

“Letter From M.O.M.”

The **Monthly** newsletter of **Moving On Ministry**

WWW.MovingOnMinistry.com

www.PrisonMinistry.net/movingon

Volume 39 – August. 2008

“I Can Only Imagine”

As you receive this volume of **Letter From M.O.M.**, we have many new writers of articles, we are putting some more of the testimonies of “How God Changes Lives” as well as some of our own written articles. We can truly say that the “high” that many of our inmates have been trying to get through the wrong methods, is being surpassed by those putting God in control of their lives.

Watch our website

www.MovingOnMinistry.com

We are affiliated with International Prison Fellowship

<http://PrisonMinistry.net/movingon>

and Good News Jail & Prison Ministry Volunteer

www.GoodNewsJail.com

Fellowship

As we continue to reach out, as commanded in Matt. 25:34-46, we get contact with many of the ministries that are also reaching out. We have been blessed with two letters from Rick Warren (Saddleback Church, 40 Days of Purpose, and Celebrate Recovery), received a phone call from Charles Morris (Haven of Rest, Haven Today), met Chip Ingram (Living on the Edge), and met Bruce Wilkinson (Dream For Africa) before we did the Africa mission trip to Swaziland.

Intentions & Wishes

The intentions of this newsletter are to allow an understanding of jail & prison ministries. It is our intentions to get input from those incarcerated as well as those “free” to visit. Life experiences of the faith and fellowship from those locked up in the facilities are always desired to let others know of the value of “visitation”. I am certain that each of us have many stories of the miracles God has done in our lives.

Our wishes are that we would have a list of supportive churches that individuals might look forward to attending once released.

A list of services, such as housing, employment, and counseling services, as well as some individuals available for friendly fellowship are also much needed items.

God’s Word says if a man stumbles, how can he continue lest there be another to help him up. **Ecc. 4:10** “For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him [that is] alone when he falleth; for [he hath] not another to help him up.” **Proverbs 24:17** “Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth:” **John 11:10** “But if a man walketh in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”

Please help us with input for this newsletter as we strive to serve God. We appreciate any articles or input.

Addresses to contact Ministry Volunteers

Moving On Ministry
Chaplain Bob
P.O. Box 6667
Visalia, CA. 93290

Moving On Ministry
Spanish Ministry - Linda
P.O. Box 6667
Visalia, CA. 93290

Jesus Prayer Ministry
Sis Denise
P.O. Box 7925
Chula Vista, CA 91912

Cathy Jewell
P.O. Box 41272
Centerville, Ohio 45441

Set Free Prison Ministries
Bible Correspondence Course
P.O. Box 5440
Riverside, CA. 92517-9986

Linda Warner
P.O. Box 1356
Havelock, NC 28532

Prison Fellowship
Chuck Colson
P.O. Box 1550
Merrifield, VA 22116-1550

The above ministries have been proven in the past to write back. Please keep us updated with these and the following ministries.

A Helping Hand Prison Ministry
117 North Ave. Apt. #1
Owega, New York 13827

Ministry to Write

Agape Love Corner
P.O. Box 3321
Champaign, IL. 61826

Believers Behind the Walls
P.O. Box 1215
Willow Grove, PA. 19090

Blood Covenant Fellowship
109 W. 24th St.
Chester, PA. 19013

Brothers in Prison
PMB 209, 1116 West 7th St.
Columbia, TN 38401

Christ First
P.O. Box 2620
Gainsville, GA 30503

Christ First Discipleship
PMB #198
23170 Northern Ave. Suite B
Kingman, AZ 86409-2504

