

CORRECTIONAL OASIS

A PUBLICATION OF

DESERT WATERS CORRECTIONAL OUTREACH

A NON-PROFIT FOR THE WELL-BEING OF CORRECTIONAL STAFF AND THEIR FAMILIES

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"PTSD in US Corrections Professionals" Research Report Now Available

Click on link below to read the *PTSD in US Corrections Professionals* Research Report.

http://www.correctionsfatigue.com/images/PTSD_Prevalence_in_Corrections_2012.pdf

In future issues of the *Correctional Oasis* we plan to highlight the study's key findings and discuss their significance further.

People Don't Care How Much You Know Until They Know How Much You Care

By Gregory Morton

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care" is a fairly famous sentence in the literature of leadership development. Everyone from Teddy Roosevelt to John C. Maxwell has been attributed with coining the phrase. Have you heard it before? Have you found it to be true? What does it mean to you personally?

To me this sentence means that the first thing we need to do in a relationship with another person is to recognize their wants, needs, beliefs, desires and preferences before we unload ours on them. It means that every person I encounter has a life to live which is separate from me and my needs and which deserves recognition and reinforcement. It means that we should presume that all people are walking around the planet with an invisible but real T-shirt with the words "Make Me Feel Important" written on it.

I was reminded of this the other day while delivering training to some corrections staff. I had been asked to develop and deliver some material on current Evidence Based Practices for working with offenders, which I did and with which I was pretty happy. It was eight hours of training, in two four hour sessions with a two week break for practice in between. Not a lot of time, but enough to plant some significant seeds. The training went well. The material was well received, the staff in the classes were pretty skilled and knowledgeable already, using terminology and tools before I even got to them, so I felt like we were all on the same page and clicking right along.

(Continued on page 2)

IN MEMORIAM

CO Carl "Kion" Batie

11/11/12

Mercer County
Trenton, NJ

Sgt. Justin Rutten

11/17/12

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People Don't Care How Much You Know Until They Know How Much You Care (Continued from page 1) **Page 2**

And since I had a little time at the end I thought I would do an introduction to Desert Waters' signature course, "From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment" (CF2F). It wasn't really what I was asked to cover, but like many of you, I knew that the CF2F material really explained a lot about how corrections employees end up interacting in and with their workplace, and how that working environment can end up changing us in ways that we didn't plan for and may not care for. So, as an experiment more than anything, I thought I'd add CF2F into the more technical "what works with offenders" material.

As Caterina Spinaris teaches, I started with the simple phrase, "*This material is about you. Most of the time in corrections training we're working on skills to work with offenders, but not in this case. This is just about you as an employee.*" Boy, did the reaction I got to the material surprise me! Even though the overall course was about offender interaction tools, and even though this was a skilled and experienced group, what I heard was, "*You should have started with this.*" And, "*This is where the rubber meets the road.*" And, "*Without this, I can't do any of the rest of it with any effectiveness at all.*"

In other words, while they were interested in what I knew and the skills that were important to their jobs, what really got their attention was when they knew how much I cared . . . about them . . . as people and as professionals. And how I cared about the effect the job had on them and their families. And how the simple fact of acknowledging how challenging this profession is to them, even when it's done well, meant even more to them as individuals than the skill development we had successfully done in the first part of the class.

It was the most dramatic example of "*people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care*" that I have experienced in a long while. A good event, based on knowledge and skill and professional sophistication, turned into a great one once they knew that I cared . . . about them.

I've told this story to people who thought that the employees were just being selfish. That these corrections professionals were more interested in somebody commiserating with them and their challenges than with learning new tools to perform their duties more skillfully. And I guess I get the thinking that corrections employees need to suck it up, rub a little dirt on it, and move on without whining, 'cause who's gonna listen or care anyway. I get that because I've seen it, lived it and done it for most of my adult life. But I've also seen the consequences of it. You all probably know the unfortunate story about how to boil a frog -- put it in cold water and turn the heat up gradually. If you put it right away in hot water it jumps out. But if you let it get used to an increasingly negative environment, it doesn't notice the danger until it's too late. As corrections employees, sometimes we're a frog in a pot of hot water. Unfortunately we don't realize how hot we are until the froggie co-worker in the pot next to us gets cooked to the core and boils over. Then we go, "Dang, this water's hot! We need to do something about that!!" (Or, worse, if we're still unaware of what's going on, we may think, "What's the matter with them? They're just weak whiners!")

