



## SUBMISSIONS

Want to share an article, story, poem, or group update? Please do!

Newsletters are bi-monthly. Newsletters for 2016 will be published in January, March, May, July, September, and November.

The next issue will be November. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please submit to [jmiles@zpi.com](mailto:jmiles@zpi.com) for consideration by the 25th of the month prior to publication.

**INSIDE&OUT**  
September 2016

## Inside & Out

Published for the benefit of ROFW members by Reaching Out From Within

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### Salina Embraces “Faces of Change”

ROFW exhibit “Faces of Change” opened with great success at the Salina Arts Center with public and private receptions on September 9th. Deputy Secretary Johnnie Goddard, Warden Marty Sauers, and many of the Ellsworth Correctional staff were present at an early reception which unveiled the new Ellsworth portraits completed by Nick Vedros this August. Later in the evening, the reception opened to the public, and hundreds of members of the Salina community were introduced to the ROFW program and exhibit.

These events were a fantastic opportunity for ROFW to reach new audiences in Salina, and for the Salina community to connect with the Ellsworth facility. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank Salina Arts Center Executive Director, Bill North. Bill became a true partner on this project, taking a personal interest in learning about the program, visiting the Ellsworth facility, and meeting with many of our ROFW program participants. His vision brought new experiences for those of us seeing the “Faces of Change” show for a second time; and the fabulous space allowed the viewer to spend time contemplating alone with each portrait. Thank you to all who took part in making this an impactful event for Reaching Out From Within.

Suzie Kemper—Executive Director

## **ROFW ANNUAL PICNIC**

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 2nd 2-4pm**

**WYANDOTTE COUNTY PARK—SHELTER C**

**BONNER SPRINGS, KS**

**BEHIND THE RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL**

**Please contact Jason to RSVP or with questions. [jmiles@zpi.com](mailto:jmiles@zpi.com)**

# Group Updates

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**Lansing Minimum**—We here at the East Unit hope this message finds everyone doing well and persisting in the struggle to change. As the summer draws to a close we held our annual Summer Summit and the hard work put into it certainly paid off. This year's theme was "More 2 Life." It is this truth that has drawn each of us to ROFW; this is not where we are meant to be; there is so much more to life than wasting away, not just in a physical prison, but a mental and emotional one as well.

The night was filled with music, poetry and some great acting to help convey our message. We had numerous speakers as well. Group member Rafael shared his story; how he prepared for prison as a young kid and how he is preparing for a better life now. ROFW Alumnus Adam Rhodes spoke about the importance of staying involved and giving back upon release. Representatives from the Leavenworth Alliance Against Family Violence battered women's shelter, the Lansing Correctional Facility's Batterer Intervention Program, and the Evening Reporting Center of Johnson County Court Services presented information about their missions and how we can help.

There was something different about this year's summit. Traditionally it has been only ROFW members responsible for the message and production of the evening, but we have been moving toward more cooperative efforts among the self-help groups in this facility. We enlisted the help of a few members of the Brothers In Blue drama team, the Arts in Prison poetry group, and several members of the population that wanted to be involved in something positive. We thank all of you for your help. It was greatly appreciated.

"Climb high; climb far. Your goal the sky; your aim the star." Inscription at Williams College

**Lansing – East ROFW's Summer Summit, a second perspective**—Adam Rhodes knows what he's talking about.

A featured speaker during the Lansing Correctional Facility-East ROFW group's "Summer Summit," he told the gathering of approximately 100 inmates and 10 guests that he'd figured out how to "get off paper." The secret, he said, was three-fold:

- "Stay clean."
- "Stay involved with whatever is positive in your life."
- "Hold yourself accountable."

One of the best ways to hold yourself accountable, he said, is to meet your parole officer's expectations. As soon as you do, they'll start cutting you slack.

Rhodes, who shared that he'd "grown up emotionally in prison," said he'd been off paper for five days, prompting a brisk round of applause. He contributed much of his success to the lessons he'd learned in ROFW meetings.

When he's not working, Rhodes said he's either volunteering or attending ROFW alumni meetings.

