



The Road to Freedom Begins Within.

That's what we believe at The Freedom to Choose Project (FTC).

With American prisons at a breaking point, overcrowding and underfunding have become typical. The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world and rehabilitation efforts have fallen short, with more than half of parolees returning to prison within a few years of their release.

In response to this crisis, FTC offers a new model for successful rehabilitation.

Inspired by Victor Frankl's famous quote *"Everything can be taken from a person, but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way,"* FTC's award-winning programs have been transforming the lives of incarcerated individuals since 2004.

After participating in FTC, program participants discover that they are more than their worst choices. Through interactive practices such as healing shame, breaking the cycles of anger and reactivity, and practicing forgiveness, participants gain new perspectives and unlock a second chance at true freedom.

None of this would be possible without our growing team of dedicated volunteers. Volunteers support our mission by successfully sharing FTC's life-changing tools in our self-directed learning program. We train our volunteers to positively support the participant's work, ensuring that each incarcerated person receives personalized feedback.

"In just the last half hour I've had more life than I've lived 'out there.' I feel like I'm free, and the prison just doesn't know it yet."

- FTC PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

The Facts:



The U.S. is responsible for **25%** of the world's incarcerated population.



California is expected to spend \$75,560 per person per year on incarceration.



Within 3 years of release, about 67.8% of returning citizens are re-arrested

Our Results:

90% of People Incarcerated
Are Estimated to Earn Parole

It is estimated that 90% of those who are incarcerated will earn parole. Help us support them in learning, healing, and preparing to rejoin their families and communities.

FTC has offered >180,000 hours of in-prison education to 4,118 individuals with 665 volunteers over the last 18 years. Flip over to learn more about our volunteer program.



How **We Work:**

- In FTC's signature workshop, 50+ volunteers spend the weekend working alongside 200+ incarcerated participants in person at the prison.
- In a caring, non-judgmental space, volunteers delve into their own life issues, right alongside incarcerated participants. They model openness and vulnerability, inviting incarcerated participants to do the same.
- The work is done in "trios" (1 volunteer & 2 incarcerated participants), each taking turns sharing, facilitating, and observing. Each person's inherent worth is mirrored back, providing the support needed to heal at the root level.
- Practical skills are applied to real life challenges: forgiving oneself and others, breaking cycles of reactivity, listening and speaking with compassion, learning to be more loving, and healing shame.

In Response to COVID-19:

- FTC programs are sent by mail correspondence where incarcerated participants complete Growthwork (what we call homework) modules. Trained volunteers then read and respond empathetically and positively to their work.
- FTC's caring and non-judgmental space is carried into our correspondence with program participants.
- Our core practical skills are taught: forgiving oneself and others, breaking cycles of reactivity, listening and speaking with compassion, learning to be more loving, and healing shame.
- Because the program is Self-Directed Learning led through correspondence, FTC can reach more prisons. We now have participants from 38 California prisons and 6 other prisons nationally.

"This program is the best program I've ever been a part of in all of my 24 years of incarceration."

- DEREK, FTC SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING PROGRAM PARTICIPANT, SAN QUENTIN STATE PRISON

"In my very first experience with The Freedom to Choose Project (FTC), I truly understood what 'Change from the Inside' meant. I thought I was going inside a prison to bring hope and inspiration to others. I discovered that I was also truly serving myself by sharing the human experience of saying to another, "I am a human with feelings and life challenges just like you." - FTC VOLUNTEER

Volunteering with The Freedom to Choose Project is a life-changing experience that offers opportunities to be of service and to master the same skills and tools we offer our participants. These skills support greater healing, effective communication, emotional intelligence, self-determination, and a higher degree of happiness.

By volunteering with FTC, **you will have the opportunity to:**

- Liberate yourself from your own inner prison (and empower others to do the same), regardless of past circumstances.
- Deepen in compassion for yourself and others.
- Gain tools to bring your "best self" forward - in any situation.
- Use leading edge emotional intelligence skills that will benefit all relationships, both personal and professional.
- Learn practical skills to transform your own life - physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Volunteer in prison (or online during COVID-19) and meet like-minded people.:

Join us in making a meaningful difference and experience the ripple effect of peace and healing in your world! Sign up for an upcoming volunteer event on our website:

freedomtochooseproject.org