Footsteps Together
P.O. Box 160
Exmouth, W. Australia 6707
Australia

Cross Roads Pen Pal
P.O. Box 363
Hyde, PA 16843

Focus On Jesus Christ
P.O. Box 181
Vernon, British Columbia
V1T 6M2
Canada

Evangel Prison Ministries
P.O. Box 19229
Louisville, KY 40259

Disciples of Christ
P.O. Box 4554
Citrus Heights, CA 95611

Free In Christ
214 Park Place
Norwood, MN. 55368

Freedom Ministries
P.O. Box 1264
Elizabethtown, KY 42702

Inmate Penpal Connection
P.O. Box 73
Syracuse, NY 13206-0073

Jesus Christ Prison Ministry
P.O. 770
Lucerne Valley, CA 92356

Sleepy Lagoon Lord's Riders
445 E. 102 St.
Los Angeles, CA. 90003

Letter for the Lord
P.O. Box 593
Harrah, OK 73045-0593

Mercy Project
P.O. Box 2853
Frisco, TX 75034

My Sister's Keeper
P.O. Box 1706
Lincolnton, NC 28093

Christian Penpals
P.O. Box 2112
Statesville, NC 28687

Free in Christ
1435 E. Palo Verde Dr.
Chino Valley, AZ 86323

Free in Christ
421 West 8th Street
Boone, Iowa 50036

Inmate Mail Call
P.O. Box 1272
Mineola, TX 75773-7272

Inside the Wall
P.O. Box 1561
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

Kim Webb
309 S. Main St.
Bogata, TX 75417

Vision of Hope
118 Meadows MHP #15
Parkersburg, WV 26104

Women Ministering Women
1940 Atlanta Rd. G-11
Smyrna, GA 30080

Women of Hope
P.O. Box 16004
High Point, NC 27261

Wings of Eagles
12427 Hedges Run Dr.
Box 201
Lake Ridge, VA 22192

One to One
P.O. Box 23803
Columbia, SC 29224-3803

Penpals 4 Jesus
P.O. Box 506
Floral City, FL 34436

Prison Letter Ministry
P.O. Box 2813
Niagara Falls, NY 14302

Prison Vision Espanol
P.O. Box 40446
Staten Island, NY 10304-0446

Prisoner Connections
P.O. Box 76275
Milwaukee, WI 53216

Rachael Deery Penpal
Haverhill St.
Brockton, MA 02301

First Baptist Church - Dallas
Prison to Praise International
1707 San Jacinto
Dallas, TX. 75201

For 2008, Bob is doing Bible study at BWDF on Mondays and Thursdays.

The Sunday after the 2nd Saturday of each month is Bob and Linda's assigned day for 3 to 4 chapel Services at Corcoran State Prison ("Old" Corcoran). 08/10/08, 09/14/08, 10/12/08, 11/09/08, & 12/14/08.

M.O.M. Needs

- Tractor repair or replacement for Camp Clarius development.
- Pen-pals to write inmates
- Finances
- Testimonies
- Development of Nevada property
- Graphics for books

From the Mom of M.O.M.

Bob's mother (Mom of M.O.M.) has requested drawings of what individuals think Heaven will be like. I think we will run a contest, to end Oct. 1, 2008, for the best drawing and award a quarterly gift pack for the drawing chosen. Also for those wanting to contribute drawings for some of our books of poetry, please contact us.

Making a Stand

Look at a church's articles of faith and see what they write down that they stand for. See what they also stand against that is written. Assume nothing that is not written.

Letters that Express it All

We like to post real life situations, because God works in real lives and He is the one that gives "Eternal Life." Every week we get many letters that state "I love hearing the testimonies." There are so many, we cannot publish them all, and the sad part is – people not involved in jail/prison ministry do not get to read the many letters we receive daily (average 2 to 11 each day) and try to keep up with and answer.

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Getting God's Attention (and God Getting Yours)

David and Bathsheba

- David saw Bathsheba and wanted her. One sin led to another as he tried to hide each sin with another and yet larger sin - 2 Samuel 11:3
- (looking > wanting > having > death of Uriah > Child)
- David chose cover-up instead of repentance –
- God required the life of the child
- And eventually the lives of David's other sons –

Eli, Hophni and Phinehas

- Eli was a high priest
- Eli was the individual that raised Samuel in the temple
- Eli's sons were ungodly men
- Eli did not raise his sons in Godly ways as required by God.
- God put a curse on Eli's family for **all** future generations.
- 1 Samuel 1:1 – 4:11