Raphael Rodriguez, who's been DR-free for more than four years, said that if it weren't for having spent time in "max" and for ROFW, he'd "...still be the messed up (gang member) that I wanted to be as a kid."

Rodriguez said that instead of always worrying about his incarceration causing his children to follow his lead, he's found a way to positively compete with them. When he talks to them, they compare each other's accomplishments. They try to out-do each other.

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Kids, he said, "...see the way you walk before you talk."

The Lansing-East ROFW group oversees the facility's GED program. Midway through the summit, ROFW volunteers Maralee Thompson and Barbara Morley handed out nine diplomas.

The group also participates in the Johnson County Evening Reporting Center, a program

designed to put at-risk juveniles, ages 13 to 18, on a positive path. A small group of ROFW members is allowed to meet with the teens once a month. Some ROFW alumni come as well.

"They build rapport with the kids," said a member of the program's staff, Hunter LaFevers. Many of the teens, she said, are in gangs and think they're too smart to get

## By Brandon L.

I did alotta bad in my lifetime  
My creator still gave me  
several lifelines  
I should've been gone but  
I'm still wit' ya  
Paint the pad wit' the pen  
till' you see that picture  
Now let me bust it the frame  
Because only real men  
possess the power to change  
So once we leave prison we  
can neva' be tha' same  
And if we are then it's back  
to tha' same route which we  
came

New book turn the page on  
life  
Every day is like a crap shoot,  
I'm rollin' tha' dice  
No doubt my old life entices  
But I ain't tryna pay tha' cost  
on the consequences prices  
Who can we call when our  
lives in crisis  
And the judge say that you  
the worst thing since ISIS  
Then my potna told me "We  
Believe"  
And spoke of SuEllen Fried  
and the Optimist Creed

I'm Reaching Out, Reaching  
Out, From Within, From Within  
Because I'm neva' comin'  
back to tha' pen  
We can do it big, but we  
gotta do it right  
That lil' Blue Book will change  
ya' life

I'm Reaching Out, Reaching  
Out, From Within, From Within  
Because I'm neva' comin'  
back to tha' pen  
We can do it big, but we  
gotta do it right  
That lil' Blue Book will change  
ya' life

I'm takin' that lil' Blue Book  
back 2 tha' streets  
Read & apply the skills  
guarantee I succeed  
I'll succeed for my city,  
succeed 4 my block  
Succeed for my daughter, I'll  
succeed for my pops  
Succed for my people who  
can't make it off of lock  
I know you feelin' you at the  
bottom, time to rise 2 tha'  
top

A whole lotta' regret but I'm  
seeking redemption  
Determined 2 do it right, I'm  
a man on a mission  
I used 2 walk around town  
wit' hateful blindness  
We can see the world  
different if we Stop The  
Violence

Reachin' Out tryna' touch  
them streets  
Hopin' tha' lil' homies don't  
end up like me

I'm Reaching Out, Reaching,  
Out From Within, From Within  
Because I'm neva' comin'  
back to tha' pen  
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caught up in the criminal justice system. The ROFW members, she said, know better and are quick to share their hard-earned wisdom.

Danielle Hunter, who runs the facility's intimate-partner batterers intervention program (better known as BIP), encouraged inmates in the audience to enroll in the six-month program. "It's not meant to excuse (your crime), it's meant to give you insight." Enrollees need to be within two years of their release dates to participate.

Jodi Cruisberry, who leads the Leavenworth Alliance Against Family Violence, challenged ROFW members who're also batterers to write "letters or mantas" that would help victims of domestic violence understand their actions.

Most of the 90-minute program centered on an inmate-written skit that underscored many of the fears and realities that confront inmates upon their re-entering society. Key scenes were capped with rap-influenced poetry by Brandon Long. Afterward, ROFW member Arvin Chapman recited a piece that he'd written, "Waiting on the Verdict," as well.

Early on in the proceedings, emcee Kolar Jeffries said the event's goals included promoting non-violence, healthy ways of thinking, giving back to society and finding ways to keep kids "from coming down the paths that we did." The group did all that and more.

