



# REENTRY OWNERSHIP MANUAL

National Web-based Reentry Resource Center

**[www.fairshake.net](http://www.fairshake.net)**

PO Box 63, Westby, WI 54667

## **Fair shake. Just chance.**

### **An equitable opportunity or treatment.**

The term 'a fair shake' is an Americanism which has been in use since the early nineteenth century, but around the globe, and throughout the human lifespan (including toddlers!), we all care about what is 'fair'.

Let's talk about this!

*Doesn't everyone deserve a fair shake at life?*

"No matter what, you give everybody a fair shake, and when somebody needs a hand, you offer yours." - Michelle Obama

"I'm into people, especially kids, and making sure they have a fair shake, and making sure they reach their potential." - Jamal Crawford

"All workers want is a fair shake." - James P. Hoffa

"Dale Jr. has never gotten a fair shake from the start because, guess what? He's not his father." - Kevin Harvick

Please feel free to consider this book as a slow conversation. I'm just sharing my perspective here. I hope you will reflect on the ideas that appeal to you and, if you're moved to do so, share your thoughts with me! Please let me know what topics you think should be included on the website the app and in the Reentry Ownership Manual. Don't be shy! If you disagree with my perspective, I'd still like to hear your thoughts. We are building the future together. Let's start with a conversation about what's important and what is possible.

## **THANK YOU!**

Fair Shake is grateful for the donations of expertise, time and financial support in the creation of this publication. Several notable professionals have donated materials to share freely with the incarcerated, the formerly incarcerated, and the stakeholders who support reentry success. Many eyes have read the content and shared their critiques and suggestions. I hope you will feel comfortable sharing yours! Deep gratitude goes out to the donors (many of whom are incarcerated!) who believe in what we are building together.

The Fair Shake Reentry Ownership Manual is free to print or download from [fairshake.net](http://fairshake.net).

Fair Shake PO Box 63 Westby, WI 54667

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# Fair Shake Ownership Manual



Note: Resources evolve constantly. For this reason, the Ownership Manual contains very few resources. In a few months, the resources in this publication may change names, merge with larger organizations or disappear. If you are unable to connect with any of them, I hope you will write to us and let us know, and we'll update the information for everyone's benefit and, hopefully, find an organization that fits what you were looking for.

2026 note: Sadly, very few organizations today will respond to letters.



## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is a primer to thinking about things that increase the ownership of our lives. For you to get the most benefit from it, please remember a few things while reading through the pages:

- Like everything, this book – and every aspect of Fair Shake – is constantly changing. What you are seeing here is the current phase of a 'work in progress'.
- The book is 100% based on the perspective of Sue Kastensen, founder and director of Fair Shake. I share what I believe is important. It is my hope that this booklet will pique your curiosity so that you will look into some of the ideas I explore. Read, discuss, listen to talk shows and watch programs to build your knowledge. And be sure to question each and every source of information...including this book!
- Know that every subject found in this book is merely a representative of a much larger body of work on each topic - whether it is about identity, or human needs or even Swellness - a word I made up - there is a great deal of information (and misinformation and disinformation) to consider. As you make your way through the murk of 'information glut' you will improve your critical thinking filter so weeding out incomplete, false and purposefully misleading information will become easier over time. Investigate the topics that are meaningful to you by using your unique way of interpreting information, so you can apply it to your life. If you disagree with my perspective, use the information to improve your argument against it! Regardless of how you use the articles, my aim is only to provide an opportunity for reflection, thinking and discussion.
- Contribute! We're building this world together. We can build it more beautifully by making sure there is a place for everyone and that each of us is valued. I value your thoughts, reflections and perspective! I have just two eyes to use to see the world; if you share how you see the world with me, my view will be that much more complete.

Throughout your life, proceed with caution.

*Remember: We see things as WE are, not as they are.*



# NOTES AND QUOTES

Throughout the book you'll find 'rest areas' with quotes and / or a little room for notes.

*"None but ourselves can free our minds."*  
- Marcus Garvey

*"What we see depends mainly on what we look for."*  
- John Lubbock

*"The first revolution is when you change your mind."*  
- Gil Scott Heron

*"Nothing is more desirable than to be released from an affliction, but nothing is more frightening than to be divested of a crutch."*  
- James Baldwin

*"Consciously making choices and accepting the responsibility for the results of those choices equals power."*  
- Denise Ryan

*"Do not wait, the time will never be just right. Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command. Better tools will be found as you go a long."*  
- Napoleon Hill

*"The most potent weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."*  
- Steven Biko

*"Difficulty is what wakes up the genius."*  
- Nassim Taleb

*"Vision is not enough; it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps, we must step up the stairs."*  
- Václav Havel

*"There is always light - if we are brave enough to see it; if we are brave enough to be it."*  
- Amanda Gorman

*"The real voyage of discovery consists, not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."*  
- Marcel Proust

*"We must act as if our institutions are ours to create, our learning is ours to define, the leadership we seek is ours to become."*  
- Peter Block

*"The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life."*  
- Muhammad Ali

*"The ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make...and could just as easily make differently."*  
- David Graeber

*"All we have to do to create the future is to change the nature of our conversations, to go from blame to ownership, and from bargaining to commitment, and from problem solving to possibility."*  
- Peter Block

*"Attention is a limited resource, so pay attention to where you pay attention."* Howard Rheingold

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

*"You never change things by fighting against the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the old model obsolete."*  
- Richard Buckminster Fuller

*"...your job is to figure out what your gifts are to best serve yourself, your people and your world. What do you love doing so much that you would still do it if you didn't get paid? Find what you love and work on it. Whatever it is that you love, it's under attack. Which of the most pressing problems can you help to solve using the gifts that are unique to you in all the universe?"*  
- Derrick Jensen

*"Growth is a 2-step process:  
1: Overcoming naivety - learning what it means to live your best life  
Key skills: humility, self-reflection, openness to negative feedback  
2: Overcoming bad habits - actually living that best life  
Key skills: inner strength, undying determination"*  
- Tim Urban



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## ***THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAIR SHAKE AND A PROGRAM***

Fair Shake; the Un-Program		Most Programs
Build community	When I receive questions from individuals, I turn to the Fair Shake newsletter readers to hear their suggestions, reflections, ideas, and experiences. Each of us holds a wealth of information! We can look to each other for solutions, critical questions and support.	Programs address one 'need'. They rarely support people outside of that one area and almost never build community among the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated.
Encourage feelings of agency and self-determination	Fair Shake provides opportunities for people to pursue their own goals. We offer support to everyone to meet their universal human needs, including the need to understand themselves as a person-in-society vs. a person alone.	Many programs are created to address 'criminogenic needs'. Many participants 'go through the motions' to get the certificate or check the box.
Build knowledge base with incarcerated and non-incarcerated alike	I ask incarcerated people what they need to prepare for reentry. I share their ideas with all readers...for example, we built our free books, higher education and pen-pal lists through newsletter contributions!	Programs tell people what they need and must do. They require participants to take surveys to demonstrate what they've learned. That's how they decide if the program 'works'.
Understanding and addressing complexity	Fair Shake offers a unique blend of interdisciplinary education opportunities Including: building capabilities, helping others, understanding ourselves, ways to collaborate, and leveraging community knowledge to address today's challenges.	Programs mainly focus on fixing or addressing deficits. They target single aspects of a person, not the whole, messy, integrated, unique person-within-community.
Multi-Stakeholder Approach	Fair Shake is the only organization that offers free information for many stakeholder groups; providing a platform for us to all work together to build mutually-beneficial success.	Programs are encouraged to work collaboratively but very few do since funding will not support it.
Educate and Leverage staff	I share 'best practices' among the state and federal institutions, who have no opportunities to learn from each other. I strongly encourage prison staff to provide tools that returning citizens need for reentry success.	Many programs rely on staff. They rarely, if ever, focus on problem-solving with other state's prisons to improve outcomes or usefulness.
FREE benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free of cost to anyone.</li> <li>• Free app. for prisons and jails</li> <li>• DIY: no need for staff or supervision</li> <li>• Free to use and explore as you like!</li> <li>• Free National Resource Directory</li> <li>• Free from data collection and algorithms</li> </ul>	"Free" of financial costs for "Clients", but often paid for by the government or philanthropy, to address the 'needs' in their agenda. Many 'free' benefits are available on 'referral' basis only.

# 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 website/app. 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 in 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 app 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, your freedom to search through our information without being tracked, nudged, directed or counted, and freedom from 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 rate 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 can build ourselves, we can build our communities, and we can build a powerful, safe and engaging future. The future we all deserve. A fair shake for all.

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 to 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 for skills we might want to possess in an unpredictable future:

Agency	Creativity	Humility	Resilience
Boundaries	Critical Thinking	Humor	Patience
Care	Curiosity	Listening Skills	Self-worth
Commitment	Determination	Noticing Skills	Questioning Skills
Confidence	Flexibility	Ownership	Tenacity
Courage	Heath (Swellness)	Relationship Skills	Willingness to Learn

These important attributes are not 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 our '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?"*

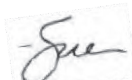
A valid and important question! To be frank, I'm an older white lady from flyover country. And I am also a person who spent her first night in a jail cell at age 14...followed by several years in foster homes, group homes, and a reform school far from home. In fact, I have 6 years' experience 'in the system'. 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

