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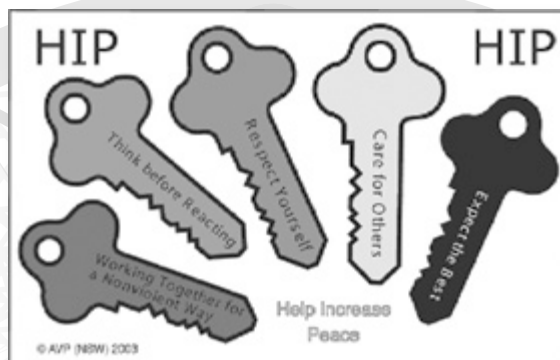
# TRANSFORMER

Supporting and Celebrating the Facilitators of AVP Workshops

## Transforming Power

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## TRANSFORMING POWER

Stories from Maryland  
by the JCI Facilitator Team



## The TRANSFORMER

*The Transformer* is a quarterly publication of the Alternatives to Violence Project of the United States of America.

Editorial Coordinators: elżbieta putrycz and Ed Sabin

Copy Editor: Joan Cowan

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Questions and address changes:

Contact: [transformer@avpusa.org](mailto:transformer@avpusa.org)

Or go to: [www.avpusa.org](http://www.avpusa.org)

Headquarters and Distribution

Service, Subscription:

1050 Selby Avenue

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Phone: (888) 278-7820

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## Using Transforming Power in Court

by Lighthouse Larry Bratt

It was late in the day as two sheriff's deputies escorted me into the courtroom.

"How's it going, Bratt?"

"Now that I'm finally in a warm courtroom, Your Honor, okay."

Laughter from the deputies, clerk and judge.

"Your holding area is refrigerated!" More laughter.

"Bratt, the hospital people that you're suing claim you failed to properly serve them."

"Your Honor, under *Steed Manufacturing Co. v. Arthur*, as long as I send certified registered mail--regardless of who signs for the mail--service is proper."

"Why not just drop the complaint?"

"Your Honor, I'm here to argue the merits of my case. You're here, and the clerk sent notices to all parties to be here today. The defendants apparently ignored the summons. Now you're asking me to drop my complaint. Sir, I want my medical records and money from the defendants under the law."

"I've heard enough! I'm ready to rule."

I laughed. "I see you want to go home."

"Not really; I've got to go home to my wife." The deputies laughed.

"At least you've got a wife and home to go to. I'm going back to a cell."

"You might be better off," said the judge.

Everyone laughed.

"Bratt, they're not going to like this, but I grant summary judgment in your favor." He smiled and hit the gavel. "Court dismissed."

I used Transforming Power in this quickest of all court hearings. The theme for this 2015 summer issue of *The Transformer*, written for the fourth consecutive year by AVPers from Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI) in Maryland, offers practical solutions to serious problems such as how to keep contact with family and children, how to deal with a spouse while incarcerated and how to get along with each other daily. **How many guides to Transforming Power can you find in these stories?**

*Lighthouse Larry Bratt has been an AVP participant and facilitator since 1995. He is a devotee of Sai Baba who teaches us to "Love All; Serve All."*



JCI Basic Workshop

## Guides to Transforming Power

- Seek common ground.
- Reach for the good in others.
- Listen before making judgments.
- Base your position in truth.
- Revise your position if it is wrong.
- Expect the best.
- Risk creativity rather than violence.
- Use surprise and humor.
- Trust your inner sense of when to act.
- Be willing to suffer for what is important.
- Be patient and persistent.
- Build community based on honest, respect and caring.



## A Family Affair

by Zaeed (means humble in Arabic) Zakaria

I am an Egyptian who has been in America for four decades--sadly, the last 20 years at JCI. I have been an AVP facilitator for 10 years and have learned to use Transforming Power in interacting with my grown children and grandchildren. Upon witnessing the birth of my six children, hearing their first cry after that slap on their bottoms, I was eternally attached to them through the invisible umbilical cord of life. Ignoring my children's lives belongs in the Trash Bag. Yes, I use the Trash Bag exercise in my daily life.

One day I called my son Amos' home. He wasn't there, but his wife, Maria, told me he was being bad to her and the children. Amos told me there were some problems between him and Maria. I insisted they both visit me. The following weekend they arrived.

"Father, Amos ignores me and the children. I feel so alone."

