

# FS News: Back to DeSchool Edition

Good Tidings Fellow Life-long Learners!

I hope you are finding ways to jujitsu the challenges that come your way each day. Frustrations will continue throughout our lives. The more tools that we have to dismantle them, reframe them, recycle them or release them, the more comfortably we will be able to get on with what it is that we want to be doing.

All living things evolve and adjust to their environments in our basic drive to continue life. Humans are no different, but we have some super-powers like reflection, planning, asking questions, constructing information, and all those terrific tools like reading, writing and 'rithmetic.

Regardless of whether keep our curious minds open, or decide to study specific things, we are always learning.

Sadly, we had no say in what we were taught in our formative years at school. Despite what we actually remember, most of the lessons were not found in books, they had more to do with answers, testing, discipline, and conditioning to become agreeable workers. We were not taught to be curious, creative and critical thinkers.

Lucky for us, it's never too late to learn! It may get a little harder as we get older, because we get stuck in our expectations, but our minds remain elastic across our life span.

To help us get unstuck from the constraints that were put on our possibilities, the next iteration of the Fair Shake Ownership Manual will contain the beginning of the WYFOG DeProgram. WYFOG stands for What You Focus on Grows. I plan to include much of the information you've seen in the newsletters and the articles I've been sharing about transformative learning, liminal thinking, predictive processing, creating emotions, seeding our minds to reduce suffering and enjoy increased opportunities, functional philosophy, efficacy, and self-determination for all. I will add more information on care, culture and health (mental and physical together, because they can't be separated) in the coming year.

In honor of the start of the 'school year', I assembled a small 'quote collage' from the 1971 book "Deschooling Society" by Ivan Illich. Yes, I am aware that we need credentials to demonstrate specific knowledge and skills, but we also need to learn HOW to learn, how to understand our emotions, how to make better decisions, how to expand our perspective, and how to listen, cooperate and construct knowledge together. Credentials are for WORK, everything else is for LIFE.

"School teaches the necessity of being taught. The public is indoctrinated to believe that skills are valuable and reliable only if they are the result of formal schooling. The institutionalization of values leads inevitably to physical pollution\*\*, social polarization, and psychological impotence; three dimensions in a process of global degradation and modern misery. (Does this sound like the world we live in?) School initiates young people into a world where everything can be measured, including their imaginations.

Everywhere the hidden curriculum of schooling initiates the citizen to the myth that bureaucracies guided by scientific knowledge are efficient and benevolent.

School is the advertising agency which makes you believe that you need the society as it is.

Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting. A good educational system should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives and empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them. (School should transform into) educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring.”

\*\* Just two examples of current physical pollution issues: How about the constant rise in cancer, depression and anxiety, esp. in younger and younger children? How about the fact a new study shows that that most Wisconsinites have forever chemicals (PFAs) in their blood? (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935124010363?via%3Dihub#bib75>) PFAs are linked to cancer and they have been found in water and food across the country and around the world!

Teachers, although many are deeply well-meaning, cannot be counted on to help us learn how to learn. They are paid by the schools to follow the rules...and most do. We will have to teach ourselves, help others learn how to learn and then construct even more knowledge together.

By all means, continue your studies, students! And remember, whether we are in school or not, we are all learners...and teachers! Ubuntu!

Thank you donors! You know who you are! Stamps, stamped envelopes and monetary donations all make Fair Shake work. 80 – 100 people write letters each month asking for information and YOU make that possible. Ever wonder why there are no universal and up-to-date resource lists in prisons? There are no grants for what Fair Shake does ~ : )

#### SPEAKING OF LEARNING:

The US workforce needs apprentices! From a Washington Post article by Heather Long 8.29.24 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/08/29/apprenticeships-government-investment/> Learn while you work opportunities are available in the construction trades (incl. electrical, plumbing, HVAC, et al), manufacturing, finance, tech and the semiconductor industry.

“Two years ago, after struggling to hire new machinists, GT Automation in Fort Wayne, Ind., started an apprenticeship that allows workers to earn \$22 an hour plus health benefits and a 401(k) retirement plan. They work on the shop floor during the day and attend classes at a local technical school in the evening. The company pays for all the tools and coursework, which leads to an associate’s degree.”

And from the comments section “Where we live electricians, HVAC technicians and plumbers cost between \$110 to \$170/hour. These trades do require a license, technical skill set, interaction with customers and pay well. These specialists are normally very unlikely to be without work for long and will never be replaced by AI.”