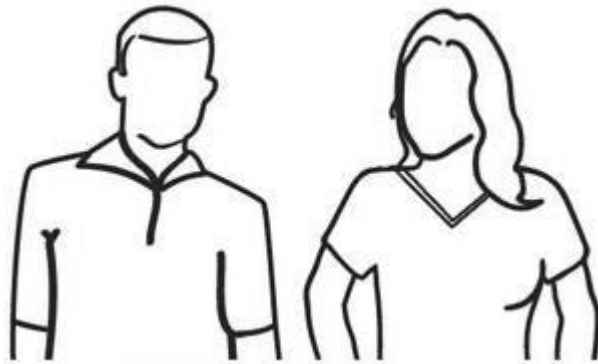


Fair Shake Founder and Director

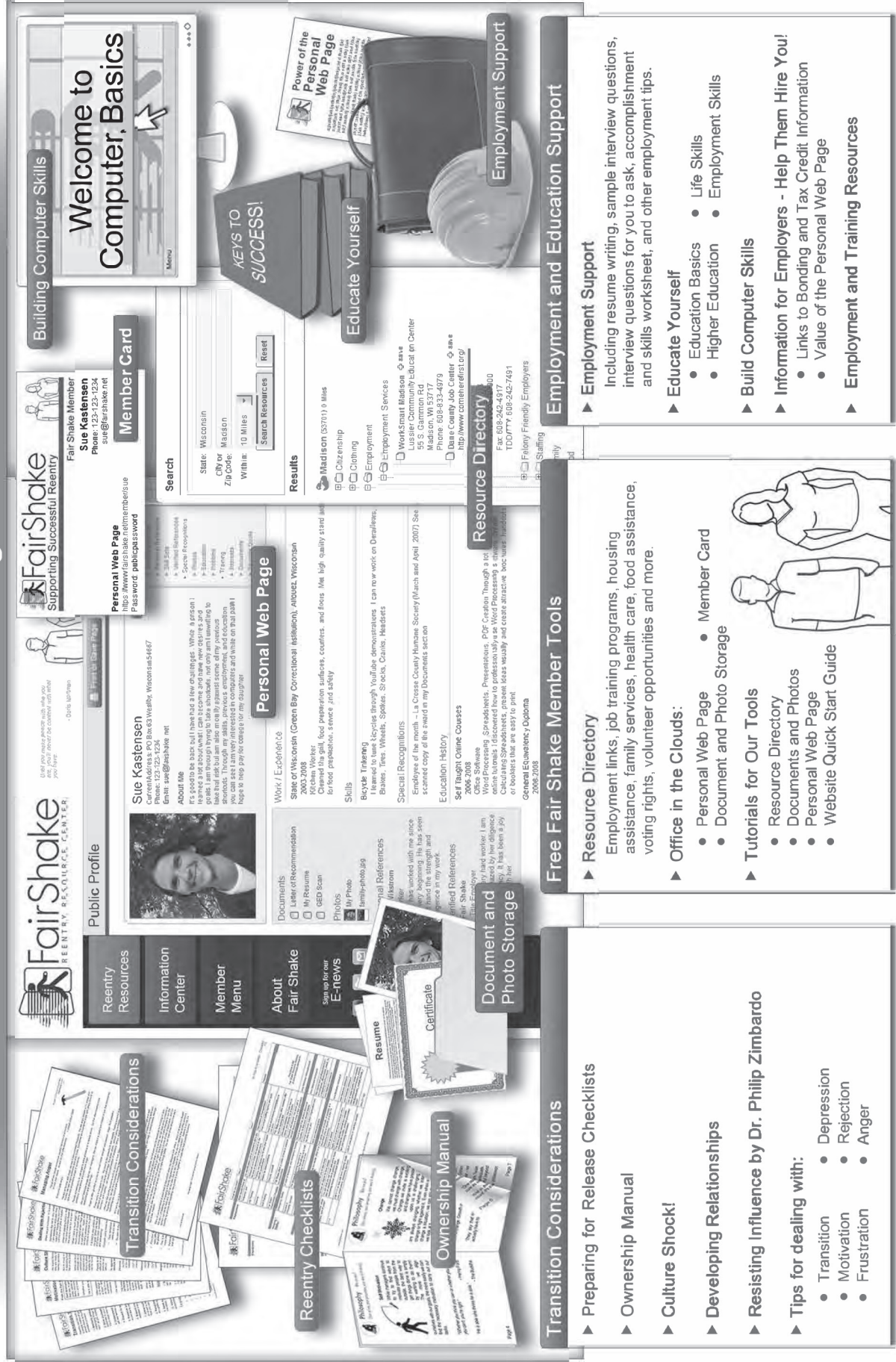
# Fair Shake Basics:

- OR -

*How does the  
website and the  
app. work?*



### Fair Shake offers the following FREE Benefits



#### Transition Considerations

- ▶ Preparing for Release Checklists
- ▶ Ownership Manual
- ▶ Culture Shock!
- ▶ Developing Relationships
- ▶ Resisting Influence by Dr. Philip Zimbardo
- ▶ Tips for dealing with:
  - Transition
  - Motivation
  - Frustration
  - Depression
  - Rejection
  - Anger

#### Free Fair Shake Member Tools

- ▶ Resource Directory
  - Employment links, job training programs, housing assistance, family services, health care, food assistance, voting rights, volunteer opportunities and more.
- ▶ Office in the Clouds:
  - Personal Web Page
  - Document and Photo Storage
- ▶ Tutorials for Our Tools
  - Resource Directory
  - Documents and Photos
  - Personal Web Page
  - Website Quick Start Guide

#### Document and Photo Storage

- ▶ Employment Support
  - Including resume writing, sample interview questions, interview questions for you to ask, accomplishment and skills worksheet, and other employment tips.
- ▶ Educate Yourself
  - Education Basics
  - Higher Education
  - Life Skills
  - Employment Skills
- ▶ Build Computer Skills
- ▶ Information for Employers - Help Them Hire You!
  - Links to Bonding and Tax Credit Information
  - Value of the Personal Web Page
- ▶ Employment and Training Resources

# Fair Shake Website and App. Home Page

Fair Shake is not like any other reentry organization:  
 The website is free for anyone to use.  
 The App. is free for prisons and jails.

Fair Shake does not track, nudge, mine or sell your information.  
 We do not tell you what you need to do as you explore the website  
 or app. What you want and need will change over time! Fair Shake  
 will change over time, too, as we continue to add more information.



*Be kind; everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.*

- John Watson



[Sign In](#) | [Member Menu](#) ▾

search our site...

Reentry Resources

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Information Center

---

Member Menu

---

About Fair Shake

---

Sign up for our **E-news!**

---

— Support Us —

Photo by David Y. Lee for The Fortune Society

Are you ready to get a Fair Shake?

## START HERE!

→

Please print our **Quick Start Guide** to help you find everything we offer

**WELCOME TO FAIR SHAKE!**

Our mission is to help formerly incarcerated people find employment, housing, and other resources to help them successfully reintegrate into society. We are a 501(c)(3) charity and all donations are tax deductible. Thanks Supporters!

Three important items for you to remember:

1. **Employment:** We have a list of employers who are looking for people with backgrounds like yours. We will also provide you with a list of resources to help you find a job.
2. **Housing:** We have a list of landlords who are looking for people with backgrounds like yours. We will also provide you with a list of resources to help you find a place to live.
3. **Education:** We have a list of schools and programs that offer training and education to help you gain the skills you need to succeed in the workforce.

Now, what are you looking for?

**REENTRY RESOURCES:**

1. [Resource Directory](#)
2. [Ownership Manual](#)
3. [Building Computer Skills](#)
4. [Find a Job](#)
5. [Become a Member!](#)
6. [Educate Yourself!](#)
7. [Fair Shake Newsletter](#)

**Fair Shake Reentry Tool Kit**

- [Resource Directory](#)
- [Ownership Manual](#)
- [Building Computer Skills](#)
- [Find a Job](#)
- [Become a Member!](#)
- [Educate Yourself!](#)
- [Fair Shake Newsletter](#)

**For Formerly and Currently Incarcerated People**

You have big hurdles. We have powerful tools to help you get beyond them!

**For Family and Friends**

Special support for special relationships

**For Property Managers**

Successful reentry is not possible without a place to live.

**For Employers**

We have tools to support you in making informed, careful hiring decisions.

**For Corrections / Reentry Professionals**

We have a number of tools for you to help incarcerated people prepare to return to the community.

**For Community**

Neighbors, Students, Advocates. We all play an important role in reentry.

**Donate!**

We are a 501(c)(3) charity and all donations are tax deductible. Thanks Supporters!

**Reentry News**

- [Bureau of Prisons Commits to Prison Reform](#)  
Click on the link to find a summary of the most significant reforms at the BOP, starting from arrival and continuing until the return home. And call this toll-free reentry hotline for resources and support! 877-895-9196
- [The Baltimore Sun: Port Covington should commit to hiring ex-offenders](#)  
What can be done to keep people from cycling back into the system? Let's start with jobs. Sustainable employment may be our single best opportunity to significantly reduce recidivism.
- [CA Voters Choice: End Death Penalty, or Speed It Up](#)  
Voters will decide between Prop 67, which would end the death penalty, and Prop 68, which would speed it up.

[More news in our archives](#)

**Videos**

**Damon Horowitz - Philosophy in Prison**  
Damon Horowitz teaches philosophy through the Prison University Project.

3:51

**Benefits of Fair Shake Membership**  
Fair Shake has created several FREE tools exclusively for those coming home.

3:41

**Victor Frankl - Why to Believe in Others**  
Victor Frankl, author of Man's Search for Meaning shares his perspective on having faith in humanity.



# QUICK START GUIDE!

WELCOME TO FAIR SHAKE! ➔ [www.fairshake.net](http://www.fairshake.net)

PRINT THIS PAGE to guide you as you explore the Fair Shake Do-It-Yourself Reentry Resource Center. There is a lot of information on the website! This guide will help you get find your way around.

## 3 important items for you to remember:

1. If you ever get lost on the website (or any website), click on the logo to return to the home page.
2. Words in blue are links to pages on our website, other websites or documents that you can also print.



3. Icons you will see:
  - Available off-line and on-line
  - Available on-line only
  - Documents available off-line and on-line

Fair Shake Website Home Page: ➔ [www.fairshake.net](http://www.fairshake.net)



## Do It Yourself!

- You are unique! No one knows what you need better than you do
- Explore new opportunities!
- No tracking, nudging, or monitoring



### Find RESOURCES:

Resource Directory – search our huge data base!  
 Resource Guides – local, regional, and national brochures, books, and interactive websites

### Find EMPLOYMENT

Prepare For Work  
 Find A Job (also includes Start Your Own Business)  
 Help an Employer Hire You!

### Explore LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Formal, Informal, Non-formal  
 Higher Ed, Life Skills, Lifelong Learning

### And Improve COMPUTER SKILLS!

Step-by-Step Tutorials and Internet Safety Tips

**Fair Shake Reentry Tool Kit**

- > Resource Directory
- > Ownership Manual
- > Building Computer Skills
- > Find a Job
- > Become a Member!
- > Educate Yourself!
- > Fair Shake Newsletter

# SEARCH the entire Fair Shake WEBSITE

It is like a REENTRY, DEVELOPMENT and COMMUNITY-BUILDING LIBRARY!

You can find all the pages on our website from almost any location on our website! By hovering over the four menu tabs on the left side of our home page, you will activate the menu bar to reveal links to pages organized under headings.

## STEP BY STEP:

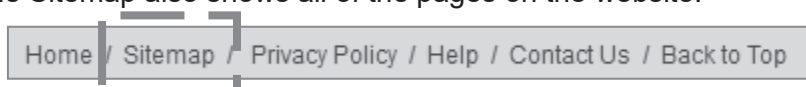
Look to the left side of any page and you will see a dark purple column. Do you see the words: Reentry Resources, Information Center, Member Menu and About Fair Shake? Hover your cursor (don't click) over the words Reentry Resources at the top of the column. To 'hover', move the cursor – which usually looks like an arrow – over a tab. You will see the cursor switch to the image of a hand. The Menu Title will then change to light-purple and the Menu will appear to the right. Next, you can move your cursor over the words in the menu. Hover over any of the titles and the color will change to orange and a line will be added underneath. Click on the title that interests you, and you will go to that page on the website.



Most websites work like Fair Shake:

- Click on the logo to return to the home page
- Find the sitemap at the bottom of almost every page
- Words that change color are often links
- Learn about an organization's Mission and Vision by visiting the "About Us" page.

Found at the bottom of each webpage, the Sitemap also shows all of the pages on the website:



## The Fair Shake Resource Directory

***The directory is a dynamic, expanding Do-It-Yourself resource-finding tool that is only available online or in the free Fair Shake app.***

**It's FREE! It's EASY!**

And it's like a phone book, where **YOU decide what's right for YOU.**

Everyone is welcome to search freely through more than 13,000 resources, located in all states. Just enter your state, city and/or zip code, and the search tool will find local, state and national resources. Select the ones that are right for you! The results go into a .pdf to print or save.

