



## Things to Ponder

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### **Negativity Not Allowed**

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*By Judi Moreo*

It seems like every conversation I have had with someone lately, they have brought up the terrible state of the economy or they have something negative to say....I've started off many conversations with my friends this week with the sentence, "No negativity allowed." I refuse to accept the "ain't it awful mentality" of the masses. I know that I make my own reality and so do you. Let's visualize a better tomorrow. Let's know in our hearts everything is just fine...because it is. Lots of people in the world are in worse conditions and situations than we are.

While living in South Africa, I was fortunate enough to meet Nelson Mandela at a dinner at the Sowetan newspaper. After having a conversation with this man who became the President of South Africa, I bought his book, "A Long Walk to Freedom". I read it cover to cover in order to learn the details of his quest. In the book, he talked about creative visualization, which he referred to as his vision of the future. He wrote, "I never seriously considered the possibility that I would not emerge from prison one day. I am fundamentally an optimist. Whether that comes from nature or nurture, I cannot say. Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I could not give myself up to despair. I thought continually of the day when I would walk free. Over and over, I fantasized about what I would like to do." What did this man know that filled him with determined optimism not experienced by other men?

During my stay in South Africa, I had two opportunities to visit the cell at Robben Island where Mr. Mandela had been incarcerated. It was three paces wide and six long, with no bathroom facilities. There was just a pot in the corner and a tired, little cot on which to sleep. As I stood in that cell, I wondered if under those circumstances you and I could have chosen to believe that one day we would make the dream of freedom come true. I lived in South Africa throughout Mandela's reign as President. I watched and experienced his vision of a peaceful transition become reality. A person with less vision would never have been able to make this happen for an entire country. Our circumstances are not as extreme as Mandela's. Certainly, if he could imagine freedom for the people of a nation and have it come true, we should be able to imagine the successful future we desire.

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