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Stories 4 Wings

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Self Awareness

Be What You Can
Become





Marchell had known prison bars too early, and too often. As a teenager, anger had always accompanied him: a dull, visceral rage that made him see everyone as an enemy, every look as judgment, every word as a threat. Since childhood, he had felt out of place, as if the world hadn't reserved a corner for him. Others laughed, banded together, built friendships. Not him.

He defended himself. Whenever someone got too close, he reacted by striking first, convinced that the only way to avoid being crushed was to bare his teeth. Violence became his language, his armor. Over the years, nothing improved. He dropped out of school early, lost jobs one after another, friends ended badly or worse. His life was a succession of mistakes, falls, doors slammed in his face. Every time he tried to get up, something would pull him down: an impulsive gesture, a word too many, a punch thrown without thinking. And each time, his anger found a new outlet to explode. Until, once again, his guilt-stained hands brought him back behind bars.

This time, however, the burden was different. He was no longer a young man in need of rehabilitation, but a man who risked spending his life in prison. The cell was small, the silence deafening. Inside him, however, a constant din reigned: fear, anger, confusion. A whirlwind that gave him no respite. It was then that something he hadn't expected happened. One day, a counselor told him about a special program for prisoners with mental health issues. Marchell wasn't even sure what that meant. He thought, with his usual cynicism, that it was just a way to pass a few hours outside his cell. So he accepted the offer. Perhaps out of boredom. Perhaps out of curiosity. Or perhaps because, although he wouldn't admit it even to himself, he felt deep down that he couldn't go on living like this.

The first sessions were strange. They asked him questions no one had ever asked: about his childhood, his family, his reactions to things he'd always had. He'd only half-answered, often with annoyance. But slowly, those questions chipped away at his armor.

One day, he spoke of a distant, almost buried memory: the car accident he'd been in as a child. It had been violent; he'd hit his head so hard he was knocked unconscious. Since then, something had changed in him.



But no one had ever noticed. No doctor, no teacher, no family member had connected that fall to the boy who, as he grew up, seemed incapable of managing his emotions. It was then that the therapists spoke to him about the brain injuries that can occur following a head injury and the psychological consequences they can have, as well as the personality changes they can bring about. Marchell remained silent. He felt the words floating around the room, like a distant echo.