Abraham and Isaac and Ishmael

- Abraham – A doubting man, but after trying to do it on his own, would follow God's plan.
- Ishmael – Born out of wedlock by Abraham and Hagar, a handmaid.
Gen. 16:1-17:26
Gen. 25:12-18

Ishmael was cast out in the desert with his mother

- Isaac – Born of Sarah and Abraham as God had planned
 - Gen. 21:1-21:12
 - Gen.25:19-34
- Abraham was the father of many nations as God had said

Adam and Eve

- Could eat of anything in the garden,
- But could not eat from the tree of knowledge
- Did the “ONLY” thing they could not do
- Cast out of the garden

FOREVER

Ownership

“Feed my sheep” but the churches (people) want to own the sheep, not take care of them.

Get the facts, and get them straight

God does not send anyone to Hell, you have to earn your own way.

No Slack With God Metolius Shawn Snyder

What type of People are in Prison? Hall of Fame People!

Tricklining is the most common type of slacklining because it can be set up from almost any two secure points.

Tricklining is done low to the ground, and it is also often called "**lowlining**." A great number of tricks can be done on the line, and because the sport is fairly new, there is plenty of room for new tricks. Some of the basic tricks done today are: standing, stand start, walking, walking backwards, turns, knee drop, opposite turn around, bounce walk. Some of the intermediate tricks are: moonwalk, sit mount, buddha sit, mantle start, sitting down, lying down, jump start, cross legged knee drop, surfing forward, surfing sideways, jump turns, "Carroll's mount." Some of the advanced/expert tricks are: back-flip on the line and back onto the line, jumps referred to as ollies, tree plants, front flip dismount, back flip dismount, doing push-ups, throwing a disc around with someone from line-to-line, tandem walking, the tandem pass, piggy-back rides across the line, and jumping from line-to-line. Also look up the **tight rope** sub-category of "freestyle-slacklining", aka "rodeo-slacklining."

Highlining is slacklining at a high elevation. The line is set extra strong with precautions taken to make sure nothing goes wrong while the slacker walks across a gap anywhere from twenty feet to several thousand feet off the ground. To ensure safety, most highliners wear a climbing harness with a leash attached to the slackline itself; however, unleashed walks of highlines is not unheard of.

NEW, LONGER SPAN ESTABLISHED AT LOST ARROW SPIRE

Longest slackline history

Long slackline walking was pioneered most notably by Dean Potter, Shawn Snyder, and Braden Mayfield.

- Shawn Snyder became the first to walk a new longer span between the Lost Arrow Spire and the valley rim. Shawn established the span, rigging it, and subsequently walked from the rim to the Spire, after several days of trying. The new span is about twice as long as the traditional gap and spans the lost arrow chimney. Clearly, it is the deepest gap ever spanned, and unquestionably the most exposed highline walk in the world, to date, though not the longest. Shawn has walked longer gaps than this, just none more exposed.

Shawn Snyder raised (rigged) a highline over a hundred feet long between the John Muir Tree and another large tree in Leidig Meadow, across the street from Camp Four. This was a spectacular rigging feat, and perhaps a very dangerous one too, being 'wider' than it was 'tall', and relying solely on the primary system.



Demonstrating Slackline



Shawn Snyder crossing **Indian Cave Corridor**

Lately lots of slackline/highline records are being established/broken. We should try to come up with all the known slackin' world records.

Highest highline: lost arrow spire (or the euro spire?)

longest highline: corbin's needles highline?

oldest highliner: Ric Phiegh @ 49 yrs.

youngest highliner: Corbin @ age 14?

heaviest highliner: Buddha!

most controversial highliner: Shawn Snyder

longest unleashed walk: 88 ft. Darrin Carter in the LBC

highest unleashed walk: lost arrow spire- Darrin, **Shawn**, Dean

longest lowline: 405 ft. – Damian C



I will tell you who Metolius Shawn is! His real name is **Shawn Snyder**, and he is one of the worlds best Highliners, with out a doubt! Scott first walked the the Lost Arrow Spire, But it was Darrin Carter that assumed the crown! Then Darrin gave some skinny kid he met in Hidden Valley camp ground, a slackline lesson. And with that Dean Potter took it from there. Shawn learned early on from Dean. And since then has done more to further sport of highline over the years then anyone that I know of!

