

Fair Shake News: EVOLVE Edition

Hello Fair Shake readers ~

I hope this edition of the newsletter finds you in good health and fairly good spirits. I always hope to bring uplifting and power-building news, but the news vibe of the day is anything but heartening; forcing us to dig deep into our reserves to maintain mental and emotional health.

I chose EVOLVE for the title of this edition because it evokes one of our deepest human needs: our sense of AGENCY. For the past 5 months we've been hearing how we must "pivot" from what we knew as normal to a 'new normal'. The driving force behind the pivot comes from health authorities. It's important to pay attention and take care; it is also important to feel like we contribute to our own health, our own development, our own information gathering. We have a deep need to feel like we are captains of our destiny!

Speaking of agency, did you know that there are no longer any states with a lifetime voting ban? Until a few weeks ago, Iowa was the final state to permanently disenfranchised people with felony convictions. This is a noteworthy step toward a more humane future. We are not where we want to be (ex: the Supreme Court upheld Florida's "Pay-to-Vote" betrayal of its citizen's wishes) but we are moving closer. We have to keep the pressure on until every state provides ballots to their incarcerated citizens. Maine and Vermont will show us the way. Re DC: I learned that ballots will be sent to the jail population in 2020, and to all prisoners in the next election.

Did you watch the conventions of the two permissible parties? They provided a clear picture of why the US is so polarized. Limiting us to two parties creates opponents rather than problem-solvers. The parties have both become antagonistic, self-aggrandizing, and fable-telling (by telling only parts of stories). Did you know that Mexico has 4 parties, Canada: 5, Germany: 14, and Nigeria: 18? We need more parties for rigorous, inclusive and critical discussions. The 'two party system' is pushing people out; in fact, the fastest growing party in the US today is "unaffiliated".

Anand Giridharadas, author of *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*, shared this reflection: "We are locked in a cold civil war. Each country feels the other is an existential threat to America. Each sees itself as the carrier of truth and freedom and righteousness. Each sees itself as honoring the founding values. Each says it will keep you safe."

Before COVID-19 raged across the planet, I talked with many of you about reaching out to the youth and children, to help them create a bright future. Any child with TV or the internet these days is seeing fewer opportunities for building trust, thinking critically and carefully, or developing global care and compassion. The virus is forcing a strained life to become even more difficult by making it impossible for the children to see you, to see classmates, or to meet new friends through sports, religious gatherings or community events.

It's hard to resist the stress. It gets more difficult each day to use our minds and our humanity to bolster ourselves against the media and their biased story-telling and emotional ploys. We can strengthen our resolve by remembering that the truth is complex. When we ask deep, caring questions, and dig to find the complexity, we increase our capacity to understand. Thinking critically will help us stay stronger mentally, emotionally and relationally - which will help us help the youth.

When I was a 15-year-old runaway, no adult could tell me anything: I could not trust them, and I did not care about the future. I'm glad I survived those painful years so I could work on this challenge with you.

We have a 'time out' right now where we can re-align our thinking with our ubuntu nature. We can think harder, listen with curiosity and care, and reflect deeply on our past, on how we have built ourselves, and ponder our future...a future, that includes the children.

If you have ideas or suggestions for how we might be able to reach "Runaway Sue", I hope you'll start a new email and share your thoughts. (If you don't start a new email, there is a good chance I won't have room to reply.)

Before I go any further, I must stop and give a grateful nod to the awesome donors on this list who make this newsletter possible. THANK YOU, DONORS!! All 4000+ of us would not be working, communicating and problem-solving together here if it wasn't for YOU!!

WHAT FAIR SHAKE IS:

The Fair Shake Reentry Resource Center is a nation-wide, self-serve FREE public "library" and "Do It Yourself" reentry hardware and software store.

A "fair shake" is not a hand out, nor is it one person giving; it is relational (like a hand shake). A fair shake is people working together; listening, problem-solving, and building fair chance at a satisfying life for everyone!

We have been conditioned to believe non-profits are well-funded, well-supported and have lots of employees and interns 'waiting by the phone' to provide services. None of this is true for scrappy little Fair Shake; created and managed by me alone, based on the donations that come in from people who care (most of whom are incarcerated) and constantly fighting against the well-funded forces that work diligently against freedom, self-determination and personal growth. It is those forces that are keeping you from having reentry resource labs available in every institution; the most obvious and inexpensive support they could – but refuse to – provide.

I've been receiving a lot of requests to perform services that are either out of my scope or WAY out of my scope. Corrlinks is very slow and with more than 4000 subscribers, I can no longer afford the time to respond to requests for services I don't offer. Here is a little guide to what I do and don't do:

What I am open to: (In a nutshell: PERSONAL and UBUNTU DEVELOPMENT)

- I encourage you to share ideas - that I can share with others - for folks to become stronger, and prepare well for the challenges of reentry and of life (anywhere!). I'm open to suggestions or questions about what I could add to the website/software.
- Sharing stories about ways people can share knowledge, build knowledge and offer support to those who are pursuing knowledge-building in certain areas or just want to expand their knowledge but don't know where to start.