"Daughter, I heard what you have said. I will speak to Amos alone."

The officers allowed her to leave and Amos to stay.

"Father, Maria says she and the children never see enough of me and that I've grown distant. I tell her I love her and that I work long and hard to provide a comfortable living for my family."

Maria returned. I said, "Children, I take no sides. Each of you has valid points. But work and money are not as important as harmony with the family. This problem is easy to reconcile if both of you are willing to listen and surrender your ego to preserve family unity and peace."

A week later, they returned. Their expressions and handholding told me all I needed to know. Unfortunately I can't be there for many of my family's problems, but I cherish the few instances in which I can help.

*For Zaeed Zakaria, cruelty is the weapon of cowards; while humility, empathy and kindness are the tools of the courageous. Zakaria is proud to be part of the JCI AVP family.*

## The Hardest Task

by 'Justice' Joe Owens-Bey

The greatest gift I have learned from AVP is to listen. Transforming Power Guide #3 says, "Listen before making judgments." I learned the wisdom of this guideline. I used to put on my Dr. Phil persona and act as though I had answers to everyone's problem. But I never wanted to listen long enough to get to the root of the problem, so I wasn't really a good listener.

A friend told me he needed someone to talk to because his mother just passed away. He asked if I could spare some time to listen to him. It truly was a blessing. For the first time, I actually listened--probably because I empathized with him. I learned things about him and his mother that paralleled my relationship with my mother.

Our friendship became strong to the point that we became true brothers. By taking the time to place my ego on the back burner and listen without judgment or advice, both of us benefitted. I recall two adages of my grandparents and great grandmother: "Take the cotton out of your ears and stick it in your mouth" and "Be twice as fast to listen and just as slow to talk."

*Justice Joe Owens-Bey became a facilitator June 2007. He has served as a service dog handler through the Canine Partners for Life Program.*

## AVP Around the World

We are part of an international movement for transformation and peace. AVP is present and changing lives in 55 countries all over the world, from Bolivian prisons to Rwandan communities, to bridging across conflicts in Israel and Palestine. AVP-International groups build community using the same AVP tools, with the same intention, connecting us across the globe. In July 2014, representatives from member countries came together for our International Gathering in Ireland. It was truly an amazing experience, and the next International Gathering is in 2017 in Nepal, so start making plans! To learn more about AVP-International, visit the website [avp.international](http://avp.international)



## September 21: Day of Collective Action

Communities around the world will facilitate simultaneous AVP workshops on September 21, 2015 for the International Day of Peace! Plan mini workshops for Monday Sep 21 and weekend workshops for Sep 19-20!



## Two Minutes With ...Wonderful Wood

Adjective Name: Wonderful Wood

Hometown: Bel Air, Maryland

Favorite AVP Activities:

Facilitating Basic workshops and the exercise *Who Am I*

Music that makes you happy:

Slow Christian and Jazz

Secret Aspiration:

To create a non-profit corporation for building housing for ex-offenders called LOFT - *Least of These*.

What do you most appreciate about your community:

The fact that the facilitators always rally and come together whenever AVP is in a bind or needs to perform menial tasks for the JCI community. JCI facilitators have done an abundance of workshops that have proven to be innovative and our teams have conducted more workshops than any other AVP prison in the state.

When do you feel most

powerful: I feel most powerful after helping someone overcome an obstacle.

## I Should Have Thought

by Michael 'Tenacious' Thomas

Although I have been an AVP facilitator for 15 years, living in a prison environment is stressful and can cause one to lose his AVP balance. However, that is no excuse for me or any facilitator to walk towards violence.

In 2008 when I began working as a supervisor in the Maryland Correctional Enterprises shop where we make uniforms for all state inmates, I took my responsibilities seriously--perhaps too seriously. One day I was giving out work assignments to other prisoners and began a conversation with a friend. Another man interrupted our discourse and started talking. I looked at my friend and said, "Did you invite him into our conversation?"

"No! He just does things like that."

"Dude, you're rude and you weren't invited!"

"Who the hell do you think you are? I can speak whenever I want!"

"You didn't even excuse yourself for interrupting us."

"I got into the conversation and if you don't like it, bring it!"

I began to feel the stages of anger: annoyance, irritation, anger, rage and fury. My fists balled up. My face

flushed and contorted into a menacing stare as my chest swelled. "Big mouth, let's go to the bathroom and settle this!"