He has had some problems along the way, his temper can be quick, and he

has problems with authority. Do you see a pattern here? But the Shawn that I have come to know over the years, is trust worthy, brutally honest, and when he is on, more fun to be around than anyone else I have ever met! I have enjoyed the opportunity to road trip with Shawn on many an occasion, so believe me I know of what I speak!

No one is more committed to the dirt bag climber life style than Shawn, and few have been on the circuit longer! I could fill this letter with Shawn stories.

What is important is that if you kids, that happen to run into Shawn in Josh or anywhere else for that matter, be respectful, because you are in the company of a Hall of Fame Highliner.

In parting, I will leave you with one recent Shawn Story. When I first started corresponding with Corbin years ago, He was always asking me about Shawn. I knew that Corbin wanted to Highline with Shawn, I did my best to set it up. But three days before we showed up in Josh, the Tool hauled his ass out of Hidden Valley to the big house!

Then this year just before Thanksgiving. Corbin calls and says he is in Josh. I gave him the best number I have to contact Shawn. But Corbin doesn't make the call! The next day Corbin and his friends are out in the Wonderland doing some climb, and as they top out, they see this highline being pulled up between the Astro Domes off in the distance! So Corbin, Raps off, and walks over to, as he phrased it "Dan the Morman, and Ex Con Shawn rigging" a hundred and forty foot highline!

So the Young Dawg introduces himself, and asks for chance to walk their line. They replied sure! "You can

go first!" After a whimper, the Young Dawg smoked their line!!!!

Man I wish I could have been there to see the look on Shawn's face when this seventeen year old shows up, and promptly smokes his hundred and forty footer, before he does! I am absolutely positive it was a grin from ear to ear! Because no one cares more about the proliferation of highline more than Shawn!

Well I'm not sure if that was a Corbin story or a Shawn story, or both

And Please, if You Have The Opportunity to Hang With Shawn, You Are Truly Blessed!! Give Him The Love and Respect that you would to a Legend in his own time! Shawn is still my friend, and I will continue to love him unconditionally no matter what!!!!

Unc

Unc is perfectly on target. Shawn is a rad highliner to the highest degree, and a fearless climber, often free soloing climbs.

I have been so busy with other pursuits, i never even had experienced the dirtbag lifestyle before.

Obviously Shawn and I come from different worlds. And somehow by the 2nd day we ever hung out together, and ever since, we have been good friends. Occasionally Shawn gets a bit defensive of his place in highlining history, and probably for good reason. The way it seems to me, the sport has grown exponentially lately, and now sponsors and businesses are coming into the sport, and those things will change it. Shawn may have a fear that the pure, early, uncrowded days of highlining are gone, but i don't think so. I think with money to travel, highlining can and will be taken to many more new places, never walked before, than there are

established highlines. I think with the right small, motivated group, we will regain the "out there", "by ourselves", origins of highlining.

Shawn is a little more cynical about change and growth than most of us, but that stems from his unwavering devotion to the dirtbag lifestyle. I had heard some bad things about Shawn before I met him, and if those things were ever true of him, he has certainly changed. He has a motivation to do good, a need to only take when he is able to give in return, and he has accepted the presence of all these new highliners and slackliners, even non-climbers like me, with a pretty good attitude.

He has shared rigging techniques and highline walking techniques with a small community of us, and his experience and knowledge has proved invaluable to many of us in our own pursuits.

I am happy to call him a friend, and despite his hardcore activities which lead to a perceived hardcore attitude, he has enabled a friendship with me, perhaps the least hardcore climber around.