- Learning with you about ways we can support folks who are making the transition out of prison. We all bring unique skills, talents, and insights. I know that when we put our heads together, we can come up with meaningful, valuable and supportive ideas!
- Exploring ways we can become increasingly pro-social (esp. in a polarized world). Harambee! How can we support each other today and in the future? I'm building the platform, together we can build the content, the tools, the virtual community center.
- Sending lists that I've created (quite often with information provided by readers!) such as the free books list, Writing Tips, Cognitive Biases, LGBTQ-supportive orgs, and responses to questions, such as the one in this edition!

What I will not do: (In a nutshell: REQUESTS FOR ME TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC SERVICES)

- I will not provide to you, or broadcast to the world, specific COVID-related information, prison information, DOC or BOP policies, etc. There are plenty of other sources for this info.
- Look up resources. You have unique wants and needs! And I am one person providing information to people around the country. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' reentry list and I don't have the capacity to find out about local restrictions, housing or job openings or other very specific (or broad...like "resources for California") information. The website / software does all that. What I do is I find the information and put it on the website for your outside supporters, reentry staff and case managers, and even YOU – in the software in prison, or when you get access to the internet (all libraries, and most phone-gizmo's have access to the internet) – to sort through the items (including books!) to find the resources that are right for you. The Fair Shake resource directory has more than 15,000 resources listed, plus nearly 400 resource guides for all states. It is FREE and open 24/7. www.fairshake.net Why is it not available to you now? Let's find out!
- Answer questions about rumors you've heard about free money.
- Put your writing submissions on the Fair Shake website. Fair Shake does not work that way, but I'd be happy to share the addresses of the organizations that will put your writing on THEIR website!

I am one person who made this whole thing up so that I could do what I can, as well as I can, every day, with what I've got. I cannot be all of the things that you are unable to find elsewhere. If you think those things need to exist, then contemplate deeply if you are the person to provide them. If you are, there is a lot of ground work to do where you are, right now, with what YOU have! Let's take on ALL of the needed tasks together. Ubuntu!

So now you know: if you ask for something 'out of my scope', you will likely not receive a response.

NEWS FROM RZERO

A lot of people have asked me what is going on with Rzero. They are down, but they are not out. They are hoping to be up again in a month or so. When I know they are up and running, I announce it in the FS Newsletter.

BLACK AND PINK

Several people have also asked me if I know what is going on with Black and Pink. I found out they moved recently and shared the following:

Black & Pink 6223 Maple St #4600 Omaha, NE 68104

We are backlogged a few months on processing mail, but are slowly catching up. Addressing the envelope based on the inquiry will process your mail quicker:

- * General: newspaper subscriptions, address change
- * Newspaper Submissions: stories, articles, poems, art
- * Feedback: feedback for the newspaper
- * Advocacy: advocacy requests (include details, and thoughts about how calls or letters might help)

CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (CEO)

CEO has been getting national attention for their continuous expansion across the country. Now in 11 states and 30 cities, they “offer individuals just coming home from prison the ongoing support necessary to build career capital and financial stability and believe that everyone deserves the chance to work toward a stronger future for themselves, their families, and their communities.” Write to see if they are now in your city or coming soon!

CEO 50 Broadway, Suite 1604 New York, NY 10004 212.422.4430 www.ceoworks.org

BOOK RECOMMENDATION: The Stand, by Stephen King - just for fun.

Did you read this book in the 70's? The book is especially interesting today. From his website: “THE STAND is Stephen King’s apocalyptic vision of a world decimated by plague and embroiled in elemental struggle between good and evil. The fate of mankind rests on the frail shoulders of the 108-year-old Mother Abigail and a handful of survivors. Their worst nightmares are embodied in a man with a lethal smile and unspeakable powers: Randall Flag”. The newly released book is nearly twice the length of the first edition (which was huge) and is available for just \$9 on Amazon.

QUOTES for this difficult time:

Pain that is not transformed is transmitted. - Richard Rohr

Hurt people hurt people. - Charles Eads

No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. - Albert Einstein

There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about - Margaret J. Wheatley

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples. - Mother Teresa

In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it. - Marianne Williamson

I’m still bailing out and rebuilding from the devastating impact of the website hack. The interconnected web of things affected is far reaching and layered on top of itself. Slowly but

steadily I will climb my way out of this mess. The new software will be released soon, reflecting all of the changes. Fair Shake will evolve.

And so will we all. Our challenge is to evolve intentionally and of our own volition!

Stay strong, stay safe and keep caring.

To our successful transitions! Ubuntu! ~ sue

Fair Shake PO Box 63 Westby, WI 54667

As always, when you are released, remember to look up free support in your phone-gizmo:
2-1-1 Fairshake.net HelpYourselfTherapy.com

Newsletters are available at FairShake.net for your family and friends to read or print!