

Human Kindness Foundation

a little good news

Summer/Fall 2006

DO WE SETTLE FOR TOO LITTLE?

Editor's note: On May 21st, 2006, Bo Lozoff preached at the Ainsworth United Church of Christ in Portland, Oregon. He made quite an impression on that congregation! Our thanks to Peggy West of Ainsworth UCC for arranging that sermon as well as transcribing it.

When I was younger and I heard the passage from St. Paul, "Man hath no greater love than this, to give his life to his fellow man," I used to think laying down your life for your fellow man meant like stopping a train, or taking a bullet for somebody, or running into a burning house to save a baby. It's really noble and takes a moment of great courage but that's actually kind of easy. That's giving your *death* to your fellow man. As I began to realize what this passage is about, lay down your *life*, it's a little more persistent and involved. It means waking up *every* day and saying I dedicate my *life* to others *today* and then doing it again tomorrow and the same the next day.

There was a meeting of some western Buddhist teachers with His Holiness the Dalai Lama a few years ago and one of the teachers was asking him, "Isn't it necessary for us sometimes to step out of the roles we're in of teachers, preachers, ministers, and just be somewhere where you don't have that role?" His Holiness couldn't actually understand the question for quite a while, so they went back and forth with a translator's help, and finally His Holiness burst into laughter and said, "Buddha time off? Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha." He thought that was a hoot, the idea that we would take time off from our Buddhahood, from our Christhood—that we feel we need time off from the role of laying down your *life*, not your death, but laying down your *life* for all creation. I've registered that more deeply as I've grown older because I think all of us are operating against the flow of a culture that insists it is psychologically unhealthy to give our lives for each other.

I can't tell you how many people ask me, "Well, Bo, how about time you take for *you*, some *me* time," with a tone of pride. I might say to somebody, "I've got next Tuesday off," and there's this immediate culturally approved celebratory response: "You're taking some time for *you*. Good, good for *you*."

I can't tell you how ugly that is to me. It is like a repudiation and a mockery, as though everything I'm doing for everybody else is sort of effortful and obligatory. "I'm being a good boy to please God, and boy, it's a great day when I get a chance to kick back and be *selfish as hell!*" What happened to "Man hath no greater Love...?"

Jesus says, "I lay my commandment upon you: Love one another as I have loved you." Somebody without a self was saying that. Somebody who never took a "me day!" My Guru used to talk about Jesus constantly. He'd say, "Jesus gave everything away, even His body."

Jesus says, "Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." I just wonder whether it is natural for us to take for granted something like, "I have overcome the world." Jesus also says, "Be in the world but not of the world."

That's very nice, poetic stuff, but then do we ever actually sit for an hour puzzled by the question, "What world am I of?" What does He mean? Is it just flowery words, some abstract concept? Or could it possibly be *literally*, not metaphorically, not symbolically, but *literally* true that *right now, today*, Sunday May 21st, 2006, you and I have within us *literally* a power, a glory, a kingdom of heaven? His disciples said, "Tell us more about this kingdom of heaven Lord," and he said, "Well, don't get the wrong idea. It's not out there, up there, over there, this kingdom I'm trying to describe to you is *within you*, and it's not later, it's *at hand*." Think about that: He said, "It's within you and it's at hand." Do we settle for too little, you and I?

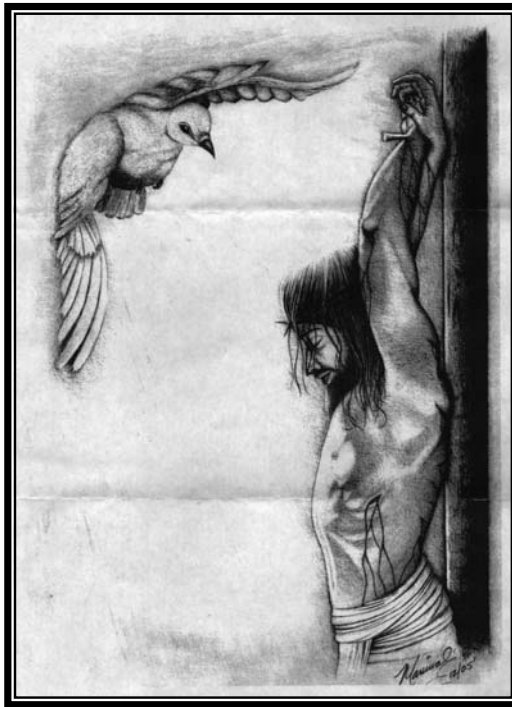
The Dalai Lama stopped at one point in the middle of an interview a few years ago, and he said, "Sir, the Buddha was not just a nice man." Do we try to make Jesus into a nice man? Do we try to domesticate Christ, domesticate God, so that religion serves us instead of us learning how to serve God, and literally giving up the self? Not "I'm going to take some *me* time today." "*Oh, congratulations, good for you.*"