Shawn was an original member of the "highwalkers" which was he, Braden and Darrin Carter trying to get a highline thing going, back in the day. It never took off, and those guys have mostly been separated for the last several years. As a nod to our past, and with mad respect for the skills of those 3 guys, I have invited any and all members of the original "highwalkers" to join or hang out with the Gravity Highline Team. Shawn is interested in being affiliated with our group, and to Darrin and Braden, I extend an open invite to join us anywhere, anytime.

I know without the efforts of guys like them, Dean Potter, Timmy O'Neal, Adam Grolkowski, Scott Balcom, Chongo and others there would be no place in this world for the Gravity Highline Team. Thanks for bringing our sport to the level it currently enjoys. Shawn will be with our highline team in Red Rocks this year (2006), maybe Braden or Darrin will show up someday too.

V nuthin ace

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF SLACKLINING

Story by Seth Lightcap • Photos by Kevin Walker

Slacklining, the art of walking along one-inch wide nylon webbing, is a new school variation of circus style tight-rope walking. Born along chain link fences in Yosemite Valley, the sport of slacklining has become a recreational phenomenon enjoyed worldwide, from the beaches to the highest alpine spires.

A slackline gets its name because although the line is tensioned very tightly between two anchor points, it is not rigidly taut due to the dynamic nature of the nylon webbing. As you walk out on the line the webbing stretches underfoot and hence it feels "slack" compared to a rigid tightrope cable that does not stretch. The squirrely and seemingly unpredictable movement of the line is what makes slacklining the ultimate balance challenge. Your entire mind, body, and soul are needed just to stay balanced, let alone walk the line.

The average slackline is set up between trees or posts at a beach or park and ranges from 15 to 100 feet in length. The tension of the line varies based on your equipment and desire. A tight line is easier to walk, but the rubbery bounce of a slightly looser line can be

rewarding. There is always a great deal of energy in the line so getting aggressively bucked off is not uncommon. To avoid injury, most slacklines are set up within a few feet of the ground.

While rope walking has been around for thousands of years, the familiar art of slacklining along a taut length of tubular nylon webbing was invented in the early 1980s by two Yosemite rock climbers, Adam Grosowsky and Jeff Ellington. The pair picked up on the idea after walking along loose chain fences on rainy days in the Valley. Hooked on the challenge, they strung up old climbing webbing between trees around their campsites at Camp 4, the traditional campground for Yosemite climbers for over 40 years. Voila! The slackline was born.

In the summer of 1983, Adam and Jeff's slackline antics started to draw the attention of other Yosemite climbers. Their attempt at walking on a steel cable across the gap between the Valley rim and Lost Arrow Spire, a 2900-foot deep chasm that's 55 feet across, was especially impressive. Several more climbers began slacklining that summer, but only a select few really developed a passion for it. One of the most inspired was a young climber named Scott Balcom.

Returning to Southern California that fall, Scott and a few friends started practicing religiously and experimented with different types of slacklines. Soon Scott's skills were dialed and he began focusing on the goal inherited from Adam and Jeff – to walk across the Lost Arrow Spire gap. For practice, Scott's crew set up a 22-foot slackline underneath a highway that spanned an 80-foot drop. Using doubled lines for added strength, and harnesses and a

tether to escape from would-be fatal, this “highline” was a first of its kind.

In 1984, Scott returned to Yosemite set on conquering the Lost Arrow chasm. Skilled but unable to escape his fear, the exposure proved too daunting and Scott was unsuccessful. Throughout the next year Scott trained both harder and smarter, focusing on visualization and distance perception. The training paid off and that next summer, in July of 1985, Scott became the first person to walk the gap from Lost Arrow Spire to the Valley rim.

Scott's achievement stands proud to this day. Still the most coveted accomplishment in the world of slacklining, the Lost Arrow highline was not walked again until 1993 when Darrin Carter successfully crossed the span. Darrin would later up the ante even further by not only crossing the span in both directions, but also by crossing without a safety tether!