If you are in an institution that does not utilize the free Fair Shake app., please ask a friend, family member, case manager, housing unit support staff, reentry coordinator, church support group, activist, advocate, or mentor to use our FREE DIRECTORY to locate your resources! Be sure to also let them know there are Reentry Guides below the form, too!

**Search**

State:

City or Zip Code:

Within: 5 Miles

**Guide to our Resource Directory:**

[Click here to see the list of categories.](#)

[Click here to find out where resources can be found. \(Under the local, state or national heading\)](#)

[Resource Directory Tutorial](#)

[Click to see State and Local Reentry Guides](#)


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**National, State and Local Reentry Guides** Choose Your State

Florida

**Florida**

[South Florida Reentry Guide](#)

 [File: south\\_florida\\_reentry\\_guide\\_2011.pdf](#)

[Veterans Reentry for Florida and Southern Georgia](#)

<u>Categories in the Resource Directory</u>		
<b>Citizenship</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>Money</b>
Birth Certificate	Child Care	Finances/Budgeting
Dept. of Motor Vehicles	Family Services	Free Credit Report
Legal Assistance	Parenting Support	<b>Reentry Resource</b>
State Government	Youth Support	Orgs w/ Many Resources
Voting Rights	<b>Food</b>	Reentry Coalition
<b>Clothing</b>	Food Pantry	<b>Shelter</b>
Free Clothes	Free Meals	Energy Assistance
Interview / Career Clothing	<b>Free</b>	Housing Authority
<b>Computers &amp; Technology</b>	Free Phone	Low Income Housing
<b>Education</b>	Free Stuff	Shelters
Free Higher Education	Free Audio Books	Transitional Housing
Continuing Education	<b>Health</b>	<b>Special Considerations</b>
GED programs	AA NA AIA non	Disability Support
Life Skills	Addiction Recovery	Elders
<b>Employment</b>	Dep.t of Human Services	Veteran Support
Employment Services	Free/Sliding Scale Clinic	Registrants
Second Chance Employers	Free Dental Clinic	<b>Volunteer Opportunities</b>
Temporary Staffing Agency	Mental Health	<b>Your Leisure Time</b>
Job Training	Reduced Cost Medication	
Licensing Information	<b>Advocacy</b>	
Workforce Development	Support Circles	

# Fair Shake Resource Directory

<https://fairshake.net/reentry-resources/search-for-a-resource/>

This is how it works!

## Search for a Resource


Please note: Services and organizations listed in our directory may change at any time.

Resource Directory | Print Saved Resources | Recent Searches | Submit a Resource

### Search for Resources


State:   
City or Zip Code:   
Within:

**PLEASE READ**



*This Important Note About The Resource Directory*

**US and State Reentry Guides**



## Results

### Milwaukee (53203) 0 Miles

- Citizenship
- Clothing
- Employment
  - Employment Services
  - Job Training
  - Second Chance Employers
  - Staffing Agency
- Family
- Food
- Free
  - Free Stuff
- Health
- Legal
- Money
- Native Resources
- Reentry Resource
- Shelter
  - Home Repairs
  - Homeless Assistance
  - Homeless Shelter
  - Housing Resource Center
  - Low Income Housing
  - Mental Health
  - Reentry Housing
  - Religiousbased Housing
  - Shared Living
  - Supportive Housing
  - Transition Center
  - Transitional Housing
  - Used Furniture Appliances Household Items
- Special Considerations

### Wisconsin Programs

- 
- Citizenship
    - Birth Certificate
    - Department of Motor Vehicles
    - Legal Assistance
    - Voting Rights
  - Employment
  - Family
  - Food
  - Free
  - Health
    - AA NA AlAnon
    - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic with Dental
    - Health Department
    - Narcotics Anonymous
  - Legal
  - Money
  - Native Resources
  - Reentry Resource
    - Multiple Resources Available
  - Shelter
  - Special Considerations
  - Volunteer

### National Programs

- Advocacy
- Citizenship
- Clothing
- Computers and Technology
- Equipment Internet and Training

# National, State and Local Reentry Guides

...and other helpful reentry information

## Search for Resources

State:

City or Zip Code:

Within:

Just below the Search Box on the Resource Directory page you'll see that Fair Shake has discovered more than 400 local, regional, state and national reentry guides that offer even more resource information! Many cities, counties and states have created reentry publications, and many resources are available for the entire country, as well.

## National, State and Local Reentry Guides

- National**
- Prisoner Reentry Resources:** U.S. Dept. of Labor Federal Funding for Crime Prevention and Improved Reentry  
Web: <https://reentry.ojp.gov/funding/labor>
  - New England Guide to Resources 2012**  
Resources in New England; some may no longer be available. No update was found.  
File: [new\\_england\\_reentry\\_guide-1.pdf](#)
  - SSI: What Prisoners Need to Know**  
Benefits after incarceration: What You Need to Know. An individual released from incarceration may be eligible for retirement, survivors, or disability benefits. Call to see if you qualify 1-800-772-1213  
Web: <https://www.ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm>  
File: [what-prisoners-need-to-know.pdf](#)
  - SSI: Entering the Community After Incarceration - How We Can Help**  
Benefits after incarceration: What You Need to Know. An individual released from incarceration may be eligible for retirement, survivors, or disability benefits. Call to see if you qualify 1-800-772-1213.  
Web: <https://www.ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm>  
File: [entering-the-community-after-incarceration.pdf](#)
  - Prison Activist Resource Center (PARC) Directory 2022**  
PARC is a prison abolitionist group committed to exposing and challenging all forms of institutionalized violence. PARC believes in building strategies and tactics that build safety in or the PIC. We produce a directory that is free to prisoners upon request. PO Box 70447 Oakland, CA 94620  
Web: <https://www.prisonsactivist.org/>  
File: [2022-parc-directory.pdf](#)
  - Transitional Housing.org**  
TransitionalHousing.org is for those who are in need of locating transitional housing in the housing and group housing.  
Web: <https://www.transitionalhousing.org/>
  - Money Smart for Adults**  
The curriculum consists of 14 modules that cover basic financial topics.  
Web: <https://www.ftdc.gov/consumer-resource-center/money-smart-adults>
  - !! National Reentry Helpline: 844-916-2577**  
The National Reentry Network provides a free, confidential 24/7 information services including: reentry planning, food pantry, clothing, housing, mental health, recovery services, and more.  
Web: <https://thenationalreentrynetwork.org/>
  - Homeless Shelters and Service Organizations.**  
National list of homeless shelters and other services.  
Web: <http://www.homelesshelterdirectory.org/>
  - Food Pantries, Food Banks and Soup Kitchens**

**National, State and Local Reentry Guides** Choose Your State:

**California**

- Veterans Reentry Guide**  
Incarcerated Veterans Re-Entry Guides contain information on resources and how to plan a successful reentry.  
Web: [http://www.va.gov/homeless/reentry\\_guides.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/reentry_guides.asp)  
File: [02\\_ca.pdf](#)
- Contra-Costa County Crisis Center**  
Our mission is to keep people alive and safe, help them through crises, and connect them with culturally relevant resources in the community. 24-HOUR NUMBERS: Information and Referral: 211 Crisis and Suicide: 800-833-2800. Crisis: 800-837-1818 Homeless: 900-808-6444  
Web: <http://www.crisis-center.org/>
- State of California Community Resources Directory**  
The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) developed this community-based organization directory.  
Web: [http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Community\\_Partnerships/Resource\\_Directory.aspx](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Community_Partnerships/Resource_Directory.aspx)
- Contra-Costa County Reentry Resource Guide**  
Easy, printable, condensed (2 page) phone-book type listings of resources for returning citizens.  
Web: <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/28908>  
File: [contra-costa-county-reentry-resource-guide.pdf](#)
- California CareerOneStop Centers**  
Find centers all over the state!  
File: [ca.pdf](#)
- Anti-Recidivism Coalition**  
The Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC) works to end mass incarceration in California. To ensure our communities are safe, healthy, and whole, ARC empowers formerly and currently incarcerated people to thrive by providing a support network, comprehensive reentry services, and opportunities to advocate for policy change. LA: 1320 E. 7th St. Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA 90021 (213) 955-5885  
Web: <https://antirecidivism.org/>
- CA 2-1-1**  
2-1-1 California is the statewide network of local 2-1-1 information and referral providers, and is a collaboration of the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services (CAIRS) AND United Ways of California.  
Web: <http://211california.org/>
- Alameda County Guide for Domestic Violence Resources**  
Domestic Violence Resource Guide for Alameda County Guia de Recursos de Violencia Domestica para el Condado de Alameda  
Web: <http://www.alameda-county-family-violence-resources.pdf>  
File: [alameda-county-family-violence-resources.pdf](#)
- Root and Rebound: Roadmap To Reentry 2018**  
Root and Rebound has a legal guide for people returning to California, and their advocates. They have a Legal Hotline: 510-270-4602 available on Friday only from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. They accept collect calls. They have also shared their 1100+ page Roadmap To Reentry book!  
Web: <https://www.rootandrebound.org/resources/ca-roadmap/>  
File: [ca-roadmap-to-reentry-2018.pdf](#)
- Solano County Housing Guide**  
File: [solano\\_housing.pdf](#)
- Lions Vision Resource Network - East Bay**  
Grants for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.  
Web: <https://www.lionsvisionresource.org/quality-of-life-grants/>
- Los Angeles**
- L.A. Area ExOffender Reentry Resources**  
File: [ex-offender-reentry-resources.pdf](#)
- San Diego**
- Housing Resources Directory 2016-2018**  
Promoting safe, affordable housing opportunities and improved communities in the San Diego region.  
File: [sd-housing-resources-2016-2018.pdf](#)
- San Diego**
- San Diego Reentry Resources Guide**  
Web: <http://211sandiego.org/Re-entry>
- San Diego**
- San Diego 2-1-1 Post-Incarceration Reentry Resources**  
Web: <http://www.211sandiego.org/Re-entry>
- San Francisco**
- GETTING OUT STAYING OUT**  
A Guide to San Francisco Resources  
File: [2856-final-goso-edition\\_1st-printing\\_august-11\\_2015.pdf](#)
- San Francisco**
- Jails to Jobs**  
On this website you will find a step-by-step plan to follow, from researching potential employers and writing resumes to handling interviews; with advice tailored to the special needs of those recently released. Focus on uncovering the hidden job market: those jobs that are not typically advertised or posted. Attitude and persistence will be your keys to success.  
Web: <http://jailstojobs.org/index.html>
- San Francisco**
- San Francisco Reentry: Community Assessment & Services Center**  
Online Directory with links to programs for housing, education, parenting, employment and behavioral health.  
Web: <https://www.reentrysf.org/reentryservices>

# Fair Shake's (large and growing!) webpage for you

## Formerly and Currently Incarcerated People



This page is loaded with links for folks in transition.

There are a lot of links on this page, and links to other pages, too. We include tons of information because reentry is different for every person.

The shift is a big one, but please remember: many of our most highly treasured stories are redemption stories!

For those of you who are currently incarcerated and have access to Corlinks, please sign up for our newsletter: [outreach@fairshake.net](mailto:outreach@fairshake.net).

This page is also for Family, Friends, Advocates, Non-Profits, Ministry, Case Managers, and everyone who supports people through the transition!