Before the intruder could respond, my friend used JCI's AVP adage, 'Sometimes a man has got to think for another man.' "Michael, snap out of it; you know better. Stop and think about what you are doing!"

I looked at my friend and the interloper. I shook my head. He was right, and I was wrong. I looked at the man I was about to pummel. "I apologize. I was wrong to become so agitated."

The man was startled by my sudden turnaround. He did not want to fight any more than I did. "No. I should apologize because I sometimes interrupt conversations before finding out if I can join it."

"Let's forget the whole thing and start fresh. Okay?" I extended my hand, and he took it. To this day, we are friends. I am happy to say he became an AVP participant.

*Michael Tenacious Thomas likes to help people and loves drawing. His energy and caring are infectious.*

## Staying In Touch Through Prison Walls

by Jeffrey 'Jazzy' Johnson

I have been incarcerated since October 1990—just before my baby girl turned three. My incarceration created turmoil in my relationship with her and her mother. When I went to prison, her mother returned to Florida where she was from and took my daughter. Still, her mother made sure that my girl could visit with my family and see me at least once or twice a year. She made sure we had regular communication via the phone and mail.

My family also helped me build a loving foundation with my daughter. I would call my parents' home; in turn, they would call my daughter on the second phone and then connect the phones so the two of us could talk for the 30-minute calls afforded to prisoners. Of course, I bombarded her with pictures, letters and cassette tapes of my singing. I shared my life with her, and she did likewise. I did all I could to be an influence in my child's life and, with the help of my family and her mother's family, I was able to do that while she was young.

As my daughter got older and started high school, we

were able to reach out to one another on our own. She could correspond with me herself. Despite concerns from my daughter's maternal family about our relationship, my ex-wife stayed loyally in my corner and facilitated my staying in our daughter's life.

It was my AVP tools as a facilitator that made me a better listener. AVP helped me to hold thoughtful conversations with my child. In turn, she became a thinker and made plans for her future. She is now independent and has graduated from Florida State University to become a lieutenant in the United States Army. She made me a proud father. I am ever so grateful for an experience that easily could have been taken from me if not for her mother, my family and the love I share with my baby girl.

*Jazzy Jeff has been an AVP facilitator for seven years. He is also a facilitator for Purpose Driven Life and Life's Healing Choices. He takes pleasure in musical accomplishments.*

## Staying In Touch

by 'Constructive Chris' Hunter

Everyone in my life was mad at me--especially the mother of my children. Convicted of armed robbery, I received a 14-year sentence. Still, I tried several times a day to contact her and my children to no avail. I wanted her to know I still cared. Yet, I harbored no delusions about my circumstances or the position I left her in. *It was my entire fault!*

I had broken every promise I made to this beautiful young woman, now abandoned with our two incredible children. What could I expect? Then one day I was called for a visit. Surprise and delight overwhelmed me when I saw my parents with my son (3) and

daughter (1). It had been a year since I'd seen or talked to them, but our connection was instantaneous. I soaked up every word, smile and touch that day.

I held it together until I got back to my cell; then I lost it. Monsoon tears flooded the floor. That day I decided my children would always know that 'Daddy' loves them--no matter what. If I couldn't get them on the phone, then I would be in their mailbox as much as possible. I discovered what they liked. I drew pictures, wrote stories and cut out magazine pictures to send them. Inspired by letters I received back, I began building treasure chests of dolls, stuffed animals, necklaces, nightlights, etc. Heck, I even sent them prison-made

taffy, Scooby snacks and other candies.

My point is that stamps are cheap, and it doesn't matter what is sent because *Daddy* sent it with love. My children, now 6 and 4, get excited when they go to the mailbox. Their bedroom walls are covered with constant reminders of *Daddy*. My relationship with their mother is more receptive, so I talk to them daily. I now teach them how to draw on the phone. I cherish my role as *Daddy* and know it's completely up to me to let them know that.

*Constructive Chris has done a lot of things in life, but none of it mattered as much to him as being a father and being looked up to and loved unconditionally.*

## My Partner

by 'Positive Pat' Senf

In 2009, I was blessed with a new wife, who loves me despite myself. I have trust issues and have had difficulties my entire life communicating feelings of love and other emotions. By not understanding how to live and cope with emotions, I found myself arguing and fighting with others--even my new wife. Heck, prison life for me was easy because I didn't care about myself or others.