Though Adam, Jeff, Scott and Darrin were the pioneers, it was not until well-known rock climber Dean Potter stepped on the Lost Arrow highline that slacklining was seen in the public eye. Pictures of Dean slacklining in Patagonia ads introduced the sport to the masses and inspired the next generation of slackliners such as Shawn Synder, Corbin Usinger, and Damian Cooksey.

In today's world of slacklining, the discipline has evolved two distinct specialities – lowlining and highlining. Lowlining is the style that a majority of slackliners enjoy because it can be practiced anywhere you can find two anchors and requires a lot less equipment. With little consequence for falling, lowlines also afford the freedom to attempt tricks on the line. The progression of lowline stunts is much

like that of a gymnast on a balance beam – beginners work on moving smoothly through direction changes while the very best in the world execute front and back flips (taking off and landing on the line). Freestyle slackline competitions are even popping up where competitors perform a routine for judges.

On a highline, overcoming your fear to just walk the span is the goal. Highlines are significantly more dangerous as swinging falls can careen you back into the rock and the rigging of the line must be incredibly strong to withstand a fall midline. The exposure on a highline is immense and only those who can focus beyond their trivial fears will be successful. Despite the danger, the world's best slackliners and rock climbers continue to push the boundaries of balance by walking highlines as long as 200 feet.

Slacklining is a graceful form of moving meditation and many regard its benefits to be Zen like. "Walking the slackline makes you look within," notes accomplished highliner Shawn Snyder. "Everytime I walk a highline it's almost like a beautiful enlightenment ... an experience that opens your eyes, softens your heart, and quiets you a little bit."

Though rock climbers have been the foremost proponents of slacklining, walking the line can be fantastic training for any sport requiring balance. Professional surfers, snowboarders, and cyclists have taken up slackline training as a means of improving core strength and mental resolve. Walking the quivering line mimics riding through uneven terrain and improves your ability to control your center of gravity and stick to your path no matter the obstacle.

Whether you're an aspiring surfer, climber, or Cirque de Soleil performer, learning to walk on a

slackline will undoubtedly improve your performance. Part sport, part meditation, slacklining requires focus and commitment. Look for a slackline in a neighborhood near you or learn how to make one. Better balance is just a couple of wobbly steps away!

What does Forty Days Forward have to do with slack-lining? You may not know what slack-lining is. Even if you do, take a look at [this short film](#) by Jutta Reichardt, presented by [Nau](#) (a unique clothing company on a mission). The film profiles the journey of one man, Shawn Snyder, who discovered himself and deeper meaning and purpose for his life through simply walking. Ok, so it's not just walking but the simplicity is real

As I listened to Shawn talk about his journey on the slack-line, I was struck by the similarities with [Forty Days Forward](#). First, he talks about looking within to find his answers. By reflecting on himself, his life and behavior, Shawn came to realize that he could live his life by reaction or he could live his life on purpose, by choosing. He began to choose. He found that the meditative quality of walking the line calmed him. That's what pure, laser-like focus and flow do, they take you out of your head and ground you firmly in the present moment.

When you are in your head, preoccupied with the future or rerunning the past, the present is left out. You are not alive in the moment; you're somewhere else, perhaps somewhere that's not serving you. By letting go of your thoughts, and being fully present, you are suddenly alive in a way that may be totally new to you. For Shawn, it was a life changing experience, akin to an enlightenment or [satori](#). (Satori is a bit like being stuck by lightning. If you

want to know what it feels like, ask me about mine sometime.)

Unlike the myth of controlling outcomes, controlling your responses is not a myth. It is an attainable goal, a skill that you or anyone can acquire. It starts with reflection: looking, seeing, believing what's there. Next, a decision is required, a choice point. Then, there is letting go: releasing the past and the future to reside in the present moment

The next time you are feeling stressed or upset, you don't need a slack-line to experience the same sort of exhilarating life that Shawn does. Take a moment for a really deep breath. Don't just breathe. Feel your breath rushing past your nostrils, the cool sensation in the back of your throat. Look around. Be where you are. See your surroundings. Look for colors, listen for sounds. Even 30 seconds of present moment awareness can transform your feelings of frustration. Yes, it takes discipline. But think about what your stress, frustration, or anger may be costing you. Is it worth it?