Another interesting and up-and-coming position is:

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS! They earn, on average, \$48,000 and there are 8,000 new openings each year with 14% growth expected in 10 years. To get started in this field you'll need a high school diploma. Some employers prefer to hire candidates who have postsecondary education. To attain competency, they typically complete a brief period of on-the-job training, and some states require certification. Ask the employment development folks to check out this link for more info: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/community-health-workers.htm>

#### BULLSHIT DETECTOR:

Recently, I received this message from a credit card company: "Saving on interest is easy. Once you activate this offer you'll get a promo APR of 0.9% on all new purchases for 6 months. After the promo ends, your standard variable (!) purchase APR applies to any remaining balances and new purchases; currently 26.24%."

This is complete bullshit because they know that most folks who are paying over time will not remember when the 6 month cut off comes around and they will then pay criminal rates to complete their payment on a purchase. A lot of predatory BS looks like this.

HONEST FAKERY by Jo Marchant in Nature <https://www.nature.com/articles/535S14a>

Thanks everyone for your interest in the articles I've been making available! Anil Seth, Lisa Feldman Barrett, Tom Asacker, Dave Gray and more have so much great information to help us expand our minds so that they can include more possibilities. Hundreds of readers here have ask for these articles! I have a new article to offer that will blow your mind. It's about pain relief research that shows placebos...even when people know the pills are placebos...are still very effective! If you'd like to read this article, please start a NEW message to me with the word PLACEBO in the subject line.

MINDFULNESS MOMENT: WALKING MEDITATION by Thich Nhat Hanh

<https://plumvillage.org>

You can do this walking around a room or walking for an hour.

1. As you begin walking, pay attention to each step.
2. Notice how many steps you take during each inhale and exhale, and at the speed you're walking. Pay attention to your lungs, and do not force your breathing or the number of steps you take.
3. Match your steps to your breath. For example, as you breathe in, count 1-2-3 steps. As you breathe out, count 1-2-3 steps. Let your lungs and feet come to a happy equilibrium.
4. As you walk, you may wish to say a phrase that approximates the rhythm of your walking. Thich Nhat Hanh suggests: "With each step, a gentle wind blows."

WI READERS –

I hear the GTL tablets are increasingly being used in the WI prisons. As I've mentioned before, I do not know how to send mass emails through their service. If you'd like to continue to receive the Fair Shake newsletter, you can send me a SASE and I'll send the latest newsletter to you...including whatever articles are available with that edition. The address here is Fair Shake, PO Box 63, Westby, WI 54667.

HIGHER EDUCATION NEWS: You can receive the "College Inside" newsletter - created by the folks at Open Campus - by writing to Open Campus, 2460 17th Avenue #1015, Santa Cruz, CA 95062. Email newsletters might be an option, too.

<https://www.opencampusmedia.org/>

#### RANDOM QUOTES:

"How you respond to people, changes people.  
How you respond to the world, changes the world.  
How you respond to yourself, changes your life." - Tom Asacker

"People support a world they help create." - Dale Carnegie

"The leverage that matters in the future will be changing the systems that control us." – Daniel Goleman

"Never confuse education with intelligence, you can have a PhD and still be an idiot." - Richard P. Feynman

We can't avoid our biases. The best we can do is maintain an honest dialogue with our biases and commit to identifying and repairing inadvertent damage caused by them as efficiently as possible. - Buster Benson

"Just because your situation is bad doesn't mean you should give up and stop caring; that will only make things worse. Instead, keep trying to do better and keep moving forward." - Jaccob Pate

"Why are you unhappy? Because 99.9 percent of everything you think, and of everything you do, is for yourself - and there isn't one." - Wei Wu Wei

"You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him." - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"As long as you're breathing, it's never too late to do some good." - Maya Angelou

To smooth transitions!

Ubuntu, ~ sue

As always, remember to find support in your phone-gizmo: Fairshake.net & National Reentry Helpline (24/7): 844-916-2577

FREE REENTRY BOOK: "Mapping Your Future" Write to: Education Justice Project 1001 South Wright Street Champaign, IL 61820

Newsletters are available to read or print at FairShake.net.

And you can watch Fair Shake tutorial videos as you explore the huge reentry website. Visit the Building Mental Strengths page to bolster your spirit during difficult times!