wish to start their own men's group will find the suggested format from Chiron Centre Anonymous useful. And if some women are also inspired to start their own women's group, so be it (as long as they come up with a different name to Chiron Centre Anonymous).

### **Personal Stories: Men share their Experience, Strength & Hope**

We've saved the best till last! The personal stories of the men in this section are all written anonymously. Some are addicts in recovery. Some are ex-prisoners. Some are gay. Some are straight. Some are white. Some are black. Some are mixed race. Some are married with children. Some are single with no children. Some are celibate. All men have an interesting story to tell.

### **Anonymity**

Anonymity is the basis for humility in recovery. Recovery means healing from alienation and spiritual bankruptcy through a spiritual transformation. Out of respect for the sacred tradition of anonymity within the global fellowship inspired by Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, I have chosen to remain anonymous and have used the pen-name Martin H.

What this book attempts to address is how inner pain can lead to criminality. When one looks at the world in general and the institution of prison in particular, madness is everywhere. The good news is that we can be restored to sanity as long as we are willing to follow some simple spiritual suggestions. Change is possible if we can become more honest, open-minded and willing to embrace a spiritual way of life. Spirituality involves daily meditation and prayer. The belief in a compassionate Power greater than the human race leads to faith. Our new found faith will bring about inner peace. With inner peace we create the conditions for world peace. When men and women work together towards world peace on a daily basis, we will usher in a new dawn that could heal our precious planet earth.

May this book be of benefit to those men who are still incarcerated worldwide, both inside and out of prison.

Blessed be!