I mean really, next time you're in an encounter with somebody and you feel that popular sentiment, try to experience it as viciously anti-Christ as I do. Because it's a vicious attitude, this "congratulations for being selfish." That's how the Antichrist is speaking through our culture of consumerism. "You need to be selfish. Let's all pay some lip service to this unselfish crap, but man, when you take off to do what *you* want, that's great!"

I spent three years in retreat many years ago reading all the bibles of the world's religions. I never came across that one. Yet Oprah, who is considered one of the good forces in our culture, says to her audience, "Learn how to say **I want!**" I

searched the bibles of the world, never came across “**Thou shalt learn how to say I want.**” I came across plenty of things saying, “Lay down your life for your fellow man.”

So I wonder, do most of us religious people settle for something that’s a fraction of the way there? We settle for being a nice man, a nice woman. We settle for taking these vaguely inspirational, abstractly inspirational messages that’ll help me cope with this difficult world of events, but here He’s saying, “I have overcome the world.” Now He obviously didn’t overcome it just for himself. It wouldn’t be inscribed on the stained glass if it was just a personal message that He broke free of this. He’s telling you and me, “I have overcome the world for *you*.”



“I have overcome *the world*.” The fellow who said this died on a cross. When we pray for God’s mercy, when we pray to be healed of cancer, when we pray for our loved ones to be safe or whatever, are we settling for too little? Are we forgetting what it means or never reflecting on what it means? He *overcame* that world. It’s okay. We can die of cancer. Life may indeed crucify us. We’re supposed to strive for peace and mercy and justice every day of our lives, like Mahatma Gandhi strove to free India from British domain. But when somebody asked Gandhi, do you think India will be liberated from British rule because of your effort, he said, “That’s none of my business. *My* part is to strive to do this because it’s right, not because I think it’s going to work.”

“*I’ve overcome the world.*” Pontius Pilot just wants to see Jesus tremble a little. He says “Don’t you know I have the power to free you or crucify you?” Jesus says, “You have no power over me. I’ve overcome the world.” The night before, in Gethsemane, Jesus has a conversation with God and says, “I’d rather not be crucified, nobody would want to be crucified, but I submit to Thy will.” That’s what it says at the bottom there (*pointing to bottom of stained glass window*): “Thy will be done.”

And so He’s already said, I know we can’t control this *mortal* world. When He tells Pontius Pilot the next day, “You have no power over Me,” Pontius Pilot thinks, “Well, how wrong can somebody be? Crucify Him!” And they do. Pontius Pilot certainly wasn’t one of the people in his lifetime who recognized the resurrection, who understood that Jesus made trivia out of death, who understood what Jesus *meant* when He said, “You have no power over Me.” That torture, crucifixion, and death are trivial to this power that I am. “I’ll come back in three days. The temple will be rebuilt.” There is nothing that can touch this. This mundane world is small and the eternal world is huge and glorious.

Pontius Pilot didn’t understand any of that. Pontius Pilot went to his grave thinking how wrong he proved that scraggly guy who said “You have no power over Me,” because then he exerted power over Him and Jesus died. We understand what Jesus was referring to when He said, “You have no power over me.” It goes along with, “Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s.”

Even the body itself is Caesar’s. We cannot control what the world does to it. But what is God’s? Our Love, our attitudes, our generosity, all our good and noble qualities.