The reason why I don't think these staff were in any way out of line expressing appreciation for the Corrections Fatigue material is because I've heard that first phrase before—that what people want to know is that you care . . . about them . . . as people. **Corrections employees do a hard job, every single day, 24/7/365, without anybody except our own co-workers knowing what we do, and without anybody caring that much either. Which is why we need to acknowledge that and care for ourselves and for each other.** Self-care is not selfishness. (Would you consider yourself to be selfish for changing the oil in your vehicle as needed, checking the belts and topping off the fluids?) We're the ones who know what working in corrections is like, so we need to be the ones who show we care.

People Don't Care How Much You Know Until They Know How Much You Care (Continued from page 2) Page 3

I was going to end this article by saying something like, "Especially if you are a supervisor or leader." Which is certainly true. That is the Maxwell meaning of the phrase. People rally around leaders who are committed to them as individuals, as professionals with skills and challenges, and who actively desire success for each and every team member. But then I was reminded of a text we used to use in Leadership training right along with Maxwell's texts, one called *You Don't Need A Title To Be A Leader*¹, which causes me to want to end this article differently.

That text includes the following thoughts, "You may be unaware of just how much of a leader you already are. You may be part of a large group of people [called] the 'undertitled'. In other words, your title doesn't reflect all that you do or accomplish. If that describes you, don't let your lack of a title hold you back. You are a leader." No matter what our job is or length of time doing it, we all have some corner on professional responsibility, and therefore the possibility of influencing others, and thus, leading. Whether you are the supervisor who has staff reporting directly to him or her, or are the veteran employee who can do a particular job better than anybody else, or a newer employee who has had the most up-to-date Best Practices Academy experience, it's likely that you have people watching you, learning from what they see you do, and as Teddy Roosevelt and John Maxwell have declared, checking to see whether you care . . . about them . . . as people.

¹ Sanborn, M. (2006). *You Don't Need A Title to Be A Leader*. New York: Doubleday.

Thanksgiving as a Natural Mood Booster

by Caterina Spinaris

Do you want a significant mood lift at practically no cost to you?

Write a "thank you" note—email, text, sticky note—a day for 30 days and send it to the people you are thanking for touching your life in positive ways.

If you want to get the most out of this practice, write a "thank you" note to someone daily FOR ONE YEAR (365 days).

Studies have found that people's degree of life satisfaction and happiness increased as a result of expressing thanks and gratitude. One research project reported progressive increases in life satisfaction and happiness over the course of six weeks with each of three letters of gratitude written to people who had positively impacted the study participants' lives (Toepfer, 2008)¹.

Sounds pretty simple, doesn't it? Just thinking about all the people who have helped you along the way can make you begin to feel more peace and joy. And it won't cost you more than perhaps a stamp.

¹Toepfer, S. (2008). Kent State University (2008, November 27). Want To Be Happier? Be More Grateful. ScienceDaily. Retrieved November 16, 2012.

2013 T4T (Instructor Training) "From Corrections Fatigue™ to Fulfillment"

Dates for T4T (Instructor Training) to be offered in Florence, CO in 2013:

March 26-29, 2013; June 25-28, 2013; October 1-4, 2013.

http://www.correctionsfatigue.com/images/T4T_Corrections_Fatigue_2012.pdf

If your agency would like to train several trainers, we can offer the T4T at your location. Please write or call for details.

