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The Prison Experience

With my birthday looming only days away, I reflect back on my prison experience thusfar. I am inmate #251821 in Indiana's Department of Correction in Pendleton, IN. It's March 2020 and soon I will have been here exactly 3 years. It's an easy thing to track, because I arrived at Pendleton on my actual birthday... oh the irony! Needless to say, my last 3 birthdays have not been so great, but I digress. I want to discuss how life in prison has affected and changed me over the last 3 years. Though my outlook is often bleak, and my days are riddled with anxiety and worry, more often than not, I try to remain optimistic and, at minimum, realistically hopeful. This has not been easy.

Often I reflect on my current situation and two words ~~come~~ come ~~back~~ to ~~my~~ mind. Compassion and empathy. Prison has actually strengthened my belief and practice of thought and actions dedicated to these two ~~words~~ ~~concepts~~. Mainly, this can be credited to my search for and study of existential philosophy, but also I must give credit to my recent discovery ~~of~~ of Buddhism. It's the former that I'd like to discuss though. Specifically, the concept of Existential Humanism, its relation to the prison experience, and ^{subsequently} who I've come to be in the last 3 years (5 if you count the time I spent in ~~23 hour~~ 23 hour isolation in the county jail). So, what is Existential Humanism? Well,