Feelings of self-contempt caused many arguments with my wife. Because I couldn't communicate my true feelings, I left her. My fear of rejection strangled my desire to experience her love. However, she had other ideas. She refused to accept my leaving. When I caught

this latest sentence, she visited and said, "I refuse to desert you, and you won't leave me!" I was hit with a taser. She loved me more than I loved myself. That day I decided to change.

By participating in AVP, I learned tools of effective communication. My wife and I share a love but, just as important, I learned to love myself. I eagerly look forward to life with my wife beyond prison walls.

*Positive Pat Senf has grown up inside prison walls. Thanks to many people--especially his new AVP family--he feels that, at 45, his life has truly begun.*

If you order from Amazon this year, please, please, please use the **Amazon tab** at the bottom of [avpusa.org](http://avpusa.org) so that 5% of your order goes to AVP USA. Let your friends know about it!

## Staying Connected

Want to connect with facilitators and AVP communities around the country and world? Sign up for AVP Listserves -- regular emails to your inbox from the AVP community. Email [avp-1@avpusa.org](mailto:avp-1@avpusa.org) to subscribe!





## Looking Back, Moving Forward: Exploring Diversity at the AVP-USA National Gathering in Tacoma, WA



75 facilitators celebrated the 40th Anniversary of AVP on Memorial Day Weekend, May 22-24, 2015. The Conference was held at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, near Seattle on the Northwest coast of the US.

**T**his past Memorial Day weekend AVP-USA celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. The slogan for the celebration was "Looking Back, Moving Forward." The organization took the opportunity to look back at our history, evaluate where we are now and set goals for the future.

### The History

AVP began as a diverse coalition. In 1975, several groups of people converged in response to violence in upstate New York prisons, including the well-known uprising at Attica. Who would have thought that prisoners would converge with prison staff, civil rights workers and Quakers to form one of the most successful programs of nonviolent conflict resolution? The founders of AVP embodied a community built on honesty, respect and caring. A unique feature of the program was its horizontal leadership structure where blacks shared power with whites, rich with poor, young with old, incarcerated with free. This leadership structure demanded that everyone have equal power and the right to be heard before a decision was made. This commitment to

equality and diversity resulted in a program that has stood the test of time. Since 1975, AVP has expanded to over 55 countries.

### Where We Are Now

Because AVP developed as a prison program, it is easy to succumb to the idea that the enfranchised carry the responsibility to bring the message of nonviolence to the disenfranchised. But at its inception, AVP was conceived as a program that one day would transcend prison walls. The men and women who began AVP were concerned not only with prisoners but with preventing people from ever becoming prisoners. Serving youth has become difficult partly because, nationwide, we lack youth facilitators. At the national gathering, there were only three AVPers under 30 and not a single person under 21 to represent the voice of youth. With such demographics, it is easy to see why AVP has trouble expanding efforts to serve youth. Violence does not discriminate, and neither should we.

### How We Move Forward

Moving forward, AVP promises to renew efforts to maintain the diversity that is AVP's legacy. Diversity is

important for social and political reasons, but also because we need diversity of thought. The organization is committed to expanding its leadership structure to reflect further the ideals of AVP's founders. The best ones to deal with violence are those directly affected by it. We are learners and teachers together. There need to be opportunities for young facilitators to advance in the organization and share leadership roles. There also need to be opportunities for returning citizens to connect

and grow with the organization. Hopefully when facilitators from all communities take on leadership roles at every level of the organization, each year's national gathering will begin to look different from the previous one.

*Al "Just Josh" Simmons is a facilitator with Landing Strip NYC, a support group for returning citizens. He is Co-Clerk of both AVP-NY and AVP-USA's Committee of Local and Regional Groups (CLARG).*



## Letter from National Outreach Coordinators:

We are young, passionate facilitators looking to strengthen AVP as a diverse, national movement, and we need your help to do that. AVP-USA has decided to hire us, on a modest stipend, to do promotion, community building and fundraising. This means helping to organize and connect local groups as a whole, strengthening public relations and outreach, and generally spreading the AVP word so that we can raise more money for the organization. More financial resources will enable the organization to support projects such as AVP in schools and stipends for facilitators in financial straits, including those coming home from prison.