By Dave R., ROFW volunteer

**LCMHF West**—"Change is inevitable; growth is optional." (Quote taken from the Blue book – Author unknown)

Here at L.C.M.H.F. (Central and West Units) we are blessed in the sense that we are offered many programs that are geared to help deal with your inner feelings and with your overall success. There are programs for

your spiritual, mental, physical, educational, financial, and future needs. All an interested party needs to do to use most of these is either show up or ask to be included in them. The most important commonality is that all these programs help you to get through your stay in prison quicker and easier. They can give you the tools to succeed after your release. It's your choice on what path to take and how much you are willing to help yourself.

In my years incarcerated, I have seen more people convince themselves that they do not need help, refusing to take advantage of programs that would put them on the path to self-healing. While recruiting for R.O.F.W. one of the most common excuses I hear is, "Well, I don't want to be mixing in with a lot of troublemakers, drug abusers, or sex offenders."

I have also heard others criticizing existing members, saying that they don't show any positive change since joining R.O.F.W., "They continue to get into trouble and cause problems." People do not change overnight, and some have problems that have deeper roots than others. We are **all** a work in progress. Saint Exuprey once said, "If you wish to be acquainted with the butterflies, sometimes you have to endure the presence of two or three caterpillars."

While it is true that some people may never be able to deal with their problems, they have at least taken a positive step in the right direction by seeking help. If you are not willing to take that step you may never realize the full potential that the programs offer you. Are you curious to see just how much you can change with a little help? Would you like to show your loved ones and others that you **can** change? Are you willing to lighten your

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load? I challenge you to take the first step. Some of the saddest words ever written or spoken are... "*It could have been...*"

S. Scott – Newsletter Editor

**Winfield**—Some say that life comes down to a few moments that can alter the direction of one's life forever. Some of these moments are seemingly random and unexpected, but mostly stem from our personal decisions.

You may be familiar with Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Less Traveled" in which Mr. Frost describes a traveler faced with a fork in the road on his journey. One path leads the traveler down a well-traveled road offering perceived assurances and predictable outcomes, while the other path points to a flourishing trail of green grass seemingly uninterrupted by the common traveler.

It has been said that "over 99% of our decisions are made subconsciously with little thought as to the execution, OR, the outcome" (Hardy, 2010). Think about it. [IF] we make 99% of our decisions subconsciously—that means we are making simple decisions, such as what to order off the canteen the same way we are making more complex decisions, such as deciding what type of vehicle to purchase, what job to take, the sort of decisions inside of prison that could lead us to a D.R., OR WORSE YET, lead us back to prison.

Seems farfetched, but take a look at your past decisions and then ponder with true consideration their consequences. Mr. Frost's poem should also cause us pause and consideration as to how we make our future decisions when faced at the crossroad. Mr. Frost continues on to say (One may only cross this path once in their lives). So, ask yourselves, "Do I Intend To Follow The Crowd, OR, Blaze A New Trail According To What

Your Heart Tells You?" Choose what's right, Change what isn't!

Many will choose to continue taking the same old, same old. But those that [BELIEVE] will choose to take a new path leading to their true destiny.

Coming to prison doesn't have to end your dreams. In fact, It's the perfect place to launch your new vision for life.

Personally, I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do it for whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder my life, the more I live. Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

The purpose of life to me, is a life of purpose. Put your heart, mind, intellect & soul, even to your smallest acts. This is the secret of success.

We members of Winfield's ROFW openly welcome all inmate offenders at this facility to attend out biweekly meetings (Tuesday & Thursday—7 till 9 PM), and we members boldly stand together as we state that our group stands united to provide anonymity in a self-governed, safe environment that therein allows offenders to take control of the most important next step in their life.

Empowering others with tools, insights, and the needed knowledge to gain a higher education, consistent leadership skills & meaningful wisdom, and all you have to do is show up with a sincere desire to make a difference in just your life. You will be amazed at what follows. What do you say—Come join ROFW, your one-stop shop for making historic changes in your life.

Mark. F—Newsletter Editor &  
THE MEN OF WINFIELD ROFW

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**Ellsworth**—Greetings from the Ellsworth Chapter of ROFW.