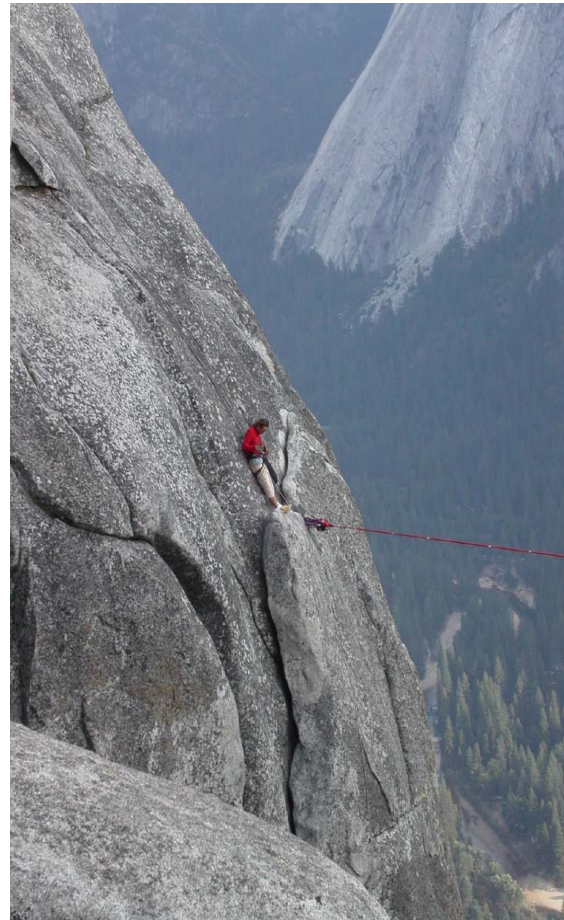
In the end, Shawn talks about the growing popularity of slack-lining. There are probably people in your area doing and teaching it. He says, "[We] started something because it was rad. And other people want a part of [the] radness." From my perspective, what he's saying is that when you're comfortable in your own skin, with nothing to prove to anyone, people sense that and are attracted by it.

Look around you. What are you attracting into your life? The radness of your best life? Or something less desirable? You get to choose. What do you want?

Peace be with you, Tara



The **long Spire line** ~120 ft. long - 2890 feet above the valley floor - First walk: Shawn Snyder, summer 2003



Shawn Snyder at "**The Flake**"



Wes Ellis at the **Lost Arrow Spire**



Shawn Snyder on the 60 footer,
Slackline Brothers Inc. © 2006

Cave Corridor 60 - 60 ft. long - 75 feet high - First walk: Shawn Snyder

Cave Corridor 90 - 90 ft. long - 75 feet high - First walk: Ammon McNeeley

The Big Boy - 210 ft. long - 40-80 feet high (ground is slanted) - First walk: Shawn Snyder?



Corbin on the 90 footer, *Slackline Brothers Inc. © 2006*

Testimony

By Shawn Snyder

I was born in 1970. I am one of 9 kids, one mother and five fathers. Alcoholic grandparents and drugged out parents. We had lots of physical, sexual, and mental abuse. I dropped out of school really young to help raise my brothers and sisters, when my mom went to prison for seven years.

One day on the Pacific Crest trail from Mexico to Canada, I had an out-of-body experience, if you will. My legs gave out and I could not walk at all. This really bad feeling came over me. It started from deep within me and worked its way upward to my shoulders and out my head. This thing stood and looked at me. It was the scarest thing I had ever seen in my life. It was "me." I was put into this box, if you will, like a small, dark, lonely elevator. The door closed, but left a small crack of light. The feeling of death lurked all around. I heard this voice saying, "this is where you are heading if you don't change your way of life." You see, I have always pointed the finger outward, saying this sucks, that sucks, I hate this, and I hate that. The truth was that I suck, and I hated myself. Most people see and hate in others what they really hate within themselves. Once this thought came, the elevator opened and a new light, a new way of thinking, arose in me. This was the first day I admitted to myself that I wanted help in my life. I knew my life had become unmanageable. I started at the starting line and started to seek truth. I wanted to have an accurate knowledge of why I am here, what is my purpose, and how do I find peace?

