

Re: jeanette, have families, friends, neighbors

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Dear Judges, Lawyers, Policemen, Guards, Counselors, Taxpayers, et. al.,

We are here. Like it or not, for good or bad, we are here. Who are we? We are the downtrodden and dispossessed, the self-torturing, the disenfranchised convicts, drug and alcohol addicts, the unemployed and unemployable. We are the children of poverty, financial and spiritual. We have and will have children of our own, grandchildren too. We are ex-cons, uninsured, homeless, of many colors and speaking many tongues. We are the enemy in what has become a domestic war against ourselves.

And who are you? You who like the tough talk of Tough on Crime? You who watch as budgets are cut in education and health care while you militarize a police force? Bullet-proof vests, automatic weapons, helicopters, tanks, robots ... the testosterone is oozing through the streets, more prisons, longer sentences, tighten the belt, spartan conditions, task forces, gang units, gun courts. And what is there to show for it? Unemployment stays low because half the population oversees those "out of the workforce", the dregs, the rabble, the enemy? Please tell me there is a deeper reason. Do you feel safer? More humane? More like a cohesive society with a shared sense of purpose, who can identify Us and Them? Do you live in a gated community or gentrified neighborhood? By the way, have you read the Declaration of Independence and US Constitution – or do you only know the first phrases?

It's about time we got together. Please know that I have yet to meet a convict who wants their child to be a thief, an addict, a dealer, a prostitute, or a violent individual. Most of us still have hope for ourselves even when stuck in the darkest dilemmas, ruts and catch-22s. Most of us believe in crafting laws and instilling order. Many of us have burrowed beneath the surface to find a spiritual sense of being, an understanding force at least as powerful as those we succumbed to, and many of use wouldn't escape if you opened the front door. Did you know that approximately 10 million Americans are either incarcerated, on probation, on parole or once were in those categories? Each of those 10 million have families, friends, neighbors ... and so closer and closer does the We interface with the You. Don't you think it's time we talked?

Are you ready? Can you accept that the road we are travelling points toward a grim and painful future? Do you have the heart to face monumental failures while bravely struggling beyond where we are now? I know that some of you are, and that some of us are, and this is what gives me hope. You need our insights just as we need your structure. It is never over, especially when a real solution, a real treatment for

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our sickness, is yet to begin.

In Solidarity,

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P.S. – I am trying to conceptualize an effective guerilla media campaign to promote this cause. Ideas are welcome. Collaboration is prayed.

Flames Considered Harmful.

Every few months a plague descends on Usenet called the spelling flame. It starts out when someone posts an article correcting the spelling or grammar in some article. The immediate result seems to be for everyone on the net to turn into a 6th grade English teacher and pick apart each other's postings for a few weeks. This is not productive and tends to cause people who used to be friends to get angry with each other.

It is important to remember that we all make mistakes, and that there are many users on the net who use English as a second language. There are also a number of people who suffer from dyslexia and who have difficulty noticing their spelling mistakes. If you feel that you must make a comment on the quality of a posting, please do so by mail, not on the network.

Don't Overdo Signatures.

Signatures are nice, and many people can have a signature added to their postings automatically by placing it in a file called "\$HOME/.signature". Don't overdo it. Signatures can tell the world something about you, but keep them short. A signature that is longer than the message itself is considered to be in bad taste. The main purpose of a signature is to help people locate you, not to tell your life story. Every signature should include at least your return address relative to a major, known site on the network and a proper domain-format address. Your system a