Workplace Climate Optimizer™ (WCO)

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The Workplace Climate Optimizer™ for Corrections (WCO) is now available to assess your facility's workplace climate and then provide a 14-day intervention to improve that climate along seven key dimensions. Contact us for more information. http://www.correctionsfatigue.com/images/WCO_Flyer <http://correctionsfatigue.com/Services.html>

Rescheduled—Conference on Correction Officer Wellness

http://www.middlesexsheriff.org/Wellness%20Conference/Conference_Flyer10.pdf

The Conference, to be held in Lowell, MA and co-hosted by the National Sheriffs' Association and the Middlesex (MA) Sheriff's Office, was rescheduled due to Hurricane Sandy. You can attend at no charge. The title of the Conference is "An Unspoken Crisis in Corrections: Beginning an honest discussion about the causes and effects of workplace stress." Speakers are Jaime Brower, Jerry Cooper, George Everly, Barry Feldman, Al Grudzinskas, Eric Lambert, Viki Sharp, and Caterina Spinaris.

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow By The Old Screw

It is surprising how little the field of Corrections has changed in some ways and how much in others.

When I started in Corrections, I received very little training. I learned more on my own than I picked up in training. There was no in-service training. When you started you learned from your peers and the old school of hard knocks. I learned the hard way that the only thing you can get from the inmates is respect and that you had to earn that. Somehow I lived through my first two years at a very rough and bloody job.

When I started the next phase of a lifetime job that I had never wanted to begin with, I thought I had finally found a place that cared about their staff. Two weeks of training each year! Yes, you complained like the other staff, but you enjoyed learning new things and ways of handling situations that might help keep you alive. I always looked forward to the training as it was also like a vacation, not much, if any, contact with inmates. Also you got to work day shift and even get a weekend off. We've all had so many days off during the week that a weekend off was a real treat.

The third phase of my lifetime job was more and advanced training. Mental Health was included in training. It is sad, but some ideas that worked well were later discarded.

It was then I realized that what I had learned over the years was true. It really helped and was usually safer for all if the top people had some experience working in corrections or even if they would just listen to what line staff had to say about running the cell houses.

It is sad that people don't realize how much danger and mental stress Correctional Staff goes through. Just think, like police officers and firemen and military people, you never know when you kiss your wife and kids goodbye if you will be coming home to them and in one piece. The stress of walking a tight rope every shift is a stress that, if they are lucky, most people will never know about.

People don't realize that the reason shifts keep going is because the line staff is still getting the job done, even when running short handed. I have watched staff and myself included, work so many long hours that your family and all else falls by the way-side. (So it's no surprise that corrections workers have a very high divorce rate and lost relationships.) I've worked with no breaks, when all you can think about is getting some rest. People think they are doing just fine, as stress is hard to measure.

Yes, some things never change, no matter what. But some have. Better understanding of the stress and hardships Staff go through. People that do care about us and our families, like Desert Waters and others. I used to think that people only worried about inmates and their families. Now, thank God, there are people who care and look out for us.

Take care, *The Old Screw*

Reader Input

Contributed by anonymous reader. Reprinted with permission.

(AS USUAL) I found the recent issue of Correctional Oasis very helpful, interesting and worth all the effort that is put into it. I thought it might be good to give you a little sneak peek into the background of the article by Greg Morton of ODOC. This is a true story.

Greg Morton, (back in about 1992/1993), put together a training that was submitted to the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), which solicited all 50 states to submit what they believed to be the best supervisory training that they would like to produce, but couldn't afford. The competition for the prize (training expenses paid by a grant) was fierce. Oregon's Greg Morton combined the reading of leadership books, classroom participation and testing, along with actual "hands-on" training for participants to travel to another facility in Oregon to work side-by-side with a manager in a different correctional discipline, i.e., Physical Plant, Health Services, Food Services, Security, Program Services, etc. Oregon won that grant – brought to you largely by Gregory Morton.

Many of the participants, including myself, were promoted into a managerial field or through the ranks, largely by what they gleaned from the training. There were two classes, I believe, that benefited from this wonderful training. It was titled, *Correctional Supervisory Candidate Program*. It actually "launched" many careers at that time, since Oregon was growing in its inmate population as well as the number of correctional institutions.

There is an old correctional adage, "Never forget where you came from." Thanks to Greg Morton, many of us have not forgotten his efforts.

Situational Morality: Is it OK to Lie to Yourself? By Barry Evert

Reprinted with permission from CorrectionsONE. <http://www.correctionsone.com/writers/columnists/Barry-Evert/articles/6029446-Situational-morality-Is-it-OK-to-lie-to-yourself/>. Accessed on November 17, 2012.