This is supposed to be a model for you and me when we look at imprisonment, at cancer, at grief, at loss, at failure, at insecurity, at the fragility of life. *Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.*

Jesus is saying to us, “You’re *going* to die, you’re going to get sick, you’re going to lose everybody you love, everything in the world may go wrong, and I have overcome that. Be in that world, show up to work in it, serve it with your last breath, strive for what is right: peace, mercy, justice, love. But that’s not where you live, that’s only where you work. You live in Me and I have overcome that world. Don’t worry about a thing—even when you are facing Pontius Pilot and he says, “Crucify Him!”

So I ask again, do we settle for too little? Are we in front of Pontius Pilot quaking at the power he has over us, saying, “But where is Jesus? God, help me!” Are we trying for, “The world has no power over me” to mean that as long as I have faith in God this isn’t lung cancer that’s in my lungs? That Pontius Pilate will say instead, “Spare his life?” Are we settling for too little?

There is a modern wave of Christianity, where ministers are assuring their congregations: “You don’t have to believe in miracles to be a good Christian. You don’t have to believe in the virgin birth or the resurrection or walking on water or raising the dead. These are metaphorical things. I mean, we all sort of rise from the dead when we’ve been addicted and go into recovery, or when we have a trauma and we recover. You don’t have to stretch your credibility. You know, if that all seems hokey to you, just set it aside.”

Oh sweethearts, are we settling for too little? That’s being in the world *and* of the world. That’s assuming this world is all there is and that all the rest is just poetic, flowery words for children. What He came to show us by the resurrection, which I *absolutely* take literally is, “This world is trivial to the love that I am.” And we are *never* safe in this world of Caesar’s. Forget that. In fact, the only reason that we have a group of vicious people in charge of the country right now is because they played to our fears about wanting little Johnny to be safe. Johnny can never be safe in that way.

You sit here and think, hmm—I feel a little lump in my neck. Suddenly next week your whole world is doctors and nurses and chemotherapy and cancer and surgery. I leave here in my car and I stall at an intersection and get wiped out by a truck and this is the last group of people I ever talk to. We are *never* safe in this world. That's not what Jesus ever promised us. He died on a cross and He said, "Do you want to be my followers? There's a cross waiting for you. Pick it up and follow me." Now, the symbol of Christianity is not the shroud and it's not the sepulchre. It's the cross and He said pick up your cross and follow me. But then He tells us: "Be of good cheer as this world destroys you, because I've overcome that world, and you live in Me. So I want you to show up for work everyday to be in that world. Serve all my brothers and sisters." You don't have to take any "me time."

I certainly take days off—for my service to you, because I can't function going 20 hours a day, every day. It's natural. It's not prideful and it's not selfish. The only way that I can show up at the prison in decent shape in two days is if I take Tuesday off. This is the 7th event that I've had since Friday night, so Tuesday is a complete day off for me. It's not "me time." There's no difference between "me time" and "you time." I'm taking a day of rest because this is a physical body. I need to crash, play some music, go for a walk, so that I can be fresh for the next group of people the next day.

Obviously we have to take care of ourselves. But I think most of you probably know the tone that comes across when you tell people you're taking some time off. I'm just saying let's start questioning that. Next time someone congratulates you on taking some "me time," say, "Oh, I'm only doing this so I can be a better servant, a better citizen. This is just part of the balance; just how it all works best."

But we have only *one life*, and that's in God. Christ doesn't say, "Make sure some of your motivation is for yourself." Christ says "Love thy neighbor as thyself. Love one another as I have loved you." But remember, this is not just about being a nice person, this world we see around us is not all there is. He tells us, "Be in the world, but try to spend a little bit of time every day silent and humble before Me. Know that I am with you until the end of the world."

"I am *with* you," not, "I'll come to you." I am *with* you. Are you spending enough time opening to where He is with you, or are you settling for too little, thinking all of this is just a bunch of flowery words? Jesus is saying, "I have a force inside of you that can literally walk on water, move mountains, raise the dead. It's in you right now, and I'm here, I'm a'waitin' for you, babe. I'm waitin' for you to find that balance with being in the world but not of it. You live and you breathe and you rest in Me and you

work out there on My behalf and it's none of your business whether it is going to go in a better direction or not."