In a hurry today? You can print the Fair Shake flyers, plus add a state resource list, for a total of 5 pages (one stamp!) to send to folks preparing for release: Fair Shake flyers

### Employment

Looking for information to help you find a job? Check out our Find A Job page!  
If you're getting ready to apply or interview, check out our Prepare For Work page!

### Housing Search

Transitional Housing is supportive housing that helps fight the homeless problem in today's society. Transitional housing is generally for a limited time period. Stays can be from two weeks to twenty-four months.  
<https://www.transitionalhousing.org/>

### Low Income Housing

Find affordable rentals & housing options for low income families and individuals.  
<https://www.lowincomehousing.us>

### New to Computers?

Need help with your computer skills? Learn more about using your computer on our Building Computer Skills page!  
Keep your documents safe(ish) in the cloud!  
Google online storage

### Vital Documents

**Social Security**  
Supplemental Security Income  
Apply for SSI  
Reentering The Community After Incarceration  
More Publications  
Social Security Card  
<https://www.ssa.gov/numsub/>  
[social-security-card-info.pdf](https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf)  
This is the ss-5 form.  
<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>  
[social-security-card-form-ss-5.pdf](https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf)  
**Social Security Administration**  
Office of Public Inquiries and Communications Support  
1100 West High Rise  
6401 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21235  
Include your Social Security number when you write.  
**Write For Vital Records - All States**  
Certificates of Birth, Death, Marriage, Divorce  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>  
[vital-records.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm)

### DMV Request Outline:

There are many reasons you may wish to write to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to request relief. Perhaps you have very old parking tickets, or your license was suspended, et al. You may find some leniency from the DMV to help you drive again, especially to get to work. This form has been created by folks in the FCJ Sandstone Career Resource Center and is meant to be used as a template or outline for you to use to create your own.  
DMV Change Request Outline  
**Tax FAQ's from the IRS**  
Get Right With Your Taxes

### Educate Yourself!

Need more math skills? Concerned about your grammar? Looking to pick up more knowledge or skills? Visit our Educate Yourself page or our list of Correspondence Schools

### Financial Aid

Federal Student Aid  
P.O. Box 84  
Washington, D.C. 20044  
1-800-433-3243  
<https://studentaid.gov/>  
**A NOTE ABOUT PELL GRANTS**

To access Pell Grants, incarcerated individuals must be enrolled in an approved Prison Education Program (PEP) offered by an eligible public or non-profit college or university. Currently, it cannot be used for correspondence school. The grant does not go to the learner, the grant goes to the school. Talk with Education staff to find out more.

### Fair Shake Resource Directory

Find food, employment training, free stuff, housing, health care, family support, more than 12,000 resources and 450 reentry publications and links in our FREE Resource Directory!

### National Reentry Network for Returning Citizens

National Reentry Helpline: 844-916-2577  
[thenationalreentrynetwork.org](http://thenationalreentrynetwork.org)

### Banking

#### FRSH Banking

Created specifically for people who have been incarcerated. The website says "We partnered with Sunrise Banks to power our FRSH program. FRSH is a technology company and not a bank." (The FRSH website says that their co-founder was incarcerated, yet they do not accept letters...???)  
Check them out here: [myfrsh.com/banking](http://myfrsh.com/banking)

### OPERATION HOPE

Operation HOPE has a series of programs to support your path to improving your credit, reducing debt, increasing savings, buying a home or starting a business. Our programs and services, which serve youth and adults, are offered at no cost to you.  
**Operation HOPE**  
91 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 3840  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
678-388-HOPE (4673)  
[operationhope.org](http://operationhope.org)

### InCharge

InCharge offers a free credit counseling service that provides help with budgeting, solutions for becoming debt free and tips to successfully manage your money. The goal of credit counseling is to provide a solution that helps you achieve debt relief and get on a financially healthy path. The service can be done over the phone or online.  
You may be able to:  
\* Lower your interest rates  
\* Reduce monthly payments  
\* Credit scores are not a factor  
\* Eliminate fees and over-limit charges  
\* Stop harassing calls from debt collectors  
\* Consolidate credit bills into one monthly payment  
\* Build a realistic budget and financial plan you can follow  
**InCharge Debt Solutions**  
5750 Major Blvd, Suite 300  
Orlando, FL 32819  
<https://www.incharge.org/>

### Improve Your Financial Outlook!

Check out the Money Management page!  
Improve your Credit Score  
Build a Budget Worksheet

### Annual Credit Report.com

[www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)  
Get a free copy of your credit report every 12 months!  
**Requesting Your Free Annual Credit Reports From A Correctional Facility**  
Incarcerated individuals can request a free credit report by mail. In your letter, you can request credit reports from all three credit reporting companies: TransUnion, Equifax, and Experian. The credit reporting companies request the following information for mail requests:  
\* The applicant's first, middle, and last names, plus any suffix used  
\* A prisoner identification number  
\* Current address  
\* Address(es) during the two years preceding incarceration  
\* Social Security number  
\* Date of birth  
\* The name of the correctional institution as the return address and the prisoner identification number on the envelope used to mail the request.  
To request your credit reports by mail, write to the address below and include the name of the credit reporting company or companies you want the report from.  
**Annual Credit Report Request Service**  
P.O. Box 105281  
Atlanta, GA 30348-5281

Wherever you are on your financial journey, you can prepare yourself to make informed financial decisions with these resources.  
[www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/)

### THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

Education not found in school:  
The School of Life explores unconventional education to assist people in the quest for a more fulfilled life.  
Watch the introduction video here ->  
Here are some topics we thought might interest you:  
\* Self: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLVwNMB2XmpcEw0qyqJ2SocGFSNB1E>  
\* Relationships: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLVwNMB2XmpcEw0qyqJ2SocGFSNB1E>  
\* Work + Capitalism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLVwNMB2XmpcEw0qyqJ2SocGFSNB1E>  
You can find more on the School of Life on the Educate Yourself page!

### Fair Shake Ownership Manual

Our Reentry Ownership Manual is loaded with reentry information including tools and materials for building bridges of transformation and trust.  
Fair Shake Ownership Manual  
<https://www.fairshake.net/reentry-resources/reentry-ownership/>

### Individual Pages in the Packet

Looking for Books?  
Check out our Free Books Programs page!

### For Veterans - Check out the Veteran's Page!

The veterans' page was created to assist veterans who have been incarcerated as well as their families. The programs and resources on this page can help reduce the pressures associated with reentry. Our hope is that you will find these resources helpful in providing relief as you face the challenges of finding and supporting an effective way of life after incarceration. Thank you for your service to our country.  
The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was established to meet the needs of veterans during their period of transition into civilian life.  
Reviewing Job Offers & Support and Assistance

### Become a Fair Shake Member!

- Personal Web Page
- Data Storage
- Save your Resources
- Tutorials

Become a Member, It's FREE!

### Looking to get an Interstate Compact?

Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS)  
<https://www.interstatecompact.org/>  
According to the ICAOS website: "The Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision will guide the transfer of returning citizens in a manner that promotes effective supervision strategies consistent with public safety, accountability, and victims' rights."  
Here are two documents that can help you get started:  
Interstate Compact Overview  
Interstate Compact Directory

### PREPARING FOR PAROLE?

You might want to consider the info in these Parole Board Handbooks  
Ohio Parole Board Handbook 2017  
New Parole Board member (State, Federal, and Military) Handbook

### BJS Bureau of Justice Statistics

Bureau of Justice Statistics  
2018 Update on Prisoner Recidivism: A 9-Year Follow-up Period (2005-2014)  
BJS recidivism 9yr follow up  
<https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&id=6266>

### Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Authors Page

We've created this page to showcase literary accomplishments of the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated authors. In support of these individuals and all successful transitions, we have vetted and recommended the books on our Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Authors page at <https://www.fairshake.net/>

### Mental and Physical Health

- Visit the Wellness Page!
- Visit the Building Mental Strength! Page <https://www.fairshake.net/wellness/>
- Physical Health Page (just getting started!)

### FREE INSURANCE: Parks Insurance

offers free insurance for returning citizens as they start to navigate the world and life after incarceration.  
153 S. Oakland Ave  
Rock Hill SC 29730  
[parksinsured.com](http://parksinsured.com)

### Help Yourself Therapy

Help Yourself Therapy is a website that offers free, confidential, practical advice from a therapist. The Self-Therapy model is easy to understand and self-disclosure is never needed. Everything is completely confidential. Click on the link below to view the list of topics from the website.

### For Parents

It's important to stay connected!  
Parenting Beyond Prison - Resources for Incarcerated Parents & Their Families - Nationwide! 2025  
Children of Incarcerated Parents - Bill of Rights  
Children of Incarcerated Parents' Library  
Biblioteca sobre niños de presos

### Can you change your child support order?

- State by State Guide
- Changing a Child Support Order

### Housing

We receive very little housing information, especially on a national scale. Recently, however, the two-part document came to us from a HUD representative. So begin my attempt to connect you to HUD outside to investigate further.  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street S.W.  
Washington, DC 20410  
Telephone: (202) 705-1112  
<https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD>  
Tip: Enter "Reentry Assistance" and your state in the search bar to find programs near you.

### HUD Programs

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Program
- HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) at HUD
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) at Benefits.gov
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)
- Public Housing Programs
- Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program
- Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities

### Voting Rights

Voting rights vary from state to state. In two states, Maine and Vermont, incarcerated people can vote in prison. In all other states people in prison lose their voting rights all together. Voting rights are automatically reinstated at various times throughout the completion of the sentence. There are no longer any states with a lifetime voting ban!  
According to The Sentencing Project: Felony disenfranchisement (the loss of voting and other civil rights) is an obstacle to participation in democratic life which is exacerbated by racial disparities in the criminal justice system (and creates) a disproportionate impact on communities of color.  
To find out more, please visit The Sentencing Project.

### Voting in Jails

- <https://www.sentencingproject.org/policy-brief/voting-in-jails/>
- Disenfranchisement
- <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/locked-out-2022-estimates-of-people-denied-voting-rights/>

### NATIONAL INVENTORY OF THE COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES OF CONVICTION

Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Conviction  
Collateral consequences are legal and regulatory sanctions and restrictions that limit or prohibit people with criminal records from accessing employment, occupational licensing, housing, voting, education, and other opportunities of a criminal conviction... This

## Identity and Agency

When we don't know anything about how or why, or in what context a quote was shared, to a large extent, we decide what it means. Pick one and ponder. Or explore and discuss with others!

In our daily lives, we can become comfortable assuming that our belief about the world is 'how things really are'. Most people believe their views, even though no two people have the same understanding or perception of the world. Each person holds only their own unique perspective of "what is".

Listening carefully to others can enhance our perspective, motivate us, and increase our awareness... which can then increase our opportunities! Hearing the words of others can help us feel less alone; especially when we need to be courageous. They can help us persevere. Ubuntu!