To start this off, I will quote the great German poet Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe:
"We are never deceived; we deceive ourselves."

To be deceived in our line of work, we have to set ourselves up for failure. This sounds harsh, but it's reality.

One question to ask yourself is, "Am I doing everything possible to not deceive myself?" Self-deceit is common in the outside world. Alcoholics or smokers often deceive themselves into believing they will quit their addiction soon. It's a coping mechanism to make the person feel better about their transgressions. Often they will tell themselves that they'll quit their behavior on a certain date, New Year's resolutions being a perfect example of this. We want to feel good going into the New Year. The promise of new beginnings and a clean slate triggers our mind to be happy. We set lofty, great goals that are often unobtainable. We deceive ourselves to make ourselves feel better.

This behavior carries into our work at times. You know that officer that never does any of his work until the last minute? I have had people ask me how a person like that can be happy in their work. The reality is that this person is deceiving himself by believing he is a good worker because the work eventually gets done. Any minor hiccup though, and that person is miserably behind in their work.

This is just a small example. What we have to concern ourselves more with is the person who uses situational morality to deceive themselves.

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Situational Morality: Is it OK to Lie to Yourself? (Continued from page 5)

A common question at panel interviews in the past has been this scenario:

You have no money and are in dire straits. Your children are hungry, and you feel the only way you can get them the food they need is to steal it. Would you steal? Would you feel justified in doing so?

This is a two part question. The first question asked is if you would steal. Many people will be honest and answer that they would. The second question is much more telling of someone's character: Would you feel justified in doing so? The uncompromised person would tell you they would feel guilty.

Some people may even claim they would find a way to pay back the victim of their theft at a later time. This answer is a warning flag. You are justifying your actions by deceiving yourself into thinking the crime is not as bad as you will pay the store back some day. This is like stealing a car, and then returning it to its owner, expecting no repercussions. How does this apply in our jobs?

Simply put, we need to be honest with ourselves. One of the most common forms of manipulation involves situational morality, leading to self-deceit. A staff member may start by overlooking minor violations, figuring there is no harm. This can easily progress into the forgiveness of bigger violations, which in turn can be used to blackmail the staff member into committing a criminal act. Consider the following scenario from the Midwest (names have been changed to protect the people involved):

Working a low level security prison, Linda enjoyed her job as an officer. There was rarely violence, and the inmates were cordial enough. Filled with mostly drunk drivers and petty larcenists, Linda felt relatively safe compared to her coworkers at high security institutions. She was assigned to a large dorm facility. She saw the same inmates every day, and built a rapport with the inmates. Linda divorced from her husband in May, and quit wearing her wedding ring. This came to the attention of several inmates, but especially Shawn, who had been infatuated with the slightly older, but good looking officer. Shawn had worked as her porter for about a year, and had always been respectful towards Linda. One day Shawn brought up the lack of a ring to Linda. He told her he knew it was none of his business, but that he was sorry about her marriage, and encouraged her by telling her she was a beautiful woman who will surely find love again. Linda sheepishly thanked him, and thought nothing more of it. The entire conversation had seemed odd, but she wrote it off to Shawn being polite.

Several weeks later Shawn began to cry while he was alone with Linda, taking out the trash of the unit around the back of the building. Shocked, Linda asked what was wrong. Shawn told her that his wife had left him for good, and had taken the kids out of state. Shawn was crushed. Shawn asked Linda if he could just have a minute to cry it out back here, as he could not have his "people" see him cry. Linda obliged, and verbally comforted Shawn.

As they left the back area about 10 minutes later, Shawn gently placed his hand on Linda's arm and thanked her for being so considerate. Linda did not pull back her arm, instead she told Shawn she was glad she could help.

Over the next two weeks, daily conversations that were once about prison had turned personal. After every shift, Shawn made it a point to thank Linda, and place his hand on her upper arm and squeeze it as if to secretly thank her. One day while taking out the trash, Shawn confided in Linda that his ex-wife was now sleeping with his brother. Shawn broke down and fell to his knees and cried. Linda felt bad for poor Shawn. After all, her husband had been sleeping with her best friend, so she knew how it felt. She squatted down and gave him a short hug, reassuring Shawn it would be okay.

