

The Tao of ED

by Edgar J. Steele

For the past year, I have been in jail. If this is news to you, look on free-edgar-steele.com for my thoughts on this epic struggle.

Those in jail and prison cells lead particularly difficult lives, in an environment second in stress only (perhaps) to the likes of the Vietnam era's "Hanoi Hilton" POW camp. In the cruelest turns of fate, most prisoners have seen family and friends turn their backs upon them in shame. But, they may be the lucky ones, actually.

It seems counter-intuitive, but I have seen many inmates turn their own backs on what few family members and friends have stood by them. Why? Because every contact with loved ones "on the outs" produces extreme emotional pain, starting all over again, every time those contacts end, whether by phone, by letter or in person. It is far easier to live completely *without* our loved ones, it seems, than to be continually teased and reminded of what and who we are missing.

Thus far, I have been spared that pain in my once-again-daily contacts with my wonderful wife, Cyndi. I get my share of pain, though, every time I

see, speak or hear from my children and friends. Why is it so different for me with Cyndi? I honestly do not know.

Many wonder how I have emerged intact from a year of *solitary/max-security/full-lockdown* confinement, being held essentially incommunicado. How can I seem to be peaceful and content? Many more wonder aloud when I am going to have the expected breakdown about being convicted recently of four major felonies. I face a *minimum* sentence of 30 years, with 70 or more years a very real possibility.

"Jail suits you, Ed," is the standard reaction obvious on the faces of all who visit me here in jail. Well, maybe. In fact, I suppose it has enabled me to find whole new dimensions to my character and understanding of the Universe.

Every day, I actively work at what I have come to call the *Tao of Ed*: striving to learn and master *Patience, Surrender, Acceptance, and Humility*.

By going through a litany of truths (affirmations, some would say) and aphorisms, often several times a day, together with sessions of meditation, I have managed to avoid the desperation, hostility and strain gripping so many of those around me. Every day, I count my blessings rather than curse my

misfortunes. Indeed, I have learned to seek out the silver lining of every cloud that comes into my life.

Or, it might all simply be because I am heavily medicated, but that is a story for another day.

What are the "affirmations" I now have come to embrace each day of my life? Glad you asked. Here are the reasons I consider myself to be a lucky man:

1. I have the love and support of the *perfect* woman: strong, soft, understanding, forgiving, loving, beautiful and compassionate. Our love is even *stronger* because of this horrible experience. Like the families of Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers, Romeo and Juliet, the Feds have done their dead-level best to split us up, but have managed only to make us want to be together all the more.
2. At age 66, I am in "extra innings" due to defeating cancer, an embolism (aneurysm) and a major aortic aneurysm. How many of us might jump at the chance to return after death, even to a jail cell? With my blood pressure at zero in the hospital elevator, death is exactly what I returned from, six months prior to my arrest.

3. I have good health, a genuinely youthful, non-"stuffy" outlook, a sense of real power and an important mission in life...also, I still have all my hair, teeth, intellect and looks (☺).
4. My family and friends have their dignity, self-respect and integrity, despite my predicament, plus an empowering and deep sense of having been wronged by the very system I have fought all my life to preserve, as intended by our forefathers and about which I continually have warned all who will listen.
5. *I* have (most of) my dignity, self-respect and integrity.
6. I am warm, have clean (sort of) clothing, a safe place to sleep, all the food I need and most of the medicines I need.
7. My very existence has become a symbol of, and object lesson in, the corruption, tyranny and unfairness I have warned about for years. Like many before me, I have become a living example of the corruption, excesses and evils of my time. With my incarceration and conviction on false charges, my message gets through even *stronger* now.
8. I have embarked again upon my spiritual quest, abandoned now for over 30 years. *This* time, I have turned inward for the answers, rather than

seeking enlightenment from others (who taught me only *about* enlightenment, without any actual enlightenment taking place).

9. I have set upon what I call the path of the "Tao of Ed." - I have learned *Patience* (enduring adversity with equanimity) and *Surrender* (letting go of effort by not struggling against the inevitable). I now am learning *Acceptance* (wanting what I have, losing it without regret and not needing what I don't have) and *Humility* (putting ego aside). Humility is especially difficult for me, but being in jail helps...*a lot*.
10. Amazingly, I still have *all* my friends plus lots of *new* ones, both "on the outs" *and* inside every jail through which they have "dieseled" (a concept by the new American Prison Industry that deserves further attention later).
11. I am learning the real meaning of freedom and a new, heightened appreciation for life.
12. Somehow, even after my conviction, I am utterly confident that I will be cleared and set free. I have a date with a red sports car in Southern Oregon, you see; yet another story for another day.

13. I am ready, eager and 100% committed to take up my *real*/life's work: speaking out to fight Amerikan tyranny and to inspire others, both inside and outside "the movement."
14. My ability to influence others has grown with this affair, which seems to have enhanced my stature in "the movement" by making a very real martyr of me.
15. Again, I am working - *really* working - on several books, all of which I *will* finish. My books and my children will be my enduring legacy to the world.
16. I have been freed from the chains of work, TV and email.
17. At worst, I really face a sentence of only a handful of years. 8, 30, 70 or *1000* years - at my age, they are all the same to me. Also, by all accounts, prison will be *much* more interesting and pleasant than county jails (and my "gang" is waiting there for me).
18. Though I've never had an addictive personality, this period has completely detoxed me from all the post-surgical drugs I was using at the time I was arrested.
19. Truth, I am living larger and more peacefully than most people "on the outs." I am blessed. I am a lucky man.

20. *Never* will they be able to defeat me. *Never*.

Did you see anything that resonated with you? Even though you may not share the exceptional environmental advantage (jail) that I currently "enjoy," I'll bet that *you* can build your own list of 20 things for which you can feel genuinely thankful, each and every day. *Ten*, at least.

The Tao of Ed. Try it. It may just change your life - and without having to spend a year in jail (or a Buddhist monastery). Your mileage may vary, but *I truly am a lucky man*.

Even so, I much would prefer to be out there with all of *you*. But, I am confident that I *will* be. Just wait. *You'll see*.

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