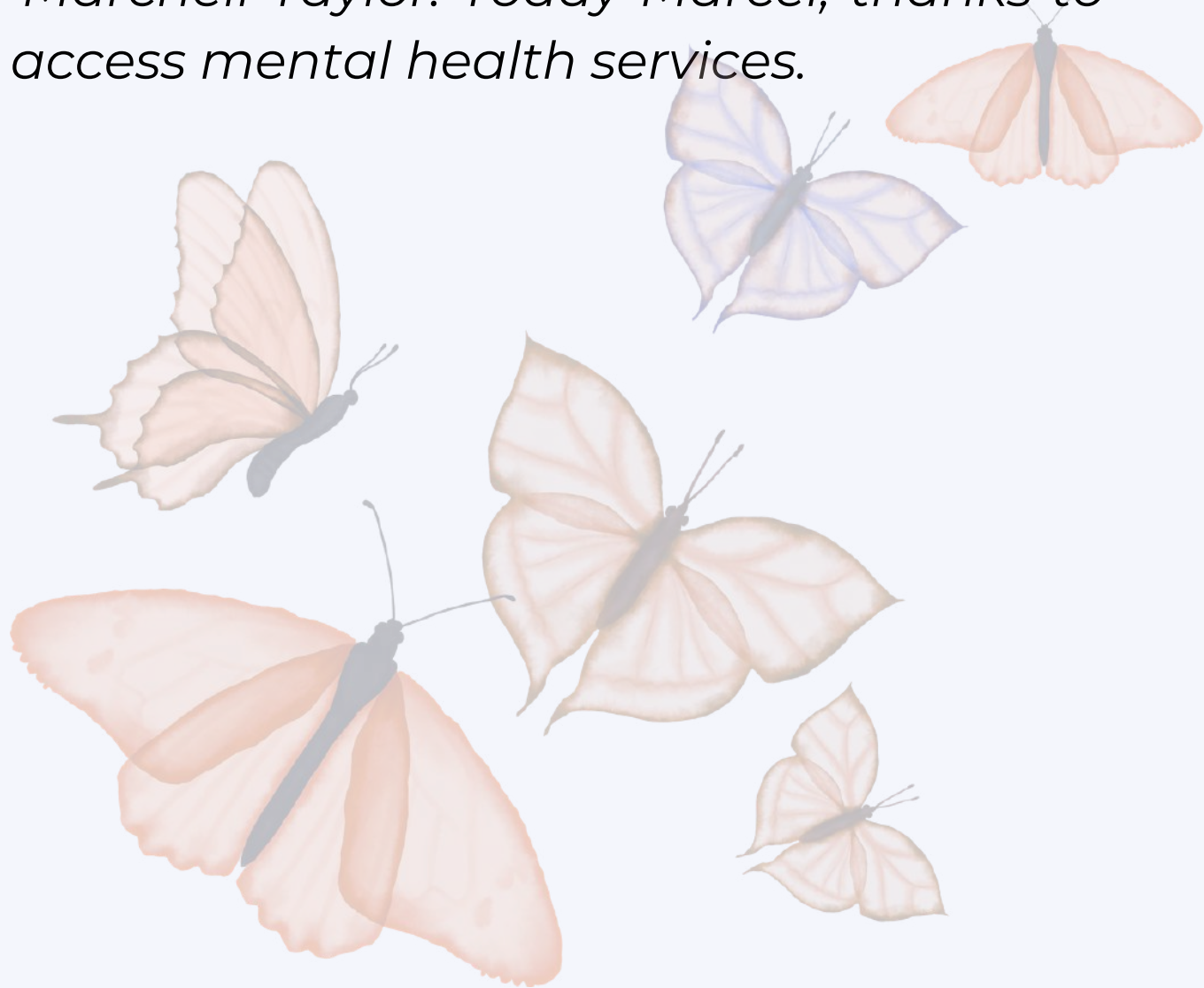
For the first time, his life didn't appear as a chaotic sequence of bad choices, but as the result of an invisible wound, ignored for years. It wasn't an excuse, and he knew it well. But it was an explanation. It was as if the fog began to lift. He wasn't simply "bad." Wounded in a way no one had ever been able to see. That realization was the beginning of a long journey.

Marchell accepted therapy. It wasn't easy: every step forward brought him face-to-face with pain, mistakes, and the responsibility for what he'd done. He learned to observe his emotions and reactions. To breathe before acting. To recognize that behind every outburst of anger was a root, an origin. There were days when he wanted to give up everything, go back to his old self. But there was also a new strength that, little by little, grew within him. He was no longer just the prisoner filled with hatred: he was truly getting to know himself. The years passed, and the change took shape. When he finally left prison, Marchell was no longer the man he'd entered. He wasn't perfect, he wasn't safe forever. But he was aware.

Capable of remaining silent without exploding. Capable of saying, in a firm voice: "I was wrong. But I'm not just this. I want to be something else." He could have disappeared, leaving the past behind. Instead, he decided to stay. To lend a hand to those who, like him, were still trapped not only behind bars, but in their own invisible traumas. He began collaborating with associations, speaking with judges, doctors, volunteers. He helped create programs that could recognize brain trauma in inmates, to give others the opportunity he had accidentally received. Every time he met an angry man, who looked at him with eyes full of defiance and pain, Marchell told him the words he wished he'd heard as a boy: "You are not just what you've done. You are also what you can become."



Story inspired by the true story of Marchell Taylor. Today Marcel, thanks to his experience, helps other people access mental health services.



