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Doug Couch, Editor
The Transformer
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Los Angeles, CA 93534-4754

Dear Mr. Couch,

Greetings from the AVP Community at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad! I just wanted to give you a progress report on AVP at Soledad and share with you an exercise created by one of our inside facilitators. We have only been conducting AVP workshops here at Soledad for a little more than a year and a half, but over 200 men have already completed the Basic Workshop experience and we are hoping to more than double that number in the coming months.

Thanks to a passionate and committed group of outside facilitators and an equally committed and talented group of inside facilitators, the music of AVP can now be heard in the corridor of this facility as men address one another by their adjective names or by sharing a happy memory from a workshop. Smiles and handshakes are offered across the formerly forbidden lines established by prison protocol, and, often for the first time, men are seeing the others they live with as people like them rather than as the distorted caricatures of stereotype. This is the beginning of real community. This is the gift of AVP.

I know that I speak for every inside facilitator and workshop participant when I express my heartfelt gratitude to outside facilitators everywhere for making all of this possible. It is your courage in coming into these places, your generosity of time, your resources, and yourselves that opens our confined worlds to a Transforming Power capable of so much more than simply averting violence. Not only do you assist us in the process of reconnecting with one another here on the inside, but you also make us feel connected in a very real way to the community beyond these walls and fences.

As a small token of appreciation, inside facilitator "Just John" Piccirillo wants to share with you an exercise that he calls "Adoption Agency." This exercise came to him during a state of post-workshop exuberance, and I was lucky enough to have been present when the AVP muse whispered in his ear. I found it delightfully entertaining to watch this very large and formerly very non-AVP-like man expressing his thoughts and ideas with all the unbridled enthusiasm of a child. For my own part, I assumed the role of scribe and just kept asking questions until John's vision coalesced in the exercise that follows. We hope you enjoy it!

Form all of us here at Soledad, thank you so very much. We totally get it!



"Judicious John" Thibeault

NAMASTE



"Just John" Piccirillo