Today we had a wonderful surprise when SuEllen came to see us, and brought world famous photographer Nick Vedros. Mr. Vedros came and took pictures of myself, my co-chairman Vern Gilliland and Mr. Isaac Allen. Our pictures will be featured in Salina from 8/17/16 through 10/30/16 at the Salina Art Center. I know for me it was a very new thing to have people take pictures of me for something positive. All my life people have had me taking only jail or prison photos. I spoke to Isaac and Vern and they were excited as to be doing something positive that could impact so many. We spent about 4 ½ hours with Nick shooting pictures all over the prison.

## ALL LIVES MATTER

Red men, Black men, Yellow men, Brown men, White men.

We are all the same.

All lives matter in today's age,

That's the name of the game.

Treat each other as you'd like to be treated,

That's our goal!

Learn to treat others with a pure heart from the goodness of your soul.

ALL LIVES MATTER

With all the pain in the world now,

And the killings of all of our brothers

All lives matter, that's how we should treat (all others)

Stop killing, burning, and destroying our neighborhoods

All lives matter, for that we should all NEVER be misunderstood.

ALL LIVES MATTER

Today, tomorrow, next month, next year

All lives matter and we should never let anyone live in fear

ALL LIVES MATTER

By Patrick U.

Recently here at the prison we also said goodbye to our long-time volunteer, Mr. Mike Warford, and welcomed Mr. Andy Holland. Also recently, SuEllen has brought three new volunteers from Salina. We also moved to our new meeting room in the 2 North conference room, and will be able to have a total of 20 members now thanks to all the help SuEllen got for us with the administration here at ECF. Thanks, SuEllen!

Chairman, Patrick W. U.



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## **Topeka ROFW groups host abuse survivor**

The TCF Central Unit ROFW group on June 13 hosted a speaker, Chloe Howey, a survivor of severe abuse and sexual trauma as a child and as a young adult. She had been in the news a few weeks earlier for having testified against her adoptive father who had gotten her pregnant when she was 13 years old. She spent many of her teen years in foster care. Our discussion went on for two hours – usually, our meetings are for one hour.

She survived and has progressed in life by finding strength through hope, and never giving up. We learned a lot from her, and we think she learned a lot from us. We thank her for coming and the facility for giving her clearance.

Ms. Howey met with the TCF I&J group on June 20. We're hoping she will be able to join us later in the year as a volunteer.

In the past few weeks, we've been exposed to a lot of violence and trauma in the news. Our speaking engagements have helped us deal with this.

Our reading of the Blue Book chapter on spirituality generated some intense discussion. We eventually concluded that resources are available to both believers and non-believers, and that everyone has a right to their opinion on these matters.

We would like to thank our volunteer sponsors: Sky Westerlund, Dave Ranney, and SuEllen Fried.

Submitted by Debra "Bo" G.

The TCF I&J ROFW group now has 12-15 members after clearing up some misunderstandings about the procedures for adding new members.

In early July, the group had an hour-long discussion on a handout that was distributed by our volunteer sponsor. It applies to people after their release from prison: **If someone who knows you are a felon asks you to do something illegal – making or selling dope, for example, or living in a house with a gun – that person is not your friend. You should not be hanging out with him or her. They care more about their drugs and their guns than they do about you.**

As mentioned above, the I&J group also spent two hours with Chloe Howey, a young Topeka woman who's recovering from years of unspeakable violence at the hands of her adoptive father.

The group tried to have a movie night on July 25 but had to leave after 15 minutes due to the facility going into a lock down that lasted several hours.

Submitted by Amber B.

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**Lansing Medium**—Greetings fellow R.O.F.W. members,

Our group here at the L.C.F. medium are joining hands with BIBR and Lifer's Organization to hold events for the population. We want to show unity and just how much we appreciate the positive change we see within members involved in these types of groups.

We are in the Respect Unit in the Blue Book to get the true meaning of what true respect is. The aspect of confusing fear with respect is common to most inmates but this is a false sense of what respect is according to the Blue Book.

