



# AVP Newsletter

Issue 1 / December 2020

## Note From the Editors

Welcome to the first edition the AVP Newsletter! The Minnesota AVP community is reaching out to readers both inside and outside of prison who are interested in finding alternatives to the violence so prevalent in our world. We are working with facilities regarding permission and procedures for submissions from our AVPers on the inside. We also want to hear from those with experience with incarceration. Your voices are a critical to the conversation this newsletter seeks to have. We are

seeking submissions in all of the segments that follow, and more.

To receive future issues, subscribe by completing the enclosed card, or send a letter to the address in the footer. In these days of COVID-19 and its restrictions on in-person workshops, the Editors and AVP community send you all warm regards for a hopeful holiday season.

*-The Editors: Bright Brucie, Perspicacious Fish, Motivated Maria, Compassionate Chris, Lucky Lee, and Artistic Andrew*

Oil painting (above)  
FERTILE FIELDS, 2006  
by Perspicacious Fish

## Artwork

**Submit an image  
of your artwork  
to share in our  
AVP Newsletter**

## Dear AVP

Send both questions and answers - for what we'd like to be a column for advice by committee

## Explore AVP

An in-depth report on adventures in AVP research and experiences

## Spirituality

A space to explore the divine in ourselves and one another. Though we are not a religious group, we are spiritual...

## Contest: Name This Newsletter!

We would like to have a name for this newsletter that reflects our goal of safe and supportive communication for all

Please submit your suggestion for a title. The only guidelines are that the title should be short enough to fit on a headline banner, and in keeping with AVP principles. Submit as many suggestions as you like to the address in the footer! Deadline: January 8, 2021. The winner will be recognized in our next newsletter.

# Dear Community,

## AVP actions underway in our community

I hope this letter finds you and yours as well as can be. I miss our AVP infusions, but I am faring well in the meantime. Those of us on the outside are thinking of those on the inside daily; our hearts are with you.

Some of us have begun meeting (virtually) several times a week to work through new methods of interacting within the community under COVID restrictions.

You're reading the first edition of one such working group result! We hope this newsletter can stand in for a much needed sense of connection to the greater community.

We're attending virtual AVP workshops that have cropped up from a few places around the world. We're developing ours for MN and reaching out to facilities.

FNVW (Friends for a Nonviolent World, AVP's parent organization) had already been producing an "Everyday Nonviolence" podcast; we're working to have it aired weekly on the prison's television channel.

We hope to begin communicating these points of contact via flyer, so look out for those too.

If you have any input for our working group – send it in!

For now, let me leave you with a summary of (a previously incarcerated AVP facilitator) Mujeddid Muhammad's recent talk via Zoom.

His message spoke to universal truths: We heal the world by healing the individual. Become a caterpillar, find a sense of rootedness within, focus on healing.

Please speak to your inner self with the language of kindness and attentiveness. And help others; in doing so, one can feel viscerally the lifting of spirits.

Until next time,

Perspicacious Fish



# Practice AVP

## Ways we might practice AVP in our everyday lives

**RESPECT FOR SELF** is part of the AVP Mandala and represents a basic premise of AVP practice. The current pandemic may be making us feel isolated and can challenge our mental health. This is a daily checklist of things that may help us get through this difficult time. Try some of the following as a way to show respect for yourself.

**\*Create Routines:** incorporate things into your day that help you feel good

**\*Light:** get as much as you can; natural light is best, whenever possible

**\*Gratitude:** make a list of three things you are grateful for

**\*Practice AVP:** choose an AVP principal or Transforming Power guideline to practice and incorporate into your day

**\*Get outside:** every day if you can

**\*Reach out:** with intention, write a letter, call or talk to someone

**\*Learn:** watch a documentary, read a book or article - feed your mind!

**\*Drink water**

**\*Improve your environment:** clean, organize, decorate

**\*Be creative:** write, draw, craft

**\*Do something nice for someone**

**\*Exercise:** walk, work out, do yoga - get moving!

**\*Music:** sing, dance, hum, strum - it stimulates your brain

**\*Laugh:** tell a joke, watch a comedy, find humor in your everyday circumstance

**\*Eat healthy:** two fruits and two vegetables a day, limit or omit sugar and snacks

**\*Physical health:** take care of your body - shower, floss, clip your nails

**\*Spiritual practice:** meditate, pray, utilize your spiritual beliefs

**\*At the end of the day:** list 3 things that went well

Try this and if it works share it with a friend. It might be even more effective when practicing RESPECT FOR SELF together.

- Compassionate Chris

# Meditation



## An opportunity for self-soothing and reflection

GOODWILL MEDITATION | by Bo Lozoff

Sit straight and quietly, close your eyes. Let your attention focus on calm breathing for a minute or two. Let other thoughts go.

Now bring to mind the image of someone or something you love in a very sweet and affectionate way - like a baby, child, parent or grandparent, a childhood pet, or a favorite place in nature.

Breathe into the center of your chest - your spiritual heart center. As you feel the gratitude and affection associated with the image you are thinking of, expand it so that you are offering a blessing to that person, place or thing which means so much to you. To offer a blessing can be as simple as thinking, "may

you find true peace in your life." Imagine their face receiving your blessing, and smiling.

Continue to breathe into that affectionate heart place. Now bring to mind the people in the cells around you, while holding that feeling of affection. Picture each of them, even the guards, and offer them the same blessing. Remember, no one with true peace in their lives will ever be cruel to anyone else, so it doesn't matter who this person is or what they are like; your blessing will help not only them, but others as well.

Keep expanding your affection outward, including the building you are in, the city, region, state, nation,

and finally the world. Whenever you feel your affection slip away, bring back your original image again.

At the end of this practice, when you have included all beings in your blessing, see yourself sitting where you are, like a shining angel, radiating light outward in all directions equally. At this moment, because of your goodwill: no one in the whole world is unloved, no one is unforgiven, no bitterness or grudges are festering in you.

Recognize your power and your responsibility to pray for the world in this way, and then offer the same blessing to yourself: "May I be well, may I find true peace in my life."

- Submitted by Lucky Lee



## ***Finding Common Ground***

### **Stories of times you used transforming power to solve a conflict**

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I would like to share a story of a time I used the guideline: **Seek to resolve conflict by finding common ground.**

Part of my job is to do assessments of people who have committed sexual crimes. Usually there were two or three people in the office, but this day I was the only one there. When a recently released citizen arrived, he barged in the door, very agitated. He yelled, "It's not \*\*\*fair! I've \*\*done my time, I shouldn't have to \*\*\*do this! And I can't even see my own daughter until it's \*\*\*completed!"

I was scared. He moved closer, towering over me in a threatening way. I desperately tried to remember ways to resolve conflict from my recent AVP workshop. The only thing I could think of was the first guideline: Seek to resolve conflict by finding common ground. I couldn't think of a thing that I might have in common with this furious (and scary) man! Trying to stay calm, I asked him, "How old is your daughter?"

He stopped yelling and said, "Eight. Why would you care?"

I told him, "I have an eight year old foster granddaughter that stays with me on weekends. It's such a fun age. I can understand how difficult it is to not see her." I could see he was calming down a little. I asked if he had any pictures of her and before I knew it, he had gotten down to be eye level with me showing me pictures. He was still unhappy about having to do the assessment, but the crisis was over. We had found common ground.

*-Compassionate Chris*