AVP needs to listen to the voices of those it wishes to serve. Issues of organizational structure, diversity, and hierarchy are always with us. Our broader community no doubt holds insights that can inform us as AVP-USA wrestles with these issues. We hope to learn and grow alongside y'all in the coming year so together we can make the organization more inclusive, more sustainable, and more able to share its resources with local groups.

We look forward to working with you. Please let us know how best we can reach out to your communities. We will update on projects via email, Facebook, and a new column in *The Transformer* called Reach Out!

Peace,

*Meditative Martin and Equalize-It Elzbieta*

## From Foe to Friend

by 'Quintessential Quinta' Uzzle

During my 17-year incarceration at JCI, I have encountered many difficulties. I share one of these experiences with AVPers when I facilitate workshops.

In my housing unit, the washers and dryers never operate properly. You can imagine how chaotic washing can be when 96 men need clean clothes after exercise or work. My dirty laundry sat by the washer for three straight days waiting for the laundryman. Fed up, I took the liberty of putting my dirty clothes in a washer. Lockdown came and while in my cell, I heard someone making a big fuss on the tier. The individual was cursing and threatening to inflict serious bodily harm on the offender.

This tirade lasted several minutes until I realized I was the object of the man's anger. I called out, "What's your problem? You need to stop yelling and cursing." His reply was foul. "I'll see you when the doors open!" I was hot and fed up with his disrespect.

The doors opened for lunch. I went up to him, then recalled my TP guidelines. His fists were balled up, and he was sizing me up. "Before you try to

start anything," I said, "let me explain my problem to you." This sudden shift in my attitude startled him. His fists relaxed. "Go on!"

"My clothes sat on the tier for the past three days, and I needed clean clothing. You did not wash them for me so I did it myself. You must have been busy and overlooked my bag."

"I was hustling and forgot to do your bag. My bad."

"No problem. Listen, I'll skip lunch and finish my clothes."

"Don't miss your meal; let's go to chow together, and I'll finish the laundry afterwards."

At lunch, we shared conversation and discovered we had many things in common. We both have children and both love the Washington Redskins. Out of this potentially violent situation, we formed a lasting friendship.

*Quintessential Quinta has been involved with AVP since 1999 and became a facilitator in 2007. AVP has transformed him in positive ways, and he sees how it continues to aid people.*

## Reach Out!

*What we can do together*

Train 1500 facilitators for the **#1500 for 40** campaign, in honor of AVP's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Anytime you facilitate a T4F, inside or outside prison—that counts. Together we'll reach 1500 in no time. Of course, boosting our efforts to train facilitators does not mean losing sight of quality and integrity. Submit your numbers and follow the running tally in *The Transformer*, on AVP-L\* and on our new Facebook page. . .

Like the new **AVP USA Facebook page**: <https://www.facebook.com/alternativetoviolenceprojectusa>  
Post your stories about the work that you're doing, and help keep the tally of trained facilitators.

AVP USA needs a **slogan!**

Submit your ideas to [avptransformer@gmail.com](mailto:avptransformer@gmail.com) or PO Box 295 Franklin, NY 13775. We will post submissions in the Autumn issue of *The Transformer*. Slogans submitted so far:

*"Increase the Peace,"*

*"Conflict is Natural, Violence Isn't"*

. . . and *"Expect the best, then make it happen."*



## No is not an Option

by 'Radiant' Ronald Ellis

At our facilitators' retreat, Lighthouse Larry shared with the group the type of articles that are needed for the 2015 Summer issue of *The Transformer*. Afterwards, I agreed to submit an article for the issue. Several weeks later, Lighthouse asked me for my article. "Larry, I've got some major personal issues going on right now. I can't put any more on my plate."

"Ron, we all have issues; but as an Elder and a leader in church and AVP, you know the value of keeping your commitments."

"Larry, I'm just not feeling it."

"Look, think about writing something with an anecdote that highlights using Transforming Power guides. Surely, you can find some time to put aside your troubles."

Then he gave me the Larry look, "Besides, you know I won't stop pestering you."

"I'll think about it." Knowing Lighthouse Larry for over 33 years, I chuckled.

I woke up the next morning and did this piece. I said to myself, "Lighthouse, it's done!" As I type this, I realize my relationship with Larry continues to highlight TP guides--in this case, the power of his patience and persistence.

