

(1/12/2022)

Dear Lee,

I will be calling you in several hours but I am going to write about what's going on. I will tell you on the phone but I just felt like talking before that (writing will have to do for now). I'm not even sure what to say. I'm just tired of prison.

Covid has made doing time much more difficult than what it is normally like in a prison camp. I'm now in unit 1. This means I have been in every unit (unit 1, unit 2, RDAP L01, and RDAP L02) in the camp and I've been behind the wall in the SHU (segregated housing unit aka solitary confinement). And I've been moved to various bunks within the units/RDAP. It's a lot of moving. Almost every move was because of covid in one way or another. Moving so often in prison can really suck.

Often, someone says, "Pack up your shit, you're moving now," and you gotta hurry up and scramble. It was like that for over 150 guys all at once yesterday. We all had to carry all our belongings across the compound outside and into our new location. And they said we could only make one trip and if we couldn't carry stuff, we had to throw it out. One locker full of stuff, plus a mattress, and work boots is a lot to carry.

It was a mess.

Trails of guys dropping belongings outside in freezing temps (below 20 degrees). Negative covid guys walking one way, positive covid guys walking the other, all passing each other on their way. They kept us, positive and negative, mixed for hours before they had us move. At least I was able to get a good bunkie. We were able to make some moves to end up together, find a locker, put it in our cube, and get a chair for each of us. Might sound like not much, but simple comforts go a long way in here.

Being in the units is louder at night. I got little sleep last night and don't expect that to change. I am eager to be done with my imprisonment. But I remind myself that difficult days for the ego are splendid for the soul.

In the heat of suffering, the soul ferments uncomfortably, but this is what helps unleash wisdom and unmask our true human potentials. Struggles, setbacks, and falling into a world of confusion are all part of being human. And perhaps they are even necessary if we are to transcend the parts of ourselves that are holding us back in our own lives.

It seems that most people don't look at it this way and that's understandable. Who wants to

willingly do the uncomfortable work of looking at and engaging their suffering face to face?

I am well aware that I can make excuses or do the work to change my life. But I don't get to do both. So, one foot in front of the other, one step at a time, I am finding my way through all this. I refuse to stay stuck. I can't wait for this difficult feeling in my chest to finally transform and guide me into the next season of my life.

I know, in order to get there, I must continue, even if my heart aches and my mind says to stop. Persisting in such moments of weakness is when we give birth to our greatest strengths. This is where we meet our potential and become our best selves. I suppose this is the beauty hidden within our suffering. Now, it's up to us to find it.

Love, Pepe