*"You're not what you think you are; but what you think, you are!"* - William James

*"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."* - Maya Angelou

*"If you think you can or think you can't, you're right."* - Henry Ford

*"We cannot think of being acceptable to others until we have first proven acceptable to ourselves."* - Malcolm X

*"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."* - Eleanor Roosevelt

*"The tighter you cling to your current identity, the harder it becomes to grow beyond it."* - James Clear

*"The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself."* - Michel de Montaigne

*"Don't let someone dim your light simply because it's shining in their eyes."* - Jessica Ainscough

*"The most important things cannot be seen."* - Fred Rogers

*"The easiest thing to be in the world is you. The most difficult thing to be is what other people want you to be. Don't let them put you in that position."* - Leo Buscaglia

*"There is no I without We."* - Roche Mamabolo

*"The hardest battle you're ever going to fight is the battle to be just you."* - Leo Buscaglia

*"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."* - Viktor Frankl

*"The easiest thing to do is to deceive oneself; for we believe whatever we want to believe."* - Demosthenes

*"Belief is a personal construct, an emotionally-colored fusion of imperfect mental processes like perception and memory."* - Tom Asacker

*"Do you want to know the man against whom you have most reason to guard yourself? Your looking-glass will give you a very fair likeness of his face."* - Richard Whately

*"It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are."* - e e cummings

*"You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do."* - Henry Ford

*"We become the stories we tell ourselves."* - Tom Asacker

*"The most effective way to do it is to do it."* - Amelia Earhart

NOTES:

# Support for folks with **DIFFERENT ABILITIES / DIS-ABILITIES**

More information can be found at [fairshake.net/different-abilities](http://fairshake.net/different-abilities)



## **National Federation of the Blind**

<https://nfb.org/>

200 East Wells Street at Jernigan Place  
Baltimore, MD 21230

410-659-9314



## **National Disability Rights Network**

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

820 First St. NE, Suite 740  
Washington, DC 20002

TDD/TTY: 202-408-9521

Phone: 202-408-9514

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

## **Client Assistance Program (CAP)** <https://rsa.ed.gov/about/programs/client-assistance-program>

The purpose of CAP is to advise and inform applicants and individuals eligible for services and benefits available under the *Rehabilitation Act*, the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*, and the *Americans with Disabilities Act*. Available to students and working individuals. Each State has its own CAP programs.

## **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI & SSI)**

<https://www.ssa.gov/disability>

Social Security Administration Office of Public Inquiries and Communications Support  
6401 Security Blvd. TTY 800-325-0778  
Baltimore, MD 21235 800-772-1213



Write for information to start your application before release! It's included in the Fair Shake app: [fairshake.net/fici](http://fairshake.net/fici). Your supporters can find information at this link, too: [ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm](http://ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm).



## **Vision Aware** <https://www.facebook.com/VisionAWARE>

Vision Aware is still very informative, but now only on Facebook. They continue to be associated with the APH Connect folks below.

## **American Printing House for the Blind (APH)** [aphcareerconnect.org](http://aphcareerconnect.org)

APH creates accessible learning experiences through educational, workplace, and independent living products and services for people who are blind and low vision.

## **The Arc of the United States** <https://thearc.org/our-initiatives/criminal-justice>

2000 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 500 202-534-3700  
Washington, DC 20006 800-433-5255

The Arc serves as a bridge between the criminal justice and disability communities. We promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetime.



## **Olmstead Rights** [olmsteadrights.org](http://olmsteadrights.org)

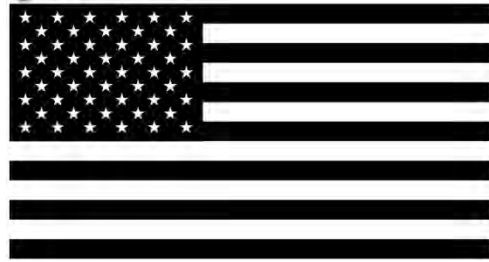
Our mission is to help low-income people navigate complexities by providing information and resources for self-advocates, family and friends of people with disabilities, and legal advocates alike. Self-help Tools! Legal Advocacy Tools! Links to resources in every state! (web-based only)

Just a few resources from our

# Veteran's Page

*Thank you for your service!*

[fairshake.net/veterans](http://fairshake.net/veterans)



This page was created to assist veterans who are, or have been, incarcerated. There are several resources on this page that may help reduce the pressures associated with reentry. Sadly, very few organizations provide mailing addresses any more. Fair Shake's Veteran's page is actually pretty large, but it has very few mailing addresses. Fair Shake continues to hold the Resource Guides that were available from 2012 -2016. Many of the organizations are still in operation so it's worth it to check them out. Resource guides like that are just not available anymore. (They are in the App., too, which is FREE to all prisons and jails.)



## Get the VA benefits you've earned

[www.vets.gov](http://www.vets.gov)

*All resources available online only.*

Disability Benefits, Health Care Benefits, Education Benefits, Housing Assistance, Careers and Employment, Life Insurance, Pension Benefits, Burials and Memorials, Family and Caregiver Benefits (Links to the forms are available on the Fair Shake website.)

## Wounded Warrior Project

The WWP mission is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors who incurred a physical or mental injury, illnesses, or wound, co-incident to your military service on or after September 11, 2001.



Wounded Warrior Project  
4899 Belfort Road, Suite 300  
Jacksonville, FL 32256

ph: 877-832-6997

[www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org)

## Other resources found on the Veteran's Page:

Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Initiative [www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp)

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) [www.benefits.va.gov/vow/tap.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/vow/tap.asp)

How Incarceration Affects Eligibility for VA Benefits  
[www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-incarcerated.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-incarcerated.asp)

VA Benefits for Homeless Veterans  
[www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-homeless.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/PERSONA/veteran-homeless.asp)

VETNET: A Career Service for Those Who've Served [www.vetnethq.com](http://www.vetnethq.com)

Helmets to Hardhats: [helmetstohardhats.org](http://helmetstohardhats.org)

Note: very few organizations offer mailing addresses any more. Much more information, including brochures and forms, can be found on the Fair Shake website and in the FREE app. (It's free for all prisons and jails to load onto any computer and share with you.)

Fair Shake is an OPEN resource. It is FREE for everyone to use!

# ELDER SUPPORT

This page is just a sample of resources on our constantly updated webpage: [www.fairshake.com/elders](http://www.fairshake.com/elders)

Elders (65 years old and older) make up the fastest growing age segment of the US population. As the retired population grows, information will change frequently, and so will Fair Shake's page for Elder Support. If you know of other resources, please let us know! We can add them to our webpage so that everyone can benefit from them.

But before we list resources, here are some benefits of a 'gift exchange' with the elders in your life:

Gifts that elders can give to us: SLOWING DOWN. LIVE IN THE NOW. LISTENING SKILLS. HEALTH BENEFITS! REFLECTION SKILLS (How will we want to be treated when we need help?)

Gifts that we can give to elders: CARE. ATTENTION. NOTICING. LISTENING. DEFENDING THEIR DIGNITY, SELF-HOOD & AGENCY

Senior Employment These are federal programs; states have elder employment programs, too.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

## Senior Community Service Employment Program

Provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors.  
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/seniors>



careeronestop  
your source for career exploration

## Older Worker Program Finder

Find employment services for seniors.

<https://www.careeronestop.org/ResourcesFor/55PlusWorkers/55-plus-workers.aspx>

## Senior Volunteer Opportunities

Millions of elders (65 and older) volunteer every year.



AmeriCorps

## AmeriCorps Seniors

[americorps.gov/serve/ameri-corps-seniors](http://americorps.gov/serve/ameri-corps-seniors)

***This program was canceled by President Trump.*** Perhaps one day they will again offer many ways for elders to volunteer.

## Social Security Administration

[ssa.gov](http://ssa.gov)

Office of Public Inquiries and Communications Support  
6401 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21235



## Eldercare Locator

[eldercare.acl.gov](http://eldercare.acl.gov) 1-800-677-1116

The U.S. Administration on Aging connects you to services for older adults and their families. ***This program is being reviewed by the Trump Administration.*** It may vanish at any time.

## Family Caregiver Alliance

[caregiver.org](http://caregiver.org) 800.445.8106

We're here to help you. All resources are free, and assistance through CareNav is free, secure, and private.



# CARING FOR ELDERS WHO NEED EXTRA CARE

Elders are a crucial segment of our community. They have much to teach us and many gifts to share. The elders of today were our caregivers when we were not able to take care of ourselves. They did not charge us for their efforts, and asked for nothing. Wouldn't it be nice to return the favor?

I realize this is not possible in many scenarios. I lived through one myself. But I know that with creativity and willingness, opportunities sometimes arise and we can simply share time with the elders in our life, even when they are getting support in a facility. Care-givers in facilities can do a lot, but they are often quite busy, and cannot slow down to share time to through a magazine, or sing, or go for a stroll.

According to the National Institute on Aging, 1/3 of all adults age 85 and older may have some form of dementia. There are several forms of dementia; Alzheimer's is just one type. Dementia is diagnosed when we reach a specific point in the forgetfulness spectrum. As of this writing, I'm 58 years old. I forget things all the time...like why I walked into a room, or what day it is, and many simple regularly-used words. We ALL, on occasion, forget, get confused, and even need help knowing what day it is. What we want, when we forget, is generosity and kindness from those around us. People with a dementia diagnosis want the same thing. Some nice gifts that we can offer them include:

**ACCEPTANCE \* AGENCY \* IDENTITY \* LISTENING \* NOTICING \* EYE CONTACT \* MUSIC  
CARE \* CHOICE between two things \* OUTDOORS \* NICELY SCENTED SOAP \* SOFT TOWELS**



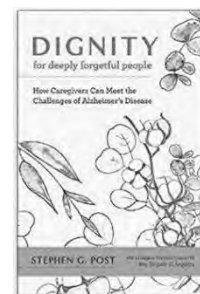
**Validation Training Institute, Inc.** <https://vfvalidation.org/>  
P.O. Box 871 Pleasant Hill, OR 97455

Validation can help you improve and integrate new communication skills, gain competence and confidence in dealing with difficult situations. You will have less stress and frustration, and more joy.

## ***Fair Shake Book Recommendation:***

***Dignity for Deeply Forgetful People*** by Stephen G. Post  
***How Caregivers Can Meet the Challenges of Alzheimer's Disease***

Learn to notice and appreciate expressions of continuing self-identity and include deeply forgetful people in your vision of a shared humanity! Drawing from years of experience, author Stephen Post challenges us to set aside 'hypercognitive biases' to learn from 'differently abled' people. He inspires us to deliberate about inalienable dignity, autonomy, identity, worth and authenticity. Post stresses the continuity of selfhood in persons (not patients, not victims, not disposable objects) experiencing the increasing challenges of cognitive decline. He argues for a deeper dignity grounded in consciousness, emotional presence, creativity, interdependence, music, and a self that is not "gone" but "differently abled."



## ***Music can support mind and heart:***

Music is deeply rooted in conscious and unconscious areas of our brain. Music can awaken the rich trove of memories that are associated with familiar songs or beloved pieces. Help the elders in your life connect to joy through music! You can sing, play favorite songs, play the soundtrack to musicals, leave the classical or jazz music station on all day.

## **Other ways to engage:**

Art, Crafts, Gardening, Cooking / Eating, Looking Through Picture Books. These are all great activities for living in the present moment, and also for triggering good memories.

## Resources for LGBTQ+ Folks

Fair Shake's LGBTQ+ page is a work-in-progress. If you know of resources that could benefit the LGBTQ+ community, we hope you will share them with us so we can share them both on our website and app!



**Black & Pink**  
2406 Fowler Ave Suite 316  
Omaha, NE 68111  
531-466-3346  
[www.blackandpink.org](http://www.blackandpink.org)

Black & Pink is an open family of LGBTQ+ prisoners and “free world” allies who support each other. We are outraged by the specific violence of the prison industrial complex against LGBTQ people, and respond through advocacy, education, and direct service.

