

FS News: Transition Edition

Happy Fall, Everyone ~

And a big THANK YOU to all of the Veterans!

The busiest time of the year is upon us and many things in our lives are changing at a rapid pace. More than 2500 years ago a philosopher named Heraclitus pointed out that the 'only constant is change', yet change is still very difficult for most of us.

We all know that the Corrlinks group size changed from 1000 to 10 which equates to a ban on newsletters. After I send this edition - and it could take a few days to get all the groups out - I'll know if I will be able to send another. Since I run Fair Shake by myself, and it serves the entire country, I may not have the capacity to take on a project of this magnitude at a bimonthly rate. (Readers who are not in WI or the BOP will continue to receive the newsletter, since the group size is not currently a problem.)

The good news is, the BOP subscribers should be getting access to the Fair Shake App in the coming months, and when you see the App, you'll be able to read the newsletter there; including previous editions! In the meantime, you can ask supporters to go to the Fair Shake website so they can copy the newsletter to email to you, or print it to mail it. Additional articles will be listed there, too.

The bad news is, the WI DOC – at least for right now – will not be offering access to the FS App, so readers there will have to get the newsletters from supporters.

OR - you can send me a Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope and I'll send the newsletter and whatever else will fit in the envelope to fill one ounce, or two if you

send and envelope with the 'extra ounce' stamp ~ :)

Speaking of sending envelopes: THANK YOU, DONORS!!! You've sent envelopes and financial donations to keep Fair Shake reaching thousands of people who are not able to communicate through Corrlinks. Your envelopes reach directly into state, federal and private prisons...and jails of all sorts...around the country. Your financial support through the years has made the newsletter possible.

In creating this newsletter, I wanted to include a wide variety of information that you could use to ponder, research, question, and construct knowledge for a changing world. I've included a bunch of article options, too!

CODE YOUR DREAMS (CYD)

CYD serves communities around the world with computer-science knowledge to improve tech skills. CYD is free for all students and no specific education requirements are needed to participate in their program. College credit is available for those who want to receive it. You can even start a Code Your Dreams club in your community! Share the website info with your supporters and/or find out more by writing to:

Code Your Dreams 20 N Wacker Drive
#1200 Chicago, IL 60606
www.codeyourdreams.org

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BUILDING A 'MENTOR CIRCLE' AFTER RELEASE – Jack Groenendal's Reentry Strategy

Jack was released from federal prison after serving 13 years. He's in Reentry Housing presently, and emails a 'circle' of people to ask questions, share reflections and keep us posted on his reentry process. I thought this was a novel and powerful way to build support! Here's the info he sent about why he created a 'circle':

"Sharing reentry updates with proven supporters allows for positive feedback and words of encouragement. Sometimes replies include words of caution or "real world" experiences that I find helpful. Prior to my time in prison, I was too proud to ask for help or feedback. There is strength in numbers. If I only share potential job opportunities with a small handful from a tight knit inner circle, it limits helpful suggestions from someone with first-hand knowledge. Casting a wider net results in more than one way of looking at an issue or potential job opportunity. Teamwork wins!"

I'm happy to be one of the folks in his circle. I would be happy to be in yours, too!

ARTICLES GALORE!

FOR A LIMINAL TIME ONLY!!

Here's the big list of articles. Some documents are ready to send and some are not yet complete. Please be patient. I will send them all out!! ~ :) To receive any article (one per request) please start a NEW (blank!!) email to me and use the ALL CAPS WORDS in the subject line.

1. **VALUES** - To ponder and to add to!
2. **EMOTIONS** - So that we can identify and question our emotions, and improve our responses to them.
3. **UNDERSTANDING COGNITIVE BIASES** – Confirmation Bias worked overtime during the election. We often exercise the 'Sour Grapes' bias when we are not able to get something we want. And the Recency Bias causes us to discount the value and relevance of things we've experienced or learned in the past.
4. **TAKE OWNERSHIP OF YOUR FUTURE SELF** – Your past self does not need to dominate your identity. Include the YOU that you are becoming ~
5. **IMAGINABLE** book review and efficacy booster! Jane McGonigal provides insight to help us look 10 years into the future, and build our capabilities to be better prepared to meet it when it arrives. (Plant prediction seeds and you'll be better equipped to deal with situations when they come up. Consider the challenges, too...because only imagining how great things could be will set you up for certain failure due to the Over-confidence Bias.)
6. **SEED YOUR BRAIN** to reduce predictions that keep us stuck. When we predict that we will fail, we often find that we do. What do we need to predict and shape success? Lisa Feldman-Barrett helps us figure that out.

7. ASACKER COLLECTION: I'll fill the message space with Tom's articles and quotes! His message today included a quote from bell hooks (RIP): "Stagnation is the slow death of the soul. We must be willing to flow, like water, or risk becoming like the unyielding stone."