*Radiant Ron has been privileged to be involved in AVP for 29 years. His greatest wish is to take AVP to the outside community where it is sorely needed.*

## A Moment of Miscommunication

by 'Sincere' Shakkir Mujahid

It was unusual for me to be in the Rec Hall in the afternoon, but my intention was to retrieve a chair that belonged to our Islamic study group. I saw a young gang member sitting in the chair, using the phone.

I approached the young man respectfully and tapped on the chair.

He looked up. "What's up!" he said with a snarl on his face.

I was somewhat surprised by his look. It was general knowledge that this chair was our group's.

I said, "This is our chair, and I am about to use it." As soon as I completed this statement, the young man leaped up. "No, I am using this chair!" He defiantly took a fighting stance.

My group and his group both went on high alert. The tension in the room was thick as a sirocco in the Arabian Desert that not even a thousand scimitars could cut through. There was complete silence; everyone strategically positioned themselves. Even I took a defensive stance. We stood transfixed on each other. My next words gave oxygen to the room.

I said, "Okay, you got that." I walked out.

It was ironic that I had been on my way to facilitate an AVP Communication Workshop. I was upset. I couldn't wait to get back to see the young man. Later that day, he and I got together. I used communication skills taught in the workshop. We realized that this incident happened because of miscommunication. He didn't know the chair was used for the Islamic Study class. We agreed that in the future both groups will show courtesy on the subject of chairs. To this day, the young man and I shake hands and speak to each other with respect.

*Sincere Shakkir is a coordinator for JCI Literacy/Reading Academy. He has been involved with AVP since 2008. He is also a facilitator in several conflict resolution and at-risk-youth programs.*

## Landing Strip

Landing Strip is a support group for people transitioning back to society. We have learned that often the most difficult bid begins upon release from prison.

First Tuesday and Third Thursday, 6-9pm  
Friends Meetinghouse  
15 Rutherford Place  
Manhattan, NY 10003

Every Wednesday, 6-9pm  
Redemption Center  
1186 Herkimer St  
Brooklyn, NY 11233

Third Thursdays, 5-7pm  
Church of the Ascension  
2 Riverside St  
Rochester, NY 14613

We offer a safe place where the challenges of transition can be shared openly and most importantly, understood by those who have already been there and face the same challenges. Although we do not provide direct services such as housing, job references, food or clothing, we do check in with each other and network to provide support and connections to resources. What we have most importantly is a continuing community based on honesty, respect and caring. For more information call AVP-NY 1.800.909.8920



## It's Only a Game

by 'Awesome Abdul Mateen' Pittman

In a prison environment, territorial feuds are common. I used to live in Washington, and now I live in Baltimore. Moving to enemy territory requires the ability to adapt to a challenging social setting. This time it began with a football game. The teams are composed of men from Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

The game was fearsome, the hits were gigantic and both teams were playing like clashing Titans. Baltimore had the lead by three points. Washington was on the move. Baltimore players had fire and determination in their eyes as Washington just completed a 25-yard pass. Now Washington was on the 30-yard line of Baltimore. Hut one! Hut two! It's a running play, but the linebackers of Baltimore sniffed it out, like a hawk snatching a rabbit in full dive. "Boom! Boom! Boom! Crack!" When the dust cleared, Washington's star running back was lying on the ground in agony. His leg twisted and his shinbone protruded through his skin-- Ahhhhhhhhh!

The Washington team erupted. "They did that on purpose!" Both benches

emptied. There was a lot of shoving and pushing. It was about to 'Get Real' out there. I shouted, "Man, what the hell are we doing? Don't you see Mike lying on the ground in agony? We are about to hurt each other. It's just a game! We know that this can happen."

DJ shouted back, "But they did it deliberately!" "Come on, DJ. Look at us; we all have been brutalizing each other out here. It's just a game and a good one too. Does anyone want to go on lock-up for a game we love to play?"

There were murmurs in the crowd. People seemed to calm down. Players went back to their benches. Mike was taken to the dispensary, and the game was resumed. Baltimore went on to win by three points and the rivalry continues.

*Awesome Abdul Mateen is co-creator of the HIPPY (Help Increase the Peace Project for Youth) workshops for youth and 'Hip-Hop,' an off-shoot of HIPPY, which is a one-day workshop. Mateen believes it is time to pass on peace instead of violence to our children.*

## My Path to Excellence

I have been involved with AVP for 21 years. It has given me tools to understand and confront myself. AVP has empowered me to get my mind out of the dismal realm of the ordinary and into the spectacular realm of extraordinary, creative thinking. I consider it a privilege each time I serve someone else.