### Inside Books Project

3106 E. 14 1/2 Street  
Austin, Texas 78702  
[insidebooksproject.org/](http://insidebooksproject.org/)



Inside Books Project is an Austin-based community service volunteer organization that sends free books and educational materials to prisoners in Texas. Inside Books is the only books-to-prisoners program in Texas, where over 140,000 people are incarcerated. Inside Books Project works to promote reading, literacy, and education among incarcerated individuals and to educate the general public on issues of incarceration.

### LGBT Books to Prisoners

Volunteer-run organization that sends books and other educational materials, free of charge, to LGBT-identified people in prison across the US. Will send books in Spanish (enviar libros en Español).

**Serves all states except Texas.**

<https://lgbtbookstoprisoners.org/>  
LGBT Books to Prisoners  
1202 Williamson St #1  
Madison, WI 53703



### Prison Activist Resource Center LGBTQ+ Resources

Contact PARC  
PO Box 70447  
Oakland CA 94612

<https://www.prisonactivist.org/resources/lgbtqi-focused-organizations-and-resources>

### LESBIAN AND GAY INSURRECTION

3543 18th Street, #26  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
510-434-1304  
<http://www.lagai.org/>

LAGAI is a grassroots organization doing direct action and education for radical social change from a queer perspective. Produces the bimonthly newspaper “ULTRAVIOLET,” which is free to prisoners.

### Nat'l Center for LGTBTQ Rights

1401 21st Street #11548  
Sacramento, CA 95811  
415.392.6257  
[www.nclrights.org](http://www.nclrights.org)

NCLR works at the local, state and federal levels to ensure that LGBTQ prisoners are as safely housed as possible and have access to life-saving medical care. We work with local, state, and federal officials to ensure that LGBTQ prisoners are as safe as possible, that transgender prisoners are housed in accordance with their gender identity, and that LGBTQ prisoners have access to proper medical care.

## Transgender Law Center

P.O. Box 70976

Oakland, CA 94612

[www.transgenderlawcenter.org](http://www.transgenderlawcenter.org)

Transgender Law Center is the largest national, trans-led organization working to set all people free. We champion the right of all transgender and gender-nonconforming people to make their own choices and live freely, safely, and authentically. Prioritizing BIPOC, disabled, and HIV+ communities, we advance community-driven strategies that harness trans knowledge, power, and joy to ensure that we all not only survive but thrive at all ages and phases of life. Transgender Law Center works to end the abuses transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) people experience in all forms of detention including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and state hospitals. We receive hundreds of letters from incarcerated TGNC people each year, and our Prison Mail Program ensures that each letter receives a thoughtful response with helpful legal resources.

## PFLAG

1828 L Street NW, Suite 628

Washington D.C., 20036

202-467-8180

<https://pflag.org/>

Uniting people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer with families, friends, and allies. PFLAG is committed to advancing equality through its mission of support, education, and advocacy.

## Trans Empowerment Project

6102 S. Archer Ave Box 105

Chicago, IL 60638

<https://transempowerment.org/>

## *New Jersey:*

### GARDEN STATE EQUALITY

40 South Fullerton Avenue

Montclair, New Jersey 07042

973-473-5428

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

Garden State Equality is New Jersey's statewide advocacy and education organization for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. GSE led efforts to ensure nondiscrimination for transgender and gender nonconforming people in New Jersey, pass the most comprehensive anti-bullying law in the country, end sexual orientation and gender expression change efforts in New Jersey, and bring marriage equality to the Garden State.

## THE PRIDE CENTER OF NJ

85 Raritan Avenue, Suite 100

Highland Park, NJ 08904-2701

732-846-2232

<http://www.pridecenter.org/>

The Pride Center of New Jersey is a welcoming place where gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and questioning men, women, and teens can meet, socialize, share, bond, grow in self-awareness, and thrive.

## *California:*

Miss Major Alexander L. Lee

TGIJP Black Trans Cultural Center

370 Turk St #370

San Francisco, CA 94102

[www.tgijp.org](http://www.tgijp.org)

TGIJP Black Trans Cultural Center is a team of transgender, gender-variant and intersex people, inside and outside of California prisons, jails, detention centers, and other locked facilities creating a united family in the struggle for survival and freedom. Our Re-Entry Program empowers community members returning home as they navigate resources, gain access to housing & long-term employment.



# Resources for Registrants from Once Fallen

Derek Logue

2211 County Road 400    www.OnceFallen.com  
Tobias, NE 68453

## Resources for Persons Forced to Register upon Release

If you are a person convicted of a sex offense & will be forced to register upon release, you will find reentry more challenging than if you were convicted than any other offense. At the very least, you will be required to register with a law enforcement agency (local police, county Sheriff, and/or state police) for inclusion on a public registry. Every US State and territory has a sex offense registry, and you must register under threat of arrest for Failure To Register (FTR). You may also be subject to community notification, restrictions on where you can live, work, or visit, even if you are not on “On Paper” (supervised release, probation, or parole.) You are more likely to experience difficulties and discrimination finding a job, a residence, a relationship, or places of leisure as a Registered Person. The following resources may provide self-help and other valuable tips on navigating your life on the registry.

### DISCLAIMERS:

- Some resources listed may not be allowed by your facility and are listed here for references. Try to find out if your facility has a “banned list” before sending mail to any organization that may be banned from communication at your facility.
- We discourage the use of the term “sex offender” as we feel it suggests a person convicted of a sex offense is inevitably going to reoffend. Most organizations listed in this section may use terms like Registered Citizen/Person (RP or RC), Person Forced to Register (PFR), or simply “Registrant” to denote a person convicted of a registerable sex offense.

## TREATMENT RESOURCES

People convicted of sexual offenses are not a homogeneous group. But those of you who recognize you are struggling with issues of sexual deviancy and are seeking to continue your treatment after release may find helpful information from the following resources. Nothing listed here can take the place of any state-mandated treatment but some of the resources here may be a more positive supplement to the treatment required by the court. Some of these resources deal specifically with pedophilia, while others are for more general sexual struggles; others may be religious in nature:

Safer Society Foundation  
P.O. Box 340  
Brandon, VT 05733-0340,  
Ph: 802-247-3132  
Web: [safersocietypress.org](http://safersocietypress.org)  
Safer Society Foundation prints self-help materials and a list of treatment providers.

Stop It Now  
351 Pleasant Street, Suite B-319  
Northampton, MA 01060,  
Helpline: 1-888-PREVENT (888-773-8368)  
Ph: 413-587-3500

CURE-SORT,  
P.O. Box 1022  
Norman, OK 73070-1022  
Ph: 405-639-7262,  
Web: [www.cure-sort.org](http://www.cure-sort.org)  
CURE-SORT works to provide information, resources, contacts, and support to individuals, families, defense attorneys, treatment providers, public media, legislators, law enforcement personnel, and other professionals who work with or are interested in issues of sexual abuse and its prevention.

Pure Life Ministries, 14 School St., Dry Ridge, KY 41035, Ph# 859-824-4444, [www.purelifeministries.org](http://www.purelifeministries.org)

Virtuous Pedophiles (A site for those diagnosed with pedophilia and recognize sexual abuse is wrong) [www.virped.org](http://www.virped.org)  
email: [virpeds@gmail.com](mailto:virpeds@gmail.com)

B4U-ACT, Inc., P.O. Box 1754, Westminster, MD 21158, Ph# 410-871-8156  
General Inquiries: [b4uact@b4uact.org](mailto:b4uact@b4uact.org)  
Research Inquiries: [science@b4uact.org](mailto:science@b4uact.org)  
MAP Inquiries: [outreach@b4uact.org](mailto:outreach@b4uact.org)  
Website: [www.b4uact.org](http://www.b4uact.org)

You may also look into **Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA)**, i.e., groups of volunteers with professional supervision to support SOs as they reintegrate into society after their release from incarceration. Not all states have a CoSA group, but if you understand how the group operates then you may be able to create your own CoSA network to assist in your successful reintegration.

**About CoSA:** The “Core Member” (i.e., the Registrant) and three to five trained and screened community volunteers comprise a Circle. They meet as a group and individually on a regular basis to support the Core Member’s community integration by facilitating his practical needs (i.e. access to medical services, social assistance, seeking employment, affordable housing, etc.) and by providing a consistent network of emotional support; Develop constructive and pro-social strategies and solutions to everyday problems and concerns; challenge the Core Member’s behaviors and attitudes that may be associated with his offending cycle; and celebrate successes.

Thus, you could find supportive people, such as family members, friends, church members, a counselor or perhaps even a member of one of the registry reform groups willing to play a role in your support network. Some activist groups may offer support services, either in a one-on-one setting or in a group, either in-person or through an online video communication service like Zoom. (Those who are “On Paper” may still be barred from using Internet at the discretion of their PO.)

#### ***Treatment Books:***

- ❖ OUT OF THE SHADOWS: UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL ADDICTION, THIRD EDITION (2001) by Patrick Carnes, Ph. D
- ❖ SO: THE NEW SCARLET LETTERS (2018) by Marilyn Callahan and Tim Buckley

#### **RESEARCH, ADVOCACY, AND ACTIVISM**

The first stop for finding information on navigating life as a Registered Person is Once Fallen. Once Fallen provides information on the laws of all 50 states, a list of potential housing, and other resources like the Life On The list newsletter and the definitive guide for navigating the registry, Your Life on The List (YLOTL). “Your Life on The List” contains a summary of the laws of all 50 states.

