

Women are Used to Prisons

by Kathleen Thornton

I'm in prison. I'm forced to live in this gated community. I admit, I put myself here. No one sent me an invitation requesting my presence.

As women, we should have become used to prisons very early in our lives. Many of us grew up in the prisons that others' beliefs imposed upon us, and imposed on our mothers and grandmothers. We can thank the great male minds of the world for this. If the most respected Sigmund Freud hadn't told us most of our problems stem from penis envy, how ever would we have known?

In my opinion, Mr. Freud thought of all women as "less than" – as immoral and abnormal. He insisted we could only find love and happiness as women if we had a penis and since the only way we could get one was through sexual intercourse with a man, the man who chose us got to define us. Sounds like false imprisonment to me!

As I look around this place, I notice how little value many of us place on ourselves. This so-called society we live in has told us we are second-class citizens at best.

While many have fought hard to make gains in "the movement," we have a very long way to go. Ask a man, and you'll probably hear how we were "given" the vote -- as if men, by virtue of having a penis, can make a "gift" of something that should have been a fundamental right in the first place. It is also our right to have the basic things we need to survive, if not succeed, in this world. Yet so many don't.

Look around you. How many women do you see, who trade their bodies, their souls, for their most basic needs? How many of these women are addicts? Is this because they can't stand the pain of their penis envy? How many can't read or write? Then ask yourselves -- if you don't have the courage to ask them -- why?

Kathleen Thornton is incarcerated at Western Wayne Correctional Facility in Plymouth, Michigan.



An Important resource for Incarcerated Women:

Women's Prison Book Project...

<http://www.prisonactivist.org/wpbp/>

Since 1994, the Women's Prison Book Project (WPBP) has provided women and transgender —identified persons in prison with free reading materials covering a wide range of topics from law and education (dictionaries, GED, etc.) to fiction, politics, history, and women's health. This volunteer organization seeks to build connections with those behind the walls, and to educate those of us on the outside about the realities of prison and the justice system.