Somebody asked me this morning: "Do you see any hope in changes for the better in what we are doing in prisons? Is there any light on the horizon?" I said no, absolutely not. It's horrible, it's brutal, it's stupid. We're paying dearly for it, and we're going to continue paying dearly for it. I don't see any light on that horizon, and yet I will keep going into these brutal, stupid institutions and have some of the richest, most wonderful loving human experiences that people can ever have with each other.

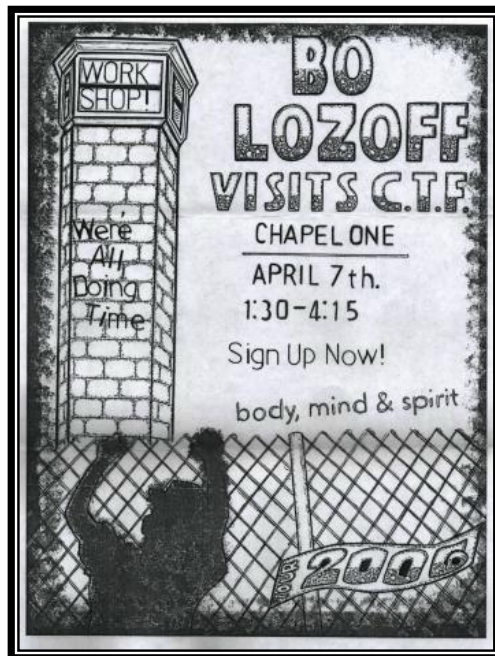
And so that's why we do it. Not because we have hope that things will get better, that's not our business. We're in a dim age as far as that's concerned. We're in a dim age as far as lots of things are concerned. Is it going to overwhelm you and me so that it saps our energy? "Be of good cheer. I have overcome that world. I've done it for you. That's not where you live and belong. Don't tie your activism, don't tie your generosity, don't tie your charity to results. Do it because you do it for Me. Leave the mystery of how it all works up to Me. But know that I am in you. I love you, and you can feel Me directly if you believe in it, make time for it, and persevere in that. You can touch Me directly."

Mother Teresa said, "When I look into the eyes of the dying I see Christ." She was not being a sweet old woman with flowery words for children. Imagine *literally*, "I look into the eyes of the dying and I see Christ already in there looking back at me." That's why Mother Teresa committed that most heinous sin of the Catholic Church all those years: ministering to thousands of dying people and not inviting them to accept Christ as their savior.

What's she going to do, look at a dying man and say "Do you accept yourself as your savior?" She's *seen* Christ there. The love that Mother Teresa brought with her is a mystical force. This isn't just being a nice woman. She

brings Christ's love to this dying beggar and she cradles him in her arms and Christ is there inside the beggar and looks back at her saying, "That's what I want you to do." So it's redundant for her to say, "Do you accept Jesus as your savior?" Jesus already accepted this person because of her love. She's carrying His love to them.

Do we settle for too little by glossing over the mystical? Mother Teresa was a mystic, not a nice lady. You and I, ultimately, have a mystical connection with Christ, right here and now. It'd be nice to take a little time every day to explore that, wouldn't it? God Bless You.



Poster by Rodney Summerton, Soledad, CA

PRACTICE: A FEW SECONDS A DAY

By Bo Lozoff

Here's an almost effortless practice that will definitely change your life for the better if you are willing to commit just ten to twenty seconds a day to it. But first, a little background about how the brain works.

In his book *Addiction and Grace*, Dr. Gerald May discusses how the human brain works and he gives us sympathy for how easy it is to form habits and addictions. One example he gives is that if we go to supper just three nights in a row and do the same thing – something meaningless, like grab our cup with our right hand and place it at the nine o'clock position at our plate – if we do this as a ritual even *three times*, and then the fourth night we deliberately do it differently, it's going to bother us. After merely three repetitions of a trivial act, the brain has already *imprinted* the behavior as being natural, as being the “right” place for that cup to be. The brain has already formed chemical synapses between the nerve endings that make us feel the cup should be placed at nine o'clock!