*Jeffrey Emancipated Ebb, Sr. helped create a HIPPY (Help Increase the Peace Project for Youth) workshop for youth and a workshop on using Transforming Power in court and parole hearings.*

## Word Search - Transforming Power

COMMUNITY	O	A	P	U	T	K	F	K	E	E	K	W	O	I	A
ATTITUDE	G	C	Y	Y	S	C	A	Y	F	V	E	O	I	T	U
RESPECT	M	L	C	I	U	S	O	E	C	A	E	P	T	H	T
HONESTY	I	S	R	R	R	F	U	M	C	Y	O	I	O	R	N
CARING	Z	I	D	F	T	A	T	X	M	D	T	N	B	M	Q
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INNER	R	R	J	E	X	R	H	Y	P	N	Z	U	T	T	C
TRUST	N	X	C	A	R	I	N	G	A	S	Y	R	I	Y	C
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UNITY	V	G	M	L	I	S	T	E	N	C	Z	R	U	B	Y
PEACE	K	Y	T	I	V	I	T	A	E	R	C	W	S	C	J
LOVE	X	F	D	U	G	R	P	N	O	D	E	Q	O	G	G
TRANSFORM	N	N	G	F	S	N	U	M	R	R	E	W	O	P	O

## Tough Love AVP-Style

by Duane 'Mindful Muhammad' Cain

I received some bad news. "Son, my doctor told me I have two years to live. There's nothing to be done!"

"Stop joking, Dad." There was a pause. "Stop playing now!" I grew anxious.

"No joke. The doctor told me the same way I've just told you--without any emotion."

I was crushed. I looked around the Rec Hall, trying to gather myself emotionally. I saw no one whom I could turn to for comfort. I called my mother.

"Mom, Dad just told me he is dying."

She criticized my father. I went

numb. I was seeking words of comfort for my grief, and Mom was reliving her past.

"Shut up! I don't want to hear that negative stuff right now! That's not why I called you. Stop it."

As soon as the words left my mouth, I couldn't believe I spoke to my mother like that. I'm 49 and continue to respect my mother and watch what I say--still, she had to be told.

"Ha ha ha!" Mom laughed. "Baby, you're right. Let's talk about your father."

Since that day, things have done a 180. Mom has been speaking with Dad and even has taken him meals.

The best news is that Dad's condition isn't as dire as first indicated. Even though my parents are not together, they have become closer through misfortune.

It was my AVP training that helped me communicate more effectively, even with my mother. Despite my counsel to fellow AVPers that AVP doesn't work all the time, I now know it does. You just have to be willing to take risks.

*Mindful Muhammad is 49 years young, serving 30 years with 15 to go. He has been an AVP facilitator since 2004.*

## What's Up Next?

Look for this column in every issue of *The Transformer*! We will preview the topic for the upcoming issue here.

### Autumn 2015: AVP for Hire?

What would happen if local chapters paid facilitators a stipend per workshop as standard practice? How would this reflect, or not, the heart and soul of AVP? At this May's National Gathering in Tacoma, participants held conversations throughout the weekend on the question of AVP for hire, and the role of volunteering within AVP. Facilitators around the

world already get paid as a regular part of the program in different countries. However, some say: AVP is not for sale! Others such as Joseph Aiken would add AVP is not just a program; it is a way of life. Among groups who advocated payment for facilitators, general consensus was that stipends would be the way to go, rather than a salary. Currently, many facilitators already get travel reimbursements from

their local chapters. Stipends for each day of facilitation, for example, would be a way of expanding on the travel stipend—particularly for folks who cannot afford to volunteer their time.

**Please submit your ideas, questions, articles and art about AVP for Hire? to [avptransformer@gmail.com](mailto:avptransformer@gmail.com) or PO Box 295 Franklin NY 13775**

## Calling artists across the world!!!

We are looking for a logo for AVP International - an image that reflects who we are to the world. Please submit your design as soon as possible to: Jessica Farley, AVP I North American Representative.  
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### AVP for Hire?

Life without dreams  
Is cold as snow,  
It's a barren field,  
Where nothing grows.

But dreams won't work  
Unless we do.  
So let's dream,  
And let's do.

I'll do what I dream,  
Never for hire,  
But for a stipend.  
That's my desire.

-Nice Nitaya





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