

The Fair Shake Ownership Manual

Fair Shake is the 'unprogram'.

We will never tell you what you need or what you should do.

Every person is different, so Fair Shake offers a lot of information for you to peruse and choose!

Getting a fair shake is difficult. We must advocate for ourselves despite the fact that we have not had a proper education to understand ourselves...much less to own our future. But everyone deserves a fair shake at life, so we must learn how to get it. Have you thought about what you might need to get a fair shake? I think about this a lot, and I'd like to explore this idea with you!

First, we can ask ourselves to define the term. What does it mean to get a fair shake? In this publication we consider beliefs, values, feelings, relationships, boundaries, intention, persuasion, agency, and freedom, for starters. We can think about forces (expectations, status quo, legal and social) that direct us, support us and limit us, we can think about how we are educated, roles we play, parenting, money management, time management, and employment options. What else should we consider?

At Fair Shake, we believe that when you own yourself, you own your future. There is no "program" for you to build your best life! Your strengths, your skills, your knowledge, gifts, characteristics and capabilities can develop and expand along with your intentions, beliefs and commitments. Instead of telling you what to think, how to behave, or what you 'should' do, Fair Shake offers ideas to ponder, questions to consider, and ways to understand your thinking and your feelings to build your mental, emotional, physical, relational and community strength. You are the captain of your ship!

There is no specific order to this book or to the Fair Shake software / website. Feel free to pick an intriguing idea to consider. Read, reflect, question, critique, compare this information with other texts, discuss the ideas with others, and then explore some more! Your unique interests will guide you. Like any good Do-It-Yourself center, hardware store or library, we just want to "help you help yourself".

Everything at this do-it-yourself center is FREE. We want to be clear that this means it's free for you to utilize and free for you to share; please let your outside supporters know that it's free for them to use as well!. The software is free for prisons and jails to provide resources and development support to you. Please feel free to share this information with the library, education department or reentry center.

Fair Shake is also committed to your freedom, for instance, the freedom to search through our information without being tracked, nudged, directed or counted, and without us mining your preferences or sharing your information. Search freely and anonymously with just your curiosity, interests, and self-determination to guide you.

We can't tell you "What works". No one can. If they try to tell you, they are lying. There is no 'magic pill' that works for everyone. In fact, we've been chasing the elusive key to what works for 50 years and, despite the billions invested 'evidence-based' claims, the recidivism has only increased. The most recent report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics showed it at a whopping 83%*! "Evidence" rhetoric is a 'red herring' (intentionally misleading) because the 'evidence' which is 'observed' is not you!

Only you know what works for you; it's your unique blend, comprised of belief in yourself, your opportunities, your commitments, your capabilities, your problem-solving skills, your intentions and your determination. The secret to what works is inside each of us. It IS us. It includes feeling respected and understanding our value. It is having the autonomy to make - and act upon - our choices. We build ourselves, we can build our communities, and a powerful, safe and engaging future. The future we all deserve. A fair shake for ourselves and our children.

Get lost in discovery and open doors to new possibilities!

So how do we prepare for the future? What skills will be important for success?

While it is valuable to prepare for the future through skills building and education, it is equally, if not more, important to prepare for an unpredictable future. If we prepare for change, we can reduce the mental, physical and emotional strain that comes with it. When we don't know what to expect, or what is coming next, there are skills that can help us be better learners, to be flexible, and to collaborate, so we can be ready for opportunities, challenges, and even disappointments. Here are a few ideas to build skills for an unpredictable future:

Boundaries	Courage	Humility	Resilience
BS Detect-ability	Creativity	Humor	Patience
Care	Curiosity	Lifelong Learning	Problem-Solving skills
Commitment	Determination	Listening Skills	Questioning Skills
Confidence	Flexibility	Ownership	Tenacity
Cooperation	Heath (Swellness)	Relationship Skills	Willingness to Learn

None of these qualities are taught in school, yet they are crucial concepts for success and satisfaction. They are needed at work, at home, when using technology and apps, and for building safety and joy in our communities. They will help us make sense of the world, they will help us to trust our capabilities and courage, and they will help us read situations and make good decisions.

"The only constant is change." - Heraclitus (approx. 500 BC)

The world will continue to change. That does not mean that we must change in the way that it's changing; only that we must accept the change and determine how we wish to respond to it.

Our projections and our assumptions often get in the way of our ability to see clearly: to listen, to learn and expand our perspective...which then expands our opportunities. Now is a great time to reflect on biases, projections, assumptions, and our vulnerability to BS and persuasion. We can build this 'reflective muscle' to prepare for change, and to defend ourselves against the barrage of fake news, the deep challenges of emotional appeals and to navigate the psychological games found in all forms of media (social and otherwise), several professions and even in relationships.

We always have a choice. We can either keep doing what we're doing, or we can do something else.

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." - Viktor Frankl

You might be asking yourself "Who is she to say anything about reentry or life after institutionalization?"

A valid and important question! To be frank, I'm "an older white lady from flyover country" and to be clear, I am also a person who was put in jail at age 12. And at ages 13, 14 and 15. And sent to a reform school far from home. In fact, I have 6+ years' experience 'in the system'; from age 12 until I aged-out at 18: jail, foster homes, group homes and reform school (+ time 'on the run'). I know how it feels to be hundreds of miles away from everyone and everything I knew; to lose friends, lose trust and to not have the care or love of family. I know what it's like to feel controlled, undervalued, and unable to grow into my authentic self. I know what it's like to long for a fair shake at life.

Getting a fair shake is complex! But we are capable, and we can handle this. We can own our values and our decisions and build a life that reflects our intentions.

I hope you will let me know what you think of this book. It will grow and improve with YOUR input. Yes, it's true; I listen! We never stop learning, and I'm eager to learn from and with you.

To our successful transitions!

Sue Kastensen



Fair Shake Founder and Director

* 2018 Recidivism Update, 9 years after release: 83% Recidivism = 17% Reentry Success.
<https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/2018-update-prisoner-recidivism-9-year-follow-period-2005-2014>