We would also like to take the time to welcome the new warden into the facility (Sam Cline). We understand that changes will come and that all change is not bad which is something that we believe in R.O.F.W. With the changes he seems to be on board with groups holding fundraisers which is something that we have been working on for some time (Fundraisers assist in "giving back").

I also want to give thanks to all the volunteers that dedicate their time and effort to show us how much they care about us and I'm willing to say on behalf of all the organizations, Thank You and we truly appreciate your dedication.

-E. Brown, Newsletter Editor

## Invictus

By William Ernest Henley

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.

## **Hello and greetings from Kansas City.**

By now you all should have received your copies of the new Blue Books. There were not many changes, other than some grammar and page numbers. For the future we are looking at adding some new units on Grief & Loss, Parenthood, and bringing back the Bullying Unit. As you are seeing things in the Blue Book that need fixing please let us know. Summer is coming to an end and before long we will be coming around to see all of you for the Recognition Banquets. Tomorrow we are having a reception at the Salina Arts Center for our latest exhibit of our "Faces of Change" photo exhibit. The exhibit will be in Salina until the end of October and then we will let you know where it ends up.

We had a reception for our "Faces of Change" exhibit that is currently at the Salina Arts Center and will be there until the end of October. If your family or friends are in the area please tell them to stop by. The exhibit is breathtaking and the museum did such a great job displaying the photo portraits that I felt I was experiencing them for the first time. I spoke at the reception and as I did at our Kansas City reception for Faces of Change I told of my own personal story and I also told the audience that so many of you like myself did not want to be remembered for the worst thing you had done in your life, that you wanted to be on the side of good, you want to be taxpayers, good parents, homeowners, and leaders in your communities.

Jason Miles, Board President  
with Alumnus Larry Humphery

Born again hooligan  
only to be king again

-Fugees



## **Part 2 of 3: REACHING OUT FROM WITHIN - More about how Reaching Out From Within groups heal**

ROFW provides inmates a place that creates a rhythm, a repeated system or environment that allows a healing rhythm that stimulates and arouses the sleeping, sluggish brain. It is a rhythm that stabilizes the tempo of the inmate's brainwaves and boosts the brain's production of neurotransmitters.

Neurotransmitters are brain chemicals that communicate information throughout our brain and body. They relay signals between nerve cells, called "neurons." The brain uses neurotransmitters to tell our heart to beat, our lungs to breathe, and our stomach to digest. They can also affect mood, sleep, concentration, weight, and can cause adverse symptoms when they are out of balance. Neurotransmitter levels can be depleted many ways. As a matter of fact, it is estimated that 86% of Americans have suboptimal neurotransmitter levels. Stress, poor diet, neurotoxins, genetic predisposition, drugs (prescription and recreational), alcohol and caffeine usage can cause these levels to be out of optimal range.

This all may appear complicated, but it's really a simple process. When our brain is in optimal, healthy state, and it is not being overly stimulated, deep, lasting, permanent behavioral change can take place. Let's take a closer look at what happens.

**1. The brain is stimulated with voices of stories of other hurting people.** This is the first thing that happens. The brain is stimulated through hearing other men or women voices who are experiencing life in similar ways. The brain is stimulated at

the first meeting of this new rhythm.

**2. The brain is challenged.** The discussion of stories and reactions to the readings gently challenges the brain to let go of existing negative neural patterns, and old unhealthy habits of thinking and being. There is a gentle, unspoken challenge to "come dance with me!" In a real way, what is about to happen is a lot like a dance. The small group meetings challenge the inmates to try something new and different, to trust rhythms and movements of the group process. For the longest, the inmate may have been stuck in a rut. They can't seem to break out of their old patterns and habits. The brain daily goes back to the same old way of doing things. The brain is locked in the old destructive patterns of thinking, and doing the same inappropriate patterns of behavior for years. The sights and sounds of others wakes up the sluggish brain and challenges the inmate to try something new and exciting. "Come dance with me!"