**Once Fallen**  
c/o Derek W. Logue  
2211 CR 400  
Tobias NE 68453

[iamthefallen@yahoo.com](mailto:iamthefallen@yahoo.com)  
Ph# 513-238-2873  
[www.OnceFallen.com](http://www.OnceFallen.com)

## NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Below are the three largest and well-known nationwide advocacy organizations that are fighting to reform the public registry:

- Women Against Registry Family Foundation, 8 The Green Suite #8219, Dover DE 19901, Ph# 800-311-3764, email: [contact@womenagainstry.com](mailto:contact@womenagainstry.com), Web: <https://ww1.womenagainstry.org/>
- Alliance for Constitutional Sex Offense Laws (ACSOL), 2110 K St., Sacramento CA 95816, Ph# 279-444-7956 Web: <https://all4consolaws.org/>
- National Association for Rational Sex Offense Laws (NARSOL), PO Box 36123, Albuquerque NM 87176, VoiceMail 888-997-7765, Web: <https://narsol.org/>

## STATE-SPECIFIC GROUPS

In addition to these three groups, there are many state-specific groups. Many of the groups listed below are affiliated with the National Association for Rational Sex Offense Laws (NARSOL), but some are independent. I encourage RPs interested in activism to get involved with and support activism within their own state:

**AZ:** Arizonans for Rational Sex Offense Laws, PO Box 10551  
Phoenix, AZ 85064  
Ph 623-296-2904  
Email: [az.rsol.contact@gmail.com](mailto:az.rsol.contact@gmail.com),  
Web: <http://azrsol.org>

**DE:** Delaware Advocates for the Reform of Sexual Offense Laws (DARSOL)  
PO Box 9472, Newark DE 19714  
Ph 302-635-0468  
Email: [darsol42@aol.com](mailto:darsol42@aol.com)  
Web: [www.darsol.org](http://www.darsol.org)

**AR:** Arkansas Time After Time  
PO Box 11491, Conway, AR 72034  
Ph 501-444-2828  
Email: [rsol@arkansastimeaftertime.org](mailto:rsol@arkansastimeaftertime.org),  
Web: <http://arkansastimeaftertime.org>

**FL:** Florida Action Committee  
6615 W. Boynton Beach Blvd, #414  
Boynton Beach FL 33437  
Ph 833-273-7325,  
Email: [info@floridaactioncommittee.org](mailto:info@floridaactioncommittee.org)  
Web: <http://floridaactioncommittee.org>

**CO:** Colorado Advocates for Change  
PO Box 103392 Denver, CO 80250  
Ph 720-329-9096  
Email: [advocates4changeafc@gmail.com](mailto:advocates4changeafc@gmail.com)  
Web: [advocates4change.org](http://advocates4change.org)

**IL:** Illinois Voices  
PO Box 523, Dekalb, IL 60115  
Ph 888-686-4237  
Email: [info@ilvoices.com](mailto:info@ilvoices.com)  
Web: <http://ilvoices.com>

**CT:** One Standard of Justice  
PO Box 461, New Canaan CT. 06840  
Ph 203-680-0567,  
Email: [cindytpri@icloud.com](mailto:cindytpri@icloud.com),  
Website: <http://onestandardofjustice.org>

**IA:** Iowans Unafraid  
PO Box 64, Altoona, IA 50009  
Ph 515-518-7189,  
Email: [info@iowansunafraid.org](mailto:info@iowansunafraid.org)  
Web: <https://www.iowansunafraid.org>

**MD:** Families Advocating Intelligent Registries, PO Box 8402  
Elkridge, MD 21075,  
Ph 301-779-1965  
Email: info@fairregistry.org  
Website: http://fairregistry.org

**MI:** Michigan Citizens for Justice,  
PO Box 138 Dexter, MI 48130

**NE:** Nebraskans Unafraid  
PO Box 6705, Omaha, NE 68106  
Ph 402-403-9250  
Web: https://nebraskansunafraid.org/

**NH:** Citizens for Criminal Justice Reform-  
New Hampshire PO Box 39212  
Concord, NH 03302  
Ph: 603-882-1555  
Email: info@ccjrn.org  
Website: http://ccjrn.org

**NM:** Liberty and Justice Coalition  
PO Box 36123, Albuquerque NM 87176  
Ph 505-832-4291  
Email: libjusco.com@gmail.com  
Web: http://libjusco.net

**NC:** NCRSOL, PO Box 25423  
Raleigh NC 27611  
Ph 919-780-4510,  
Email: contact@ncrsol.org  
Web: http://ncrsol.org

**OH:** Ohio RSOL  
PO Box 5501, Cleveland OH 44101  
Web: https://ohrsol.com/

**OK:** OKRSOL  
PO Box 1527 Noble OK 73068  
Ph 405-294-4299  
Email: okrsol.info@gmail.com  
Web: http://ok-rsol.org

**OR:** Oregon Voices  
PO Box 13175, Salem, OR 97309  
Ph 971-317-6868  
Email: jgn990@gmail.com  
Web: http://oregonvolces.org

**PA:** PARSOL  
PO Box 399, New Freedom, PA 17349  
Ph 717-820-2237  
Email: robertsont@parsol.org  
Web: http://parsol.org

**TX:** Texas Voices for Reason and Justice  
PO Box 23539, San Antonio, TX 78223  
Ph 877-215-6688,  
Email: marysueintx@yahoo.com  
Web: http://texasvoices.org

**VT:** Vermonters for Criminal Justice  
PO Box 8753, Burlington VT 05402  
Ph 802-503-0601  
Email: dalton@vcjr.org  
Web: http://vcjr.org

**VA:** Safer Virginia  
Web: https://safervirginia.org/

**WV:** WVRSOL  
PO Box 42, Scott Depot WV 25560-0042  
Web: wvrsol.org

**FOR MORE RESOURCES:**  
<https://oncefallen.com/links-page>

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

If you are not allowed to access the Internet because of restrictions or because you are still incarcerated but you wish to educate yourself on SO Laws, then here are a few books I recommend:

### ***Books about Registry Laws and their impact:***

- ❖ FAILURE TO PROTECT: AMERICA'S SEXUAL PREDATOR LAWS AND THE RISE OF THE PREVENTIVE STATE (2006) by Eric S. Janus
- ❖ SEX OFFENDER LAWS: FAILED POLICIES, NEW DIRECTIONS, 2nd. Edition (2014) by Richard G. Wright
- ❖ Sex Fiends, Perverts, and Pedophiles: Understanding Sex Crime Policy in America (2011) by Chrysanthi Leon
- ❖ JUSTICE PERVERTED: SEX OFFENSE LAW, PSYCHOLOGY, AND PUBLIC POLICY (2011) by Charles Patrick Ewing
- ❖ PROTECTING OUR KIDS?: HOW SEX OFFENDER LAWS ARE FAILING US (2015) by Emily Horowitz
- ❖ CAUGHT IN THE WEB OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: AUTISM, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, AND SEX OFFENSES (2017) by Lawrence Dubin and Emily Horowitz
- ❖ STRANGER DANGER: FAMILY VALUES, CHILDHOOD, AND THE AMERICAN CARCERAL STATE (2020) by Paul M. Renfro
- ❖ IMPACTS OF SEX CRIME LAWS ON THE FEMALE PARTNERS OF CONVICTED OFFENDERS (2021) by Lisa Anne Zilney
- ❖ FROM RAGE TO REASON: WHY WE NEED SEX CRIME LAWS BASED ON FACTS, NOT FEAR. (2023) by Emily Horowitz

### ***Social Commentaries and Legal Reference:***

- ❖ AMERICA'S WAR ON SEX (2006) by Marty Klein
- ❖ HARMFUL TO MINORS: THE PERILS OF PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM SEX (2002) by Judith S. Levine
- ❖ THE TRAUMA MYTH (2010) by Susan A. Clancy
- ❖ A PARALLEL UNIVERSE (2012) by Alex Landon and Elaine Halleck
- ❖ SEX PANIC AND THE PUNITIVE STATE (2011) by Eric Lancaster
- ❖ EVIL ON MY PEW: THE HYSTERIA AROUND SEX OFFENDERS IN THE CHURCH (2018) by Larry Anderson
- ❖ THE DEVIL WAS LISTENING (2018) by Stanley G. Rothenberg
- ❖ CAN I TELL YOU SOMETHING? WORDS OF HOPE AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE MODERN DAY LEPER (2021) By Bob Van Domelen
- ❖ MOVING FORWARD: A RESOURCE GUIDE (2024) by Ian Jaso, J.D.

- ❖ MANUFACTURING CRIMINALS, 2ND EDITION: WIRETAPPING AND PLANTING EVIDENCE (2020) by Bonnie Burkhardt
- ❖ THE TEXAS REGISTRANTS' GUIDE 1ST EDITION: YOUR GUIDE TO THE SEX OFFENSE REGISTRY LAWS OF TEXAS (2025) by Daniel & Cirilla Gillie

***Books written by/for Registrants, their loved ones, and/or Anti-Registry Activists:***

- ❖ CONSENSUAL CONSEQUENCES (2011) by Lynn Gilmore
- ❖ WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER (2010) by Kirsten Brydum and Frank Lindsay
- ❖ TRAUMA, SHAME, AND THE POWER OF LOVE: THE FALL AND RISE OF A PHYSICIAN WHO HEALS HIMSELF (2015) by Christopher Pelloski, MD
- ❖ THE ANTI-REGISTRY ACTIVIST MANUAL: A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY (2022) compiled by Jonathan Grund

**Other Useful Resources:**

- The Sex Offense Litigation and Policy Resource Center at Mitchell Hamline School of Law collects and disseminates information about cases on issues of sexual violence policy, and facilitates communication, sharing, and the development of strategies among the lawyers, advocates and academics who seek a more sensible and effective public policy on sexual violence prevention.  
<https://mitchellhamline.edu/sex-offense-litigation-policy>
- PFR Guide: Covers International Travel issues and Cruise Lines info  
<https://pfr.guide/>
- Atwo Zee, Registered Traveler: A blog covering interstate travel (offers a spreadsheet covering traveling to other states as a Registered Person)  
<https://a2twozee.blogspot.com/>
- Just Facts, Not Fear: A website covering international travel & emigration as a Registered Person -- <https://justfactsnotfear.com>
- The Collateral Consequences Resource Center is a non-profit organization established in 2014 to promote public engagement on the myriad issues raised by the collateral consequences of arrest or conviction. Their website - <https://ccresourcecenter.org/>- contains useful legal resources including the 50-state relief from the SOR guide, a 50 state spreadsheet on restoring certain rights (firearm, voting, public office, and jury duty rights), and a book, "The Many Roads to Reintegration: A 50-State Guide to Restoration of Rights and Opportunities after Arrest or Conviction", <https://ccresourcecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-Many-Roads-to-Reintegration.pdf>

## Fair Shake Technology Tools

Do you need to learn to use a computer? How to navigate websites? Or just brush up on your skills?

### Check out our Computer Basics tutorial!

We cover these topics:

- Mouse
- Keyboard
- Hardware
- Computers and Your Health
- Desktop Environment

And you will learn these skills:

- Mouse Articulation
- Keyboard Hand Placement
- Creating Files and Folders
- Storing Data
- Healthy Computer Use



### Ready to expand on the basics? We offer more information in these areas:

**Using computers:** Desktop, Program Menus, Recycle/Trash, Keyboard Short Cuts and Printer information.

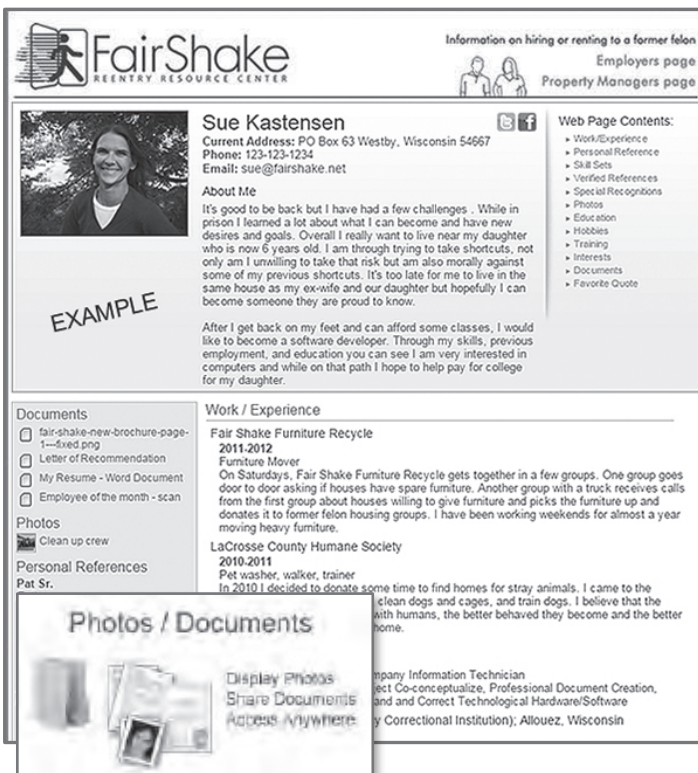
**Internet / Storage:**

Internet: Web Browsers, Internet Connection, Fair Shake Technical Tools

Storage: Hard Drive, Internet Storage, Flash Drive

**Software:** Software, Word Processor Programs (to write documents), Spreadsheet Editors (for making a calendar, schedule, budget), In The Cloud Programs, Email Software

**Be Careful:** Save Your Work, Internet, Downloading, Updating and Uploading

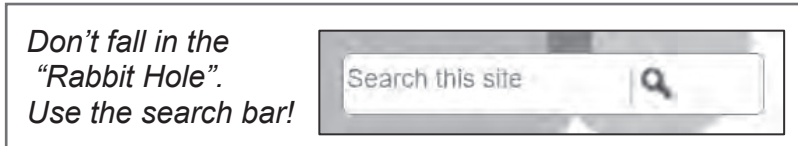


## FREE Personal Web Page!

**Personal Web Page:** Your Personal Web Page is a comfortable environment to disclose the information you would like to share with people you permit to visit. Here you can introduce yourself, list your skills, your education and work history, show your photograph, link to your documents and provide relevant and important information not requested in many job applications.

