

## A letter to my oldest daughter (about the soul)

Dear E,

I can't believe it's time to pick our monthly song to share again. It feels like I just did that. But this is a good thing when I think about the time I have left here. Hopefully every month will go as quickly as this past one seemed to flow by.

For the song, I am listening to it as I write this letter. It's "Wish You Were Here," by Pink Floyd. I've found this song entertaining in the past, when a close friend played it at work. But I never paid it too much attention. I never obtained it for myself back then.

In here, I figured I'd check out more of their music since that close friend loved them so much. I am glad I did. They have a lot of good songs. This one stands out to me now musically, but even more so lyrically. It touches on illusions we believe and later confront. This is something that I certainly did since coming to prison. It also connects to feelings of distance and of being lost, both things I became quite familiar with these last few years.

Lastly, I will say that it brings up soul. The soul in its honest form, not some new agey concept or some strict religious thing that will rise to heaven and meet a judgmental God. Rather, a soul that is the core of your being. The soul that yearns for meaning in your life. The soul that aches because we rarely try to actually obtain that meaning in life that it truly desires.

It's the soul that causes the feeling deep down that says: "Something isn't right here. I'm not sure what, but there must be more." Sadly, we tell ourselves to ignore what the soul is saying, and a piece of us dies every time we do this. If you do this long enough, you will become so distanced, so estranged from your soul, that you will lose almost all chance of hearing it anymore. You will become a defeated person, never fully you.

I have been working on connecting with the soul. It often speaks loudest during times of catastrophe, anguish, or loss. If you're willing to enter into a dialogue with it, you will start a healing process and begin to become a more whole person. You will develop a new capacity to endure suffering, increase love, and hold more space for others. You will begin to find a purpose and fulfillment in your life. You will become more whole as a person.

That's what I'm trying to be. Such soul work is not easy. It can be painful at times. But nonetheless, it is a beautiful and worthwhile process.

Love always,

Pa

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*My daughter called me Pa as a joke one day and it stuck. I've come to embrace it ever since.*