

The Inmates

By Pete Clark

Deep within the being that is me there is not a single inner child: residing in my superego and pushing their way into my consciousness are inner children. Between the early Spring of 1944 and a little after VE day in May of 1945 the inner child which I rarely discuss came into being, while my second inner resident might have been there from the beginning and may have always accompanied me in my journey through time and space. The former has been an impediment, though less so as I have matured and grown older; the latter has ever been a bright beacon in my darkest hours and is the same in the brightest sunshine.

That first mentioned inner child is by any definition an inmate imprisoned within my id and superego, held captive, kept away from my conscious mind and is able to work his nastiness only when events meet the needs for his foray to the foreground of my thoughts. I take care to avoid situations that will facilitate his escape and allow my submersion into a state of irrational fear. Sometime after my thirtieth year I remembered the incident which created this inner fiend and that realization proved that knowledge is power: I was able to neutralize his capability, but not entirely.

Unqualified curiosity, promoting imaginative ways of working through problems, being ever filled with hope and always willing to learn are a few of the qualities of the other inmate of my superego, who has done much to aid in creating the world as I see it, helping me to navigate through everything from the ripples to the tidal waves which make up the myriad of events and episodes of which life is composed. A major theme of this inmate is Go forth and conquer but never be a tyrant: embrace life's adventures, excitement, disappointments, winning, losing and love.

The greatest gift from my sunny inner child is something that should be obvious to all, though it is almost never perceived. This simple concept enables me to continue learning fresh information and new skills, exploring the world around me and exploring worlds that might be created with ink, graphite or electromagnetic ones and zeros. I have heard many times "Youth is wasted on the young." I disagree, for without the strength of youth, I would not be here to put these words on paper.

Aging should bring wisdom but that does not always occur and I make no pretense of being owlishly wise; but I have learned that no matter how devastating an event may be, as with everything that happens, some good will come from it and no matter the cost, I have to do what I have to do. The great gift from my inner child is simply this: even if I should live to be one hundred ten years old, I must never completely grow up.