8. FREE BOOKS PROGRAMS – When you write to the orgs on the list, be sure to ask for specific titles or general subjects of interest ~ :)

9. WHAT YOU FOCUS ON GROWS: a developing argument for alternative, inclusive education for everyone to clear away the shit that is keeping us from the path of our potential and satisfaction.

10. HOW TO USE FAIR SHAKE – a virtual 'tour' of Fair Shake, complete with links, that you can send to your supporters to look for resources, employment opportunities, education and training information, pages from the Ownership Manual and more!

11. ENCOURAGING WORDS – 12,000 characters of quotes!

THE FAIR SHAKE APP: ALWAYS FREE!

Let the Education and Reentry departments know it's available so they can check it out! (the app is app.fairshake.net, the website is www.fairshake.net) The app needs no staff: it's just the mirror-image of the website, so you can explore the content however you wish! If your Ed or Reentry Dept. staff would like to contact me please share my direct email: sue@fairshake.net.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Colleges, prisons and 'experts' (criminologist, psychiatrists, sociologists, therapists, et al.!) are working hard to develop 'programs' and 'interventions' to 'motivate' YOU to 'change' your thinking which, they claim, will change your behavior. These models are all founded on the idea that you have a propensity toward

committing crime...a "criminogenic need" that employment and monitoring will help you control. These models aim to categorize complex human beings, with widely differing needs, goals and beliefs into just a few groups. (Did you notice folks like Bernie Madoff and Martha Stewart were in a 'low risk' category, excluding them from 'programming'?) These 'sorting tools' are called Risk Assessments, Risk-Needs-Responsivity+'Fidelity' and Desistance programs. Do you pause to think about what motivates you? Edward Deci and Richard Ryan believe the only motivation that lasts is inside of us...our **INTRINSIC MOTIVATION**. They believe that we are all driven by **SELF-DETERMINATION** and when our basic needs are met – our universal needs (NOT 'criminogenic') for autonomy, competence and relatedness - we will be motivated toward cooperation, ownership, care and achieving our goals. What do you think?

BUILDING A TRANSITION TOOLKIT:

It's crucial to include the basic tools like critical thinking, confidence, curiosity, creative problem solving, questioning our assumptions, and our 'Swiss Army Knife' aka 'our core values'. You might also want to include the **POWER TOOLS** below:

* **Your INTENTION:** You will find it wherever you focus your **ATTENTION**.

* **PREDICTIVE PROCESSING PREP:** Your current experiences are based largely (mostly?) on your past experiences. To expand your possibilities, expand your perspective! Books, TED talks, philosophy, reflecting on assumptions, and 'future forecasting' can all help us escape the constraints of our predictions.

* **EXPECTANCY THEORY:** we have a LOT of power. (And we've been told by friends and foes that we are mostly powerless!) Dig in to your "Locus of Control" (base of power over your life) to turn on your power

so you can “Feel ready for anything!” (Jane McGonigal)

SEEDS for your BRAIN: like Predictive Processing and Expectancy Theory, you can SEED YOUR BRAIN to increase your critical thinking skills, your capacity for complexity, your creative and constructive knowledge-building skills and even your compassion and care.

CONSTRUCT EFFECTIVE EMOTIONS:
We are not encouraged to understand our emotions and they, not our thinking, control our behavior. Our emotions are constructed; they are not universal, they are based on our beliefs. Learning about our emotions and our epistemology will serve us well. (Epistemology: a fancy word that just means our beliefs about knowledge) If you want to take ownership of your life, you would do well to take ownership of your emotions!

UBUNTU: "RUGGED AMERICAN INDIVIDUALISM" is a ruse.

It is supposed to make us feel strong, but it's used to divide us. We did not create ourselves. We are who we are because of our experiences with others. (ubuntu!) In turn, we affect others through their encounters with us. When we understand that we are related to everything, we can realize the power that we possess to improve all of our relationships. We are all valuable and we all have important gifts to share with the world!

QUOTES

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, “What are you doing for others?”
- Martin Luther King Jr.

“The most potent weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.” - Steve Biko

“It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it.” – Upton Sinclair (esp. relevant with the orgs and gov't agencies that may want you to be a ‘poster child’ for them...)

Whoever is bringing out the best in you, stay connected to them.” - Tupac Shakur

“Well, well, well, if isn't the consequences of my actions.” – anonymous

“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

I have learned that as long as I hold fast to my beliefs and values - and follow my own moral compass - then the only expectations I need to live up to are my own.”
- Michelle Obama

“Whether it's money, grades, promotions, popularity, attention, or just plain material things we want, scientists agree: seeking out external rewards is a sure path to sabotaging our own happiness.”
- Jane McGonigal

I just sent the news to 100 groups. I think I can do this quarterly ~ :)

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving, a powerful and reflective National Day of Mourning, and a relaxing Buy Nothing Day on the 29th!

**Here's to expanding our possibilities!
Ubuntu, ~ sue**

Your supporters can access ALL OF THE INFORMATION on the Fair Shake website 24-7: www.fairshake.net. They only thing they cannot do is create YOUR member account. Only YOU can do that ~ :)