So we can also make this process of “imprinting” work in our favor. The moment we realize we are awake – I don't mean after getting up and going to the bathroom, or after lying there thinking of all sorts of things; I mean the *first moment* we realize “I'm awake...” – the brain is in a very raw and open state and can imprint things very deeply. So in those first few seconds of “awakeness” every day, say a prayer or state an intention that reflects your spiritual path. Something like, “Lord, may I be less selfish today than I was yesterday.”

Or, “Lord, I dedicate my life to others today; please show me how, all through the day.”

Or, “I commit my every thought, word and deed to the greatest good today. May I cause no harm.”

It takes fewer than five seconds to say one of the thoughts above. And then you lay there for another ten seconds or so to let it sink in. The brain very powerfully imprints this thought as your *first identity* of every day. All through the day it will come back to you and challenge you and remind you of your spiritual intentions. Before you are busy being a man or woman, convict or citizen, young or old, black or white or other, before you even know your name each morning, you have imprinted a profound spiritual thought into your brain; you have declared your *primary identity* as a spiritual seeker. Believe me, it will make a difference in your life.

And it only takes a few seconds. There is no one, anywhere, who does not have the time to do this practice. Every one of us wakes up every day and stays in bed a few seconds as we realize we are awake. It doesn't take long to train ourselves to do this practice; it'll come automatically after the first week or two. The only requirement on our part is to *commit to doing this every day for the rest of our lives*. That's how the brain will imprint these intentions and prayers the most deeply. If you call yourself a spiritual seeker at all, then is it unreasonable to require yourself to begin each day with a simple, effortless reminder of that?

The prayer or intention should be simple, fewer than 20-25 words, something a child can understand. And it should be *the same words* every day for at least a few months at a time in order for the brain to imprint it deeply. Don't lie in bed and start thinking of what to say; that gets the mind too involved and active. Choose the words in advance and stick with the same ones for a few months or longer, until you are guided to change or alter them.

Many people say meditation takes too much time or is too difficult or they have no place to practice it. But no one and nothing can prevent you from spending a few seconds doing this simple practice when you first wake up. There is no environment, no external force, that can prevent you from doing this. And although it is simple and almost effortless, it will change your life. One more wrinkle you can throw in is to *end* your day with the same sort of practice: Lying on your pillow waiting to go to sleep, you just check out the same way you checked in: “Lord, may I be less selfish tomorrow than I was today....”

Beginning and ending each day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, with our spiritual nature, is one good way to begin to understand “Be in the world, but not of it.” Give it a try!

Prisoners aid starving Kenyans

NAIROBI, Kenya — Thousands of prisoners skipped lunch Sunday to send food to fellow Kenyans affected by food shortages, a senior prison official said.

Most of Kenya's estimated 50,000 prisoners gave up their beans and corn porridge on the day that President Mwai Kibaki declared the food shortages, caused by drought, a national disaster in an effort to speed relief efforts, officials said.

LETTERS

Dear Bo & Sita,

I'm 25 years old and doing 2-3 years for burglary. I recently received your book We're All Doing Time. I'm eligible for parole this month, but will be turned down because I lack a place to parole to.

What is a person like me to do even if I do make parole? I have no car, house, job, etc. I have literally the clothes I was arrested in and nothing else. See the problem? I want to change my life. I really do. But how is it possible if I can't get a hand up? I'll end up back in prison. Quickly too. I'll be on parole and have to see a parole officer. When I don't show up because of lack of transportation, I'll get put back in jail. See how it works? How am I supposed to better myself if I'm supposed to fail?

And how am I supposed to change if I have no feeling? Take anyone on this planet, whether close to me or not, and I could literally look into their eyes as I tortured, maimed, or killed them and feel nothing. No hate, sorrow, remorse or pleasure. What's wrong with me? I know it's not normal to be like this. What can I do? I don't go around hurting people. In fact I'm quite the pacifist. But if the situation were to arise, I could do anything to anyone, without feeling. Is there any help you can offer?

