

FS News – December 2021: Revolution Edition

Greetings fellow space travelers!

Ready or not, here comes another trip around the Sun ~ :)

Exciting days: the sun is now lengthening our days in the northern hemisphere and this weekend we will celebrate the start of 2022. I'm hoping again for a peaceful and cooperative year. How about you?

Our days may be getting longer, but they are also getting colder. We will have more time to think about what we might wish to see throughout the entire 2022 CE revolution. A friend of mine sent a note with a suggestion to think of one thing I want to let go of, and one thing I'd like to bring into my life. When I returned her text, I said "that's my thrift store shopping policy!"

In order to try to let go of something that is no longer beneficial to us, we have to reflect on our lives. Since we are always growing and changing, this only makes sense...yet it's tough to carve out time to dedicate to reflection. I'm a do-er; I understand that difficulty! Sometimes I feel like reflection time is day-dreaming time, aka a waste of time. There's so much to do, think, fix, explore, wonder, etc! But reflection time opens up the opportunity to see if we're still on the path we want to be on or if we might need to make a slight shift to get back on track or explore something new.

A reader shared his thoughts earlier this year about how he's been opening up to his full potential and his words reminded me of the 'letting go'...by critically seeing and then intentionally working to let go of aspects of himself that no longer represent him; and by 'developing' the parts of himself that he would like to see more of. He said the process took quite a while...even just to look critically, honestly, lovingly and humanly at himself.

In this deep reflection time, we can figure out what our core values are. For most of us, they are much richer and more nuanced than any set of rules. We live by our core values; our unique code of ethics. It's good to revisit them each year and ask: what still applies? what we can let go of? and what we'd like to add?

My mom has joined all of those who have gone before her. Since she left us on Dec. 11th, Rev. Desmond Tutu and groundbreaking scientist E.O. Wilson have joined her. They are all in my 'pantheon of guides' and Tutu and Wilson are highlighted in the quotes section at the end of the newsletter. Many of you have sent very kind words to support my mom, and also to support me in my 'new normal', which has already become my 'old normal'. ("The only constant is change." - Heraclitus 500 BCE)

HUMANITY: A SOUND INVESTMENT

We all owe a great deal of gratitude to the donors who make sure we can share information here each month! The Fair Shake donors, most of whom are incarcerated, are investing in social capital – US! – for the most valuable project: building the future we all want to live in together. No grants or programs or government funding will support something this inclusive, collaborative and human. There is no bureaucratic program for freely sharing information with everyone...without expectations, special identity or group requirements, surveys, data collection or follow up questions or commitments. The cost to send the newsletter each month is around \$475.00, but last month the cost doubled because there was so much interest in the RECIPES

and CATALOGS! That was really fun!! Thanks again, donors, for giving us that added connection to each other through the holiday season ~ :) Thank you, Donors!

The donors care. They care about you and about me and about our connection to each other and the future. I receive messages from readers who care. Over the last few months, especially, I've received a great deal of support for my mom and for me. (THANK YOU!) Care has a vital but un-measurable value.

For many decades, Desmond Tutu and E.O. Wilson both demonstrated their deep care for humanity. Their 'work' was not about the paycheck. Through their vocations, they developed and offered guidance and reason to believe in our biological and spiritual need for both giving and receiving care. Lorraine, like billions of parents before her, including Tutu and Wilson, cared for others wholeheartedly, esp. her family.

Today, I feel we are in a care crisis. We have reigned in our eyes, our ears and our hearts to care for people in our close circle...but not for others, esp. the whole of all of us...and our future together.

I've learned recently about a social scientist, Stephen G. Post, who has studied the impact of care, esp. through volunteering. The impact that he was studying was on the quality of life, the reduction of anxiety and depression and the better mental and physical state OF THE VOLUNTEER....not of the person who received the support. The giver benefits as least as much as the receiver! Case in point...from the Washington Post last week:

A man strung Christmas lights from his home to his neighbor's home to support her and let her know that she was not alone. He also left a tin of homemade cookies on her doorstep. The lights, he told her, were meant to reinforce that they were always connected despite their pandemic isolation. In the days that followed, neighbor after neighbor followed suit, stretching lines of Christmas lights from one side of the street to the other.

The photo of the neighborhood was incredible! And now it's an annual tradition. We can care, and we can help others increase their capacity to care by caring.

Are you willing to let go of something during the 2022 revolution? What would you like to gain in its place? And what about for people around you...whatever that means to you...? Is there something that you'd like to see fade away while something that is better moves in to take its place?

PEN-PAL ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS?

I receive requests all the time for people who would like to find a pen pal. They ask if I can share names and addresses of orgs they can write to. I asked the readers here about 2 or 3 years ago to share ideas...and I think it's time to ask again to refresh my list! If you've had a good experience with a pen-pal organization, would you please share their organization's name and address and a short note about your experience? Thanks in advance. This will be really valuable to the folks who write in. When I get the new list together, I'll offer it to everyone in the newsletter!

JOBS * JOBS * JOBS *

Smashburger contacted me again, and now staffing agencies are calling Fair Shake, too!

There is no need to worry about getting a job anymore...now the worry is about getting an entry-level job that you can tolerate while you prepare for finding – or creating – a satisfying way to earn a living. There are lots of jobs out there...and nowadays they pay well, too. So, can you interview the employer to find the not-great job that will pay the bills and then some while you work towards the job that you feel is fulfilling and in line with your goals?

RECOMMENDED READING: Your journal. Your calendar. Letters. Notes. All of which will provide great fodder for reflection.

Rev. Desmond Tutu quotes:

"My father always used to say, 'Don't raise your voice. Improve your argument'."

"When the missionaries came to Africa, they had the Bible, and we had the land. Then they said, 'Let us pray,' and we closed our eyes. When we opened them again, they had the land and we had the Bible."

"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

"Your ordinary acts of love and hope point to the extraordinary promise that every human life is of inestimable value."

"My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together".

"Exclusion is never the way forward on our shared paths to freedom and justice."

"Every human being is precious."

"There comes a time when we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."

How could you have a soccer team if all were goalkeepers? How would it be an orchestra if all were French horns?

E.O. Wilson quotes:

"You are capable of more than you know. Choose a goal that seems right for you and strive to be the best, however hard the path. Aim high. Behave honorably. Prepare to be alone at times, and to endure failure. Persist! The world needs all you can give."

"We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom."

"We have decommissioned natural selection and must now look deep within ourselves and decide what we wish to become."

"Change will come slowly, across generations, because old beliefs die hard even when demonstrably false."

"The real problem of humanity is that we have paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions, and godlike technology."

To our increasing interdependence and success! Happy revolution 2022 CE!

Ubuntu! ~ sue

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