

The Marginal Man

In 1903 W.E.B. Du Bois introduced the concept of *Double Consciousness* — the conflict that develops when you live with an African heritage in a European dominated society. In the 1920s two psychologists, Robert Ezra Park and Everett Stonequist applied this concept to European immigrants and called it *The Marginal Man*.

In 1987 Ned Rollo, Executive Director of Open Inc., published a small handbook called 99 Days And A Get Up, a survival manual for prisoners. In it he applies the concept of the Marginal Man to the person leaving prison. He writes:

The ex-con no longer belongs to the prison world, yet he or she doesn't quite fit in the society to which he has returned. This can result in an *intense* feeling of isolation. Be aware that this is normal. It will require time and patience before you can feel that you "belong" again.

If this alienation continues, there is the chance that the ex-con becomes "The Marginal Man." this concept of the marginal man is simply that the individual does not fit into the current scene, nor does he or she really fit in the past any longer. The Marginal Man finds himself in a state of limbo...not really belonging to either world. In self-defense, some ex-cons cling to their identity as the marginal man. Since they don't feel the comfort of belonging, they will *choose* to be the outsider. A person who makes this choice can find himself trapped forever

The primary thinking with our Exodus Program is Image Theory and Imaginal Education. Our *Unconscious Image* informs our *Thinking* which informs our *Action*.

Image — Thinking — Action

I remember one man who was released a week before Thanksgiving. He told his friend, “If I’m still out at Christmas, I will come visit you.” Before he left prison he expected to be back. He was the *Revolving Door Man* at an unconscious level.

I remember another man who served 25 years. During that time he earned a BA and an MPS degree. He set goals to be released on a certain date, earn an MSW degree after release, and get married and start to raise a family. He accomplished all three. While in prison he became *The New Man*. he was intentional with Life-Giving goals that had the power to pull him into the future. Upon release he probably was *The Marginal Man* for a short period of time, but was able to make the transition and continue his life as *The New Man*.