Yours, S

Dear S,

The first part of your letter – about having no home, job, car, money, etc. – those are not the obstacles to you staying out of prison. You need to start making some parole plans NOW while you are inside, even if the plan is just to parole to a Salvation Army house or homeless shelter somewhere until you can get on your feet. The only people I know who stay out of prison are the ones who say “I CAN'T GO BACK TO DRUGS OR CRIME, NO MATTER WHAT! EVEN IF I DIE UNDER A BRIDGE OR LIVE FOREVER IN A SHELTER, EVEN IF THE WORLD IS UNFAIR AND NO ONE GIVES ME A BREAK, I AM DONE WITH DRUGS AND CRIME!!”

Those people stay out, and you know what else? They get some “lucky breaks” along the way. If you start pestering your caseworker, your chaplain, librarian and anyone else at the prison for some resources to help you

form a parole plan or learn some job skills, you'll get some answers. Your letter takes no responsibility at all, just total “victim consciousness” for everything being stacked against you and you having no hope. That's bullshit, little brother. The world is indeed screwed up and unfair, you may as well accept that. But Life works with you if you work with Life. Trust me.

About your other concern, of not feeling anything for anyone, well, your letter was full of feeling, S. Maybe your heart is mostly blocked off because of fear and pain, but you can open that up gradually through the ideas and practices in *We're All Doing Time* and my other books. Again, do the work, and it'll work for you. *We're All Doing Time* is not a novel; it's a manual. Use it.

Love, Bo



Dear Bo,

I am a woman and former correctional officer. I came to admire your work while at CMC in San Luis Obispo. I sat in the audience last night and wondered what happened to the Bo Lozoff the inmates and clergy had been so excited about years ago. I sat in the back—where I could observe you and most of the audience—and stayed for most of the presentation. It felt, to me, like you were doing the warmup act for a Michael Moore film. You used to be non-political and non-critical. Some people in the audience were turned off by the politics—and left, accordingly.

I did not vote for Bush—I don't concur with his views—but Gore and Carter are politicians TOO and they do political things. (Politics are divisive and not conducive to recovery.) I never heard Mother Teresa inject such venom in her talks. She walked her talk the way you used to. It is my opinion that you are messing up the message with politics. I think it will kill your program. (And that would be a shame.) I don't see where it is productive—especially if you are losing half your audience in the process.

If your primary work is to offer spiritual support, then you are eliminating about half our base, because (like it or not) SOMEBODY voted for the people in power now. No matter how much you

disrespect “their side,” they will not agree with you—they will just walk out feeling alienated. Just as race should not be an issue, politics should not be an issue—period. I hope your head hasn't gotten so big that you believe you know everything, and have all the answers. I truly believe you had a great message in the Prison-Ashram Project and We're All Doing Time—That is what I came to hear about—and I know many others did as well. Please consider the greater good ahead of politics. Peace.

Namaste, S

Hi S,

I'm so sorry you were put off by my talk; that's always unpleasant to hear. And my head has not “gotten so big” that I believe I know everything or have all the answers. No, actually I feel like a child with absolutely no agenda of my own.

With all due respect, S, I feel you draw some excessive conclusions in your letter, and you may want to consider that many people who attended the same talk had nothing but glowing things to say and did not consider me “venomous” or “disrespecting” the people in power, etc. Many people said they were deeply moved, deeply inspired, and deeply empowered. So go figure. Same talk, different reactions. That's one thing I hope you will consider about your own reaction – it's a relative and personal perspective.

The other thing is, there are times when the spiritual and the political necessarily interweave. The Bruderhof Community in Germany were the first people to warn their fellow citizens that Hitler would destroy their nation and commit horrific evils. They did this not to “bash” Hitler or offend the people who had voted for him, but because God called them to witness against what was happening. If you think that the people running this country are of a lot higher cut than Hitler, I think you are dangerously mistaken. Our beloved nation has become one of the world's most brutal and violent forces, all for money.

My life has always been one of engaged spirituality, not abstract. I feel my message is very positive, considering that we are entering a period of serious adversity, and I encourage people to strengthen their compassion and spiritual practice to lead

our culture in a positive direction as this shit hits the fan. It has already begun.