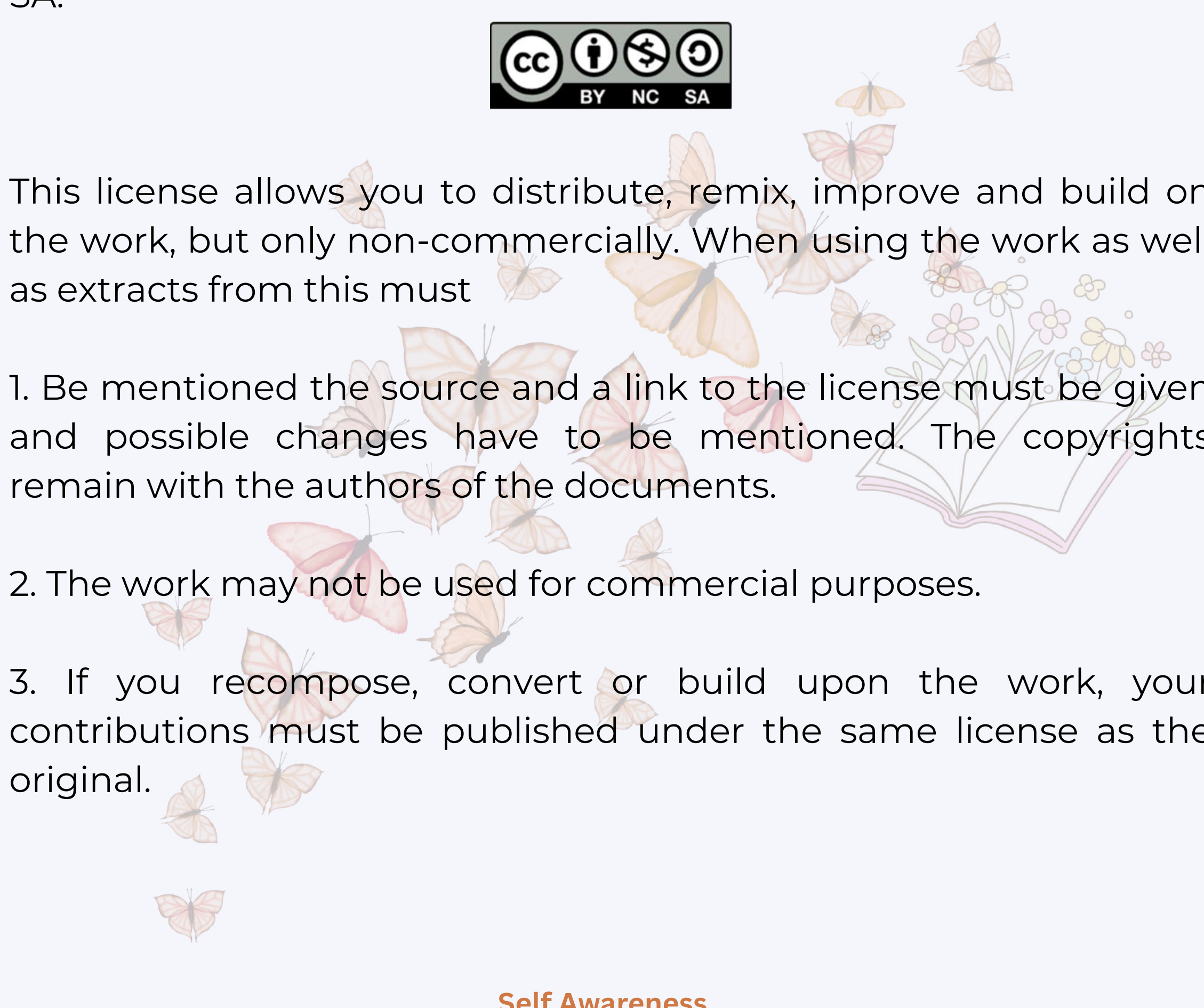


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