**3. The brain gets in rhythm with the sounds of self and others.** The discussion is a kind of rhythm that is different than what many inmates may have ever experienced before. For maybe the first time they are listening to other men and women's pain. Suddenly, the meeting or the rhythm is "enjoyable", and the brain likes it. The brain starts to dance with the rhythm. Next thing they know they are out on the "dance floor" telling their story. And they don't care who is listening or how ugly their story might be. In a strange

way it starts to feel “enjoyable”, like dancing!

You might be asking, “how is this possible? Is the brain really dancing?” Well yes, metaphorically that’s what is exactly happening. The brain is dancing to the rhythm that it is hearing and seeing. The brain is mirroring, mimicking, or getting in-synch with the rhythm in the room.

**4. The brain copies the rhythm.** When a member consistently begins to attend the meetings, their brain begins to copy the rhythm it sees and hears in the room. The brain translates the rhythms into electrical impulses or brainwaves. The brain’s electrical impulses travel from one brain cell to another. The members of the group find themselves doing and saying some of the same things they are hearing from each other.

**5. The brain’s self-regulating system is interrupted.** The brain is a wonderful “machine”. It has a wonderful self-regulating system. It is constantly striving for balance and equilibrium. Unfortunately, the inmates previous pain and trauma may have abnormally changed the brains structure. The brainwaves then parked in a dysfunctional rhythm. The negative stimulation became so bad that the brain considered the old destructive rhythms to be normal. However, something magical happens when the inmate is exposed to the sights and sounds of others in the group. The brain’s firing patterns are gently nudged in the direction of a healthier balance. This nudging interrupts the brain’s self-regulating system. The brain says, “Whoa, what’s up with this?”

We are doing things a little differently now...and I kind of like it!” Occasionally, the brain may push back, and resist the new rhythm. Change **IS** hard. The brain wants the old, familiar dance no matter how much it might like the new dance. This is why consistency, weekly meetings are so important, especially within the first 30-60 days.

**6. The tempo of the brainwaves become stabilized.** If the inmate wants to move slowly, the brain may want to move faster. If the inmate wants to move faster, the brain may want to move slowly. This, too, is normal. Gradually, the tempo of the brainwaves is balanced, fine-tuned, and stabilized. This happens automatically as the inmate gets in-synch with the sights and sounds of the group. The rhythm of the room begins to balance the brainwaves so that the tempo is within a normal range.

**7. The brain teaches itself to normalize.** As the brain gets in-synch with the sights and sounds in the room, it gradually becomes comfortable. It’s as if the brain realizes, “I like this! Yes, this is the rhythm that I like dancing to now!” The brain teaches itself to hold and maintain the new rhythm. This is a big change for the brain’s self-regulating system. The sights and sounds then produce the new autopilot.

**8. The brain begins to change electro-chemically.** During these last few steps brain cells are firing and wiring. The dendrites become thicker and denser. This enables the inmate to think faster and smarter. The brain starts to produce a stable supply of neurotransmitters which aids the inmate to focus and pay

attention. The more meetings they attend, the more they dance, the more connections (or synapses) are created in the brain. This gives them a greater capacity for transmitting messages and processing information, which translates to higher intelligence and better mental functioning.

**9. The brain is conditioned.** Every time the inmate attends a meeting, they are practicing the new dance. They are reinforcing and solidifying the neural connections in the brain. Eventually, this process becomes completely automatic and they are able to hold this rhythm for longer periods of time, until the rhythm becomes permanent.

**10. The brain creates a new brain map.** With repeated practice, the neural pathways become stronger and more solidified. The inmates are literally changing the structure and patterns in their brains. Sometimes, this process is called “rewiring the brain”. In all practicality, the inmates are creating a new brain map for learning. And for most who attend faithfully a meeting of Reaching Out From Within, they are developing a new brain map that whether they stay in prison to complete their term, or they leave—they will never be the same!

With the group, the old mind is like a coward who lost the fight. The old brain map is no longer used. The new neural pathways become stronger and the old ways (distraction disorganization, restless energy, etc.) fade away. Now the members can access their new and improved state of mind, which is peak performance. As a result, the ability to concentrate, focus, listen, read and remember improves---and their life is transformed.