Several years went by of more pain. I was still lying, stealing, and smoking

weed. Things were always way up or way down, never a steady flow, until I learned how to walk a highline. I learned to slackline on the Rostrum in Yosemite Valley at 800 feet above the ground. I learned to walk up height before ever really learning to walk down low. Dean Potter had two lines on the Rostrum. One was about 60-70 feet long, and one was about 20 to 30 feet long. I tied in to the small line and tried to walk it. After falling several times, Dean took me over to this line he put up between two trees. It was about 15 feet long. Another friend named Dean Fidalman, held my hand and walked me across the line a few times. About 10-15 minutes later, I said "I can do this." I went back to the small highline, and after several tries, I was walking back and forth with no problem. I unclipped and told Dean Potter I wanted to walk the long line. He tied a 2" piece of webbing around my waist and said "you're safe, and good luck." I was really scared. I was hanging with the big boys of Yosemite Valley, the top climbers in the world. Dean had just soloed the nose of El Cap and was filming a video. Outside Magazine was doing an article. People and cameras all over. Talk about pressure ! After a few falls, I found myself in the middle of the line. There was no turning back. And then out of nowhere, I hit this brick wall. This once familiar feeling comes over me and I cannot feel my legs. For the second time in my life, I felt what it was like to be paraplegic. This door opens in front of me and my legs come back, and I step in, only to hit another brick wall. I am now in a long hallway, if you will, with a really bright light at the end. I know

this light and I have seen it before. I call out to it, and ask “where have you been the last several years?” The light said “where have you been, I have been here the whole time.” The light told me that I have free will and that it does not force anyone to do anything. It said that “the last time we met, you left the starting line, leaving the elevator door open, open to allow your old ways to follow you. I had just realized that I brought my old habits and ways of thinking into my new search for truth and inner peace. I felt my legs come back. I then felt this really, really good euphoric feeling of bliss roll through my body and my mind for that moment. For the first time in my life, I truly felt what it feels like to be in the know, to feel whole, to feel the power of true consciousness, the presence of Jehovah God. WOW! I turned and closed the door behind me. I found perfect form and perfect balance, and walked perfectly to the other side. When I got there, everyone was silent. They knew I had just felt the presence of something way beyond human comprehension. The energy was beyond words. I sat in a moment of pure silence and wiped the tears out of my eyes. When I turned around, everyone started yelling and screaming. I heard my friend, Dean Fidelman, say “come on back home.” I stood up to clip back on the line and something stopped me. This voice said “thou shall not tempt thy God” and I yelled back to Dean “I am home.” I soloed down the side of the Rostum to the Notch and up the other side. Congratulations and hugs were everywhere. You see, I realized that on

my search to find truth and peace, I found that the finish line is and always was the starting line, it was within the whole time. I always had the power to do good, but always chose to do bad. Don't get me wrong, my life is not perfect, the sin within me still comes out sometimes, but it's just that, it's not me. It is something we humans are all born with. I have just chosen not to serve it any more. I found something more rewarding to serve. Because of letting go of fear and doubt, I have come to realize that you can do anything you put your mind to. You just have to believe in yourself and have faith, then your true consciousness will prevail. Once everyone but a few friends left Rostrum for the night, I was once again reminded of God's presence. We were laying down talking about what I was going through on the line and eating some snacks, we looked up to the sky and you wouldn't believe what we saw. For the first time in many years, the Northern Lights shined in California. It was the prettiest thing I had ever seen. Just one extra nice confirmation that our Creator and Heavenly Father is always watching over us. The Aurora Borealis was the finishing touch of a great and spiritual day one can have living and seeking truth. It was not in a mega-church with money and possessions. I was where Jesus said it would be, amongst His people.

Shawn Snyder