Over the next month, Shawn and Linda grew closer. Eventually their relationship ended with sexual encounters behind the dorm. After several of these encounters, Shawn professed his love for Linda.

Shawn came to Linda one day with a serious problem. The other inmates knew about their affair, and were threatening to expose them. Shawn said the only way to solve this was to pay them off. Shawn told Linda that if she didn't bring in a sizeable amount of marijuana soon, the other inmates would tell, and they would not be able to be together again.

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Situational Morality: Is it OK to Lie to Yourself? (Continued from page 6)

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Guess what Linda did?

At the end of the day, Linda came clean and turned herself into Internal Affairs. She had successfully stopped deceiving herself. But how did it come this far? Linda was a veteran officer, and had not fallen prey to this type of manipulation in the past. What was different?

Situational morality. Linda convinced herself early on in this scenario that, considering the circumstances, it would be okay to let a small violation (touching) go without documentation. Had Linda been honest with herself, she would have written the inmate up for the incident, and nothing further likely would have happened. It became easier for Linda to lie to herself as the scenario progressed. She convinced herself that considering the circumstances, it would be okay to discuss her personal life with Shawn. This slowly progressed into self-deceit, and an inappropriate relationship, which almost led her to commit a felony. Had Linda been honest with herself, all of this could have been avoided.

As I discussed in a previous article dealing with how to spot corrupt staff members, it would have been obvious to her coworkers that something was wrong had they looked for the signs. I have spoken with Linda, and she explained that she withdrew from her usual activities and friends at work, and spent more time with Shawn than her coworkers or people outside of the prison. Linda fell prey to manipulation by Shawn not because she was weak-minded or simple, but because she refused to be honest with herself. The worst part? Shawn received a reduction in good time credits of a few months, which he later got overturned, as he claimed that Linda manipulated him. Linda lost her job, her retirement and was prosecuted on several misdemeanor offenses, making it hard for her to find other employment.

If you read the story carefully you will find situational morality in there. Linda allowed this inmate to touch her on the arm. Linda felt, given the circumstances, it was okay. The phrase "given the circumstances" is dangerous. It allows the person to make a decision not between what is right and wrong. It allows the person to convince themselves that an act otherwise not acceptable is okay this one time.

A good example of this was hurricane Katrina. Does anyone remember watching the video of two police officers participating in the looting at a Wal-Mart?

The officer in the video never admits to looting, but tries to convince the journalist that she is there looking for looters. I am sure she felt completely justified in stealing in this case. The reasonable person standard comes in real handy here. Would an equally trained corrections officer, given the same circumstances, have acted the same way? I would submit the vast majority of us would answer "no." In this case, the officer was stealing some clothes and electronics. What if her cart was full of food? Would that make us feel different?

The real question here becomes, can we, as Law Enforcement Officers be subject to self-deceit or situation morality? Let's go over them one last time, and I will let you decide for yourself.

Self-deceit is a defense mechanism for bad behavior. Self-deceit allows us to behave as we like, anytime, anywhere and avoids the guilt that usually comes with bad behavior. Self-deceit is a learned behavior that can easily become an everyday habit and lead to destructive ends.

Situational morality can serve two purposes. First, it can also act as a defense mechanism against guilt, but is often used for a one-time transgression, as we saw in the video. Second, it can also be a survival skill that can help us cope during a dangerous situation where we have to act outside of our comfort zone. An example of this would be looting to steal food (not electronics and satin underwear as we saw in the video.)

Having put it this way, situational morality doesn't sound that horrible. Let me ask my readers this: Could a case of situational morality morph into a case of repetitive self-deceit? As Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe implied, we can only be deceived if we refuse to be honest with ourselves. To my readers, please take the time to analyze the scenario above, and let me know what you come up with.

Desert Waters

Correctional Outreach



*a non-profit organization
for the well-being of correctional
staff and their families*

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Quote of the Month

The capacity to care is
the thing which gives life
its deepest significance.
~Pablo Casals

DWCO Mission

To increase the occupational,
personal and family well-being of
staff of all disciplines within the
corrections profession.