I still feel sorry that I disappointed you. My message has not become less profound, though. And I have not abandoned any of the views or values of my books. Our nation is on the eve of an adversity at least as big as the Great Depression, and I do not share your view that it is more healing to ignore that. To me it is most healing to see life clearly and respond in a way that is holy. That's all I'm trying to share. The spiritual journey is still wonderful and powerful and I frame all of my remarks around that.

Bo



Dear Bo,

Your book *We're All Doing Time*, along with some others by Ram Dass, Alan Watts, and others planted some seed in my consciousness over the past ten years. I am writing to thank you, because your writing, and your Loving Kindness in particular, is the only reason I am alive today. Without the wisdom you have shared I would be dead, both spiritually and physically.

I've used the label and identity of someone "into" Buddhism and spiritual philosophy for a few years now, but it was never real before this year. I got tattoos of Buddhist symbolism and Art, I could tell you about the Dharma and Buddha, but I never practiced. I used my label as another attachment and something to keep me apart from Christians or "others." I continued to use drugs and let people down. I continued to suffer.

However, in January, I found myself in the hole... I had nothing left. There were no more excuses, no one to blame. I sat on the floor and began to cry. I sobbed and sobbed while I went over the story of my life in my head. I cried harder and harder and I began to realize that that moment, that precise time could be the defining moment of my life. I continued to cry, but the tears wasted away my hopelessness and sorrow. My tears turned to tears of joy as I recalled the simple, true teaching of your books.

I began to pray, meditate, and practice that day and I've continued each day since. It has only been a few months, but I already know that I won't give it up this time. My shame is gone, and I feel the profound change in my life beginning.

I am so grateful for you, Sita, and all the other Angels and Bodhisattvas in my life. That day in the hole, I might not have carried on without the wisdom and hope you have all been planting in me throughout this life. You teach me true goodness.

You are amazing grace.

Love, T

Dear Bo,

I hope you and yours are in good spirits and health. I have just read We're All Doing Time and Lineage. I must say they are both wonderful books.

I would like to tell you about my problem and I hope you will give me some advice. Please understand that I have a really hard time asking for help. And I have never trusted anyone.

I am 18 years old now. I was 16 when I was arrested for murder and sentenced to natural life without parole. My mother always worked, even when she was home she was never really there. My father I never knew. My cousin and best friend was shot to death in 2000. Eight months later my older brother died of suicide. Then my little sister moved to her father's and I have not seen or heard from her. Then in October 2002 I lost my 6 month old daughter, her mother, and a friend in a car crash.

I have thought of suicide many times. I even sat for hours in my room holding a gun but I could never pull the trigger. Suicide just is not me. In my life I have flatlined seven times, overdosed once, and nearly died half a dozen other times.

I had a truck, money and even a good house to live in. Now I have nothing.

Now as I sit here in my cell I find myself haunted by everything. But please understand that it is not my crimes. It is the feeling of emptiness inside. I feel like an empty shell.

The TV and books are full of places and things I was never able to do or see. The radio where I once found sanctuary now

only haunts me with memories of my short past.

About a year ago I lost my ability to walk from an infection that got in my brain shutting down my brain stem. I lost my balance and coordination. I am just now starting to gain my balance and coordination well enough so I can walk with a walker.

I believe I have survived everything for a reason. Maybe you can help me to understand that purpose. I hope to hear from you soon.

S

Hi S,

Well, you've gotten some very bad breaks and also caused some of them yourself. You ask me to help you find a purpose to all this: That's the easy part. The purpose is to serve OTHERS, not yourself. That's the purpose of any good life – to serve God through serving His Creation. That includes every leaf and bird and pen and paper and person you ever see. And in order to serve well, you need to take care of your own mind, body and spirit. That's what my books are about – ideas and practices to turn your life into a purposeful life. As I said, that's the easy part.

The hard part is making that commitment and doing it every day. That's your Great Adventure. What does a life of service look like in your prison unit? That's the adventure. But I can guarantee you, if you make this the center of your life, then you will find a rich and rewarding life even if you never leave the grounds. There's plenty of service to do in your prison unit.

