



## The pendulum dialogue – written dialogue between Ines Aubert and Robert Power / Casper

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### **Introduction:**

Some members never learn about the crime of their pen pals. Some mention it briefly in their correspondence while others just write about forgiveness in a general way, but I never heard an inmate talking about it like my pen pal Casper does.

I haven't written Casper for a long time yet; but it's obvious that one of several common features he and I have is a very pronounced directness and openness. In that we recognized each other quickly. Casper did horrible things in his past, but he then found peace in a profound spirituality and in his wish to help other people, which he's able to do regularly.

We both like to delve to the ground of things and we love to learn as much as possible from and about the other. So, no wonder that in short we ended up talking about his past.

Casper encouraged me from the start to ask him whatever I wanted to know, and so I did as he had invited me to do: I asked questions and he responded to each of them.

Soon after we had started to correspond, we began a second dialogue which should outline the gist of all of our discussions. A short version, so to speak, of our talk about guilt, self-examination and forgiveness, which is still going on in our letters.

Casper referred to the internet for me to read more about his crime. I read what is written there. I believe that most of it describes what really happened, but it doesn't describe the man that looks at me through Casper's eyes today.

I know he did these things. He was a man capable of committing such heinous offenses, and even though he has changed greatly, the past is part of his life.

For me dealing with that knowledge is immensely harder than not having known about it when I first wrote to Casper. It doesn't, however, prevent our closeness from growing or the continuous sharing of our inside with each other.

During the past months I exposed myself and Casper to some very hard questions which to me was a battle I had to fight for a way to accept and deal with Casper's past crimes.

I'm not sure whether I'm there already or not, but I've gone a part of the way I'm called to go, the way to bring together, in my heart, the two men Casper consists of.

I realize: I entered Casper's biography some time ago and by doing so there is no other way for me but to learn what I'm supposed to learn as everything happens for a reason. I couldn't step out any more, even if I wanted to. Because Casper has in turn done the same; he has entered my biography as well.

Please read and make up your opinion yourself.

## The pendulum dialogue

**Ines:** Casper, never before have I met a person who has touched both ends of the pendulum's swing like you did.

I perceive you today as full of spirituality and knowledge.

**Casper:** Your „pendulum swing“ analogy fits in two different ways.

Yes, I have both suffered violent experiences and caused others to suffer such experiences.

Whether you are receiving or giving violent experience, violence is traumatizing. In this regard yes, I have much knowledge.

The pendulum can also illustrate an important aspect of truth, relative to perspective.

When you consider the pendulum to be the point of one's view of an experience, it is very difficult to examine any traumatic experience when you are directly over the top of it. However, when the pendulum swings far enough away in time and space, you gain a broader view. Thus, you are able to examine traumatic experiences for any spiritually oriented objective lessons, if one's spirit is moved toward self-examination.

**Ines:** Casper, tell me, what are your thoughts about women today? What is left of the man who hurt women and children? How can you comfort me?

When I first read about your crimes after having got to know you a little through the first letters – it was only three or four lines – my very first and spontaneous thought was: “How dare he appear so friendly?”

I want to ask you in the name of all women, girls and mothers: “How dare you touch us and our children?”

I need to ask you that because I want to hear your voice to that.

**Casper:** You gave me the impression you desire to understand how I came to be so emotionally and mentally disconnected from other people that I could violently dominate innocent men, women and children.

You ask heavy questions. I give heavy answers because I believe you ask with a sincere desire to understand.

You cannot help me to get rid of my guilt. To the extent I have offended you, and feel contrition for that offense, you can forgive me if your spirit has that capacity of heart and mind.

Forgiveness of self and others can calm the effects of guilt, but even when sincerely given and received forgiveness can't eliminate guilt.

You ask what remains of the man I was when I was violent.

Nothing.

I understand your first impression, and the indignation of your question. You are part of the “world” I harmed, thus I harmed you personally by contributing to the violent world you live in and suffer through every moment of each day.

For the harm I have caused I am guilty, and do not seek to deny or justify my guilt. I cannot change the harm I have caused, though I would willingly give my life to change it. I have agonized over my guilt and given a great deal of thought to the harm I have caused people personally and collectively.

Thus nothing remains of the man I was except this body, which will soon return to dust.

I sincerely ask you to forgive the offense of my former violence against your spirit, as you considered with righteous indignation the true nature of the spirit who once occupied my heart, mind and body. Only you can judge my present spirit and decide if or not you will forgive my offense. I hope you will.

**Ines:** In one of your letters you described your past behavior with these words:

*I have killed, raped, robbed and beaten, stole, cheated in every kind of trickery, pimped prostitutes, sold drugs, and generally dominated every person unfortunate enough to cross my evil path.*

I've never heard anybody talking like that about themselves. Usually it is spoken in such terms about a third party, which in turn becomes silent when these actions are discussed.

However, in all the letters we've exchanged I only experienced you as loving, patient, spiritually oriented and supportive. I'm impressed by the big change you managed to achieve in your life. I'm still puzzled about the fact that your past and your present are that much different. How could you manage that change while others can't?

**Casper:** In my mind, "evil" is defined as any deviation from true goodness. My values were a deviation from true goodness, my judgements were a deviation, and my justice was the same. I view "justice" as any behavior that is considered by one's spirit to be justified generally, and in response to specific offenses perceived.

I had to look at my behavior and call it what it was, evil.

If I refuse, or fail, to acknowledge the truth about my values, judgement, and justice, I deceive myself and remain the same.

The difference between my past and present began with a glimpse of the truth about love, who and what love is in truth. From there, I moved to diligent study and self-examination of past and present. Then, years later, I began to imagine a future wherein my spirit is able to co-operate in love's goodness.

There is no one who cannot be changed by love, my present spirit is certain proof of that.