I'm so sorry you've lost so many people you love. But I know for a fact you can make a life for yourself that will make you very happy you didn't die. The old saying says "If life hands you a bunch of lemons, just make lemonade." But just squeezing lemons does not make them drinkable. Where does the sweetener come from? That sweetener is what you bring to it – your willingness to be a spiritual seeker, a follower of the Good Road.

You can do this, son. I know many who have. Not only can you do it, you can make a Glory of it. Honest. Don't just read my books; use them every day to create your new life.

Love, Bo



NEWS, NOTES, AND OFFERINGS

BO'S FIRST TOUR CDS – 'LIFE IS RISKY'

Life is Risky This 2-CD set is from a talk given in a church in Boca Raton, Florida in December 2005, and touches on raising children, living a spiritual life, and our responsibility to be holy.

Bonus Track from a prison workshop at Hardee Correctional Institution in Florida, also in December 2005. It is rare that we have the opportunity to hear Bo inside a prison, because regulations usually make it impossible for his workshops to be recorded. This bonus is approximately 40 minutes of Bo doing what he does best: talking to prisoners. Don't miss it!

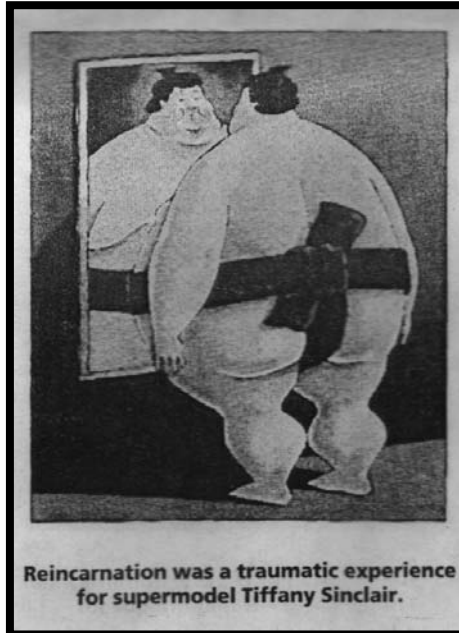
Code CLR (2 CDs) \$16 + \$3 shipping

CD SPECIAL OFFER

Open Heart, Troubled Times This lecture, with question & answer session, is a wide-ranging conversation about the difficult times we live in, the importance of keeping an open heart and clear mind, Bo and Sita's path of service and compassion, the prison work, and more. Recorded January 2005.

Code CTT (2 CDs) \$16

**Order both sets for just \$28 (CL2)
Shipping \$3 for all CD orders.**



TOUR UPDATE

Bo Lozoff's extensive tour across the country continues in full swing. Since December, he has covered dozens of states and has given talks and concerts in hundreds of institutions, churches, universities and other centers. Many who have attended have let us know how powerful the events have been for them. "It changed my life" is one remark we hear often. One person said "It was so profound to meet a simple man with a wide-open heart and no agenda."

Bo's own take on the tour is summed up like this: "I go into some of the most terrible places on Earth and have some of the richest, best encounters human beings can have. Then I travel to unbelievably beautiful places and find people who feel trapped and confined. We are a fascinating species, we human beings. But our nature is deep and noble, even while we live in a time of great challenge. Travelling so much also reminds me of how many wonderful people are doing great things everywhere. I think of the line from one of my new songs, *Life is good even when it's not great.*"

UPDATING OUR PRISONER MAILING LIST!!!

Our postage costs have risen so much, we need to cut down on as much waste as possible. If we have not heard from you over the past 5 years, you will see a % sign next to your name on the address label, and we are asking you to let us know if you want to keep receiving this newsletter. If you do not have a % sign next to your name, you will continue to receive our newsletter – there is no need to reply.

Please check the label on this newsletter. If you have a % sign next to your name, you need to write to us to continue to receive our newsletters. Be sure to clearly print your name, id#, address, and bunk, cell, etc. If your id# or address is different from what is on this newsletter, please tell us it has changed, and give us your old id#.

We may receive thousands of responses, so please keep your letter short. If you require a reply, please know that it may take us a while. Just know that we love you and are always sending you our blessings and prayers. Our next newsletter should arrive around Christmas.

a little good news

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BO LOZOFF ON TOUR