- ✓ Members differentiate themselves from other applicants!
- ✓ Members share information easily. No need to carry documents; they can be located, downloaded and/or printed from the page.
- ✓ Shows dedication to reentry success and provides a place to demonstrate interest in taking a proactive approach by sharing skills, character traits, and intentions.

# WHERE CAN WE LEARN HOW TO DRIVE A CELL PHONE?!



waitbutwhy.com

(When we write in ALL CAPS)

Looking for Guidance? How-To videos?  
You might want to check out

## **SUPREME GURU TECH**

[www.youtube.com/c/SupremeGuru/videos](http://www.youtube.com/c/SupremeGuru/videos)

How-To Mania! She'll help you add apps of all kinds! Delete apps of all kinds! iPhone and Android! Plus how to email, change font size, find music, tips and tricks & lots more.

## **FAIR SHAKE ON YOUR PHONE**

You get info and we don't take your info! ~ : )

Search for Fair Shake

[www.fairshake.net](http://www.fairshake.net)

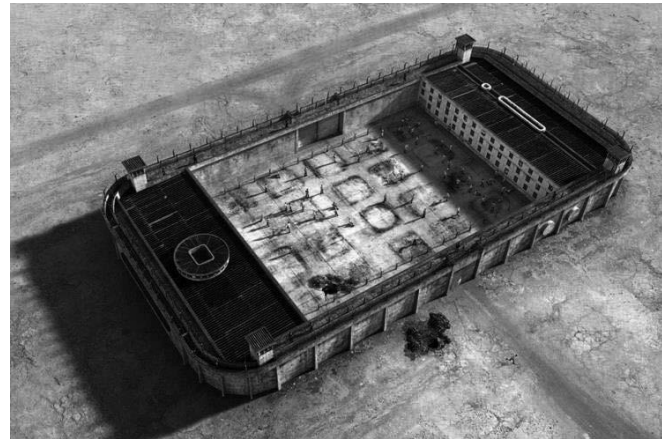


**Discover  
Resources  
& Information!**

# GIZMOS AND HUMANS

We humans are fickle. We are consistently overconfident about what we are capable of doing, except, of course, when we are justifying our deflection of ownership or initiative. We blame outside circumstances when we fail, and claim prowess and skill when we succeed. We LOVE to think that, where media is concerned, we are strong and we can “take it or leave it alone.”

With the enormous and rapid rise in emotional, physical and existential suffering caused by anxiety, fear, depression and loss of meaning and care, however, many of us turn to social media for distraction, diversion, old friends (hoping they were “good” friends), new friends, games (healthy and not) potential partners, events, and ways we can feel like we belong. What few of us realize, is the apps often contribute to our suffering.



*Modern Day Prison by Banksy*

Today, our phones are tiny computers; complete with tracking devices and communication options.

## **EVERYTIME YOU ‘GET AN APP’, YOU SHARE A GREAT DEAL OF INFORMATION THAT YOU’VE STORED IN YOUR GIZMO, SUCH AS:**

**YOUR CONTACTS** (and all the info you have - not just their names)

**YOUR PHOTOS** (Remember: You are training facial recognition AI)

**YOUR PREFERENCES** for every app you use and visit; including things you clicked on when you were trying to get them off your screen. Yup, they are now considered your ‘preference’)

**AND MUCH MORE. REMEMBER: your phone knows where you are at all times.**

## A LITTLE FOOD FOR THOUGHT ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

<https://www.addictioncenter.com/drugs/social-media-addiction/>

Social media addiction is a behavioral addiction that is characterized as being overly concerned about social media, driven by an uncontrollable urge to log on to or use social media, and devoting so much time and effort to social media that it impairs other important life areas.

Due to the effect that it has on the brain, social media is addictive both physically and psychologically. According to a new study by Harvard University, self-disclosure on social networking sites lights up the same part of the brain that also ignites when taking an addictive substance. The brain receives a “reward” and associates the activity with positive reinforcement.

The phenomena of social media addiction can largely be contributed to the dopamine-inducing social environments. Social networking sites have been developed to produce the same neural circuitry found in gambling and recreational drugs. Studies have shown

that the constant stream of retweets, likes, and shares from these sites have affected the brain’s reward area to trigger the same kind of chemical reaction as drugs.

Addictive social media use will look much like that of any other substance use disorder, including mood modification (i.e., engagement in social media leads to a favorable change in emotional states), salience (i.e., behavioral, cognitive, and emotional preoccupation with social media), tolerance (i.e., ever increasing use of social media over time), withdrawal symptoms (i.e., experiencing unpleasant physical and emotional symptoms when social media use is restricted or stopped), conflict (i.e., interpersonal problems ensue because of social media usage), and relapse (i.e., addicted individuals quickly revert back to their excessive social media usage after an abstinence period).

*"I used to think communication was the key until I realized comprehension is."*  
- Banksy

Here are a few organizations that want to help you use social media in a healthy way!

Center for  
Humane  
Technology

## The Center for Humane Technology

<https://www.humanetech.com/>

*As long as social media companies profit from addiction, depression, and division, our society will continue to be at risk*

Ledger of Harms that tech companies have no desire to address: (edited by sk)

- Misinformation, conspiracy theories, and fake news make it difficult to make sense of the world.
- Loss of crucial abilities including memory and focus making it harder to think and to pay attention.
- Stress, loneliness, feelings of addiction can lead to physical and mental health problems.
- Less empathy, more confusion and misinterpretation puts a strain on relationships.
- Propaganda, distorted dialogue & a disrupted democratic process impacts elections.
- Broadcast amplification of -isms reinforces an appeal to authority for regulation.
- Children face physical, mental and social challenges from developmental delays to suicide.
- Tech limitations can be difficult to adopt; gizmo 'house rules' are critical

**THEIR PODCAST:** Your Undivided Attention - <https://www.humanetech.com/podcast>

**TAKE CONTROL!** Got in too deep? Here are important steps to increase well-being and regain control.

<https://www.humanetech.com/take-control>

**Look Up** <https://lookup.live/>

*Helping young people thrive in the digital world.*



Youth leaders taking action to challenge the digital ecosystem and our unrealistic social norms so we can level the playing field and improve the mental health and well-being of young people.

They also offer a Community Hub: a platform where youth can collaborate with others around the world. (Adults can learn a lot from the youth who have lived their entire lives in the digital world!)

## Addiction Center

<https://www.addictioncenter.com/drugs/social-media-addiction/>

Research has shown that there is an undeniable link

between social media use, negative mental health, and low self-esteem.



## An app to help us think better:

**Mind Games:** [www.mindgames.com](http://www.mindgames.com) Full of tests to help improve mental agility, no matter how old the user is, including critical thinking skills.. Most games can be completed in less than 5 min.; just enough time for a brain workout. The app is free, or \$5 for the ad-free version.

## READING RECOMMENDATIONS:

*Enshittification: Why Everything Suddenly Got Worse and What to Do About It*

By Cory Doctorow 2025 MCD

*The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*

By Shoshana Zuboff 2019 Public Affairs.

## Mini Computer Guide

**Keyboard Shortcuts** - Usually the same on all computers... Macs have slight differences

Windows	Mac OS	Linux	Action
Ctrl + A	⌘ + A	Ctrl + A	Select all content
Ctrl + B	⌘ + B	Ctrl + B	Bold selected text
Ctrl + C	⌘ + C	Ctrl + C	Copy file or selected content
Ctrl + I	⌘ + I	Ctrl + I	Italicize selected text
Ctrl + P	⌘ + P	Ctrl + P	Print document
Ctrl + S	⌘ + S	Ctrl + S	Save current page or work
Ctrl + U	⌘ + I	Ctrl + U	Underline
Ctrl + V	⌘ + V	Ctrl + V	Paste file or content
Ctrl + X	⌘ + X	Ctrl + X	Cut file or content
Ctrl + Y	Shift + ⌘ + Y	Ctrl + Y	Redo, If you did an undo
Ctrl + Z	⌘ + Z	Ctrl + Z	Undo last action, can be done many times
Alt + Tab	⌘ + Tab	Alt + Tab	Shuffle through open programs
Tab	Tab	Tab	Use Tab as a quick way to move around forms
Shift + F3	⇧ + ⌘ + C	Shift + F3	Change selected text to all capital letters, first letter capital or all lowercase.

### Email Warnings

1. Beware of SCAMS. Advice on Scams: Scambusters <http://www.scambusters.com/> gives information about how to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft, or of frauds such as pyramid selling, or money laundering scams. The Office of Fair Trading describes SCAMS as:








































**S**cheming **C**rafty **A**ggressive **M**alicious

Their advice is that "If it looks too good to be true it probably is!"

1. Nigerian "419" email fraud: These are emails from Africa offering to share huge sums of money with you if you let them use your bank to help them get their money out of the country. They ask for your bank account details and an administration fee. But it's a scam. If you comply and pay a small administration fee, then there'll be some complication and more money will be requested - again and again. The big money for you will never materialize. At worst you might get an invite to Africa where being held for ransom is a further threat.
2. Lotteries and Prize Draws: You may get emails saying you are a winner in an overseas lottery or prize draw and asking for your bank account details so that the cash can be transferred. You may also be asked to send money in order to claim your prize. These are scams.
3. Phishing: Many Internet fraudsters use a technique called "phishing" - sending out hoax emails, which look like they have come from your Bank or other online account such as Ebay Paypal. These often say that there has been a problem with unauthorized access to your account, or that you need to reconfirm your details for security reasons. Links in the email would take you to a page that could look like it belongs to your bank, where you will be asked to enter your passwords and personal information. If you followed these instructions and entered your details you would be enabling the fraudsters to access your accounts. It might be safer to use a search engine to find the web site of your bank than a link in an unverifiable email.

For more Fair Shake computer guides, tutorials and short-cuts visit our New To Computers page at:

[www.fairshake.net/new-to-computers](http://www.fairshake.net/new-to-computers)

 <b>New</b> – Create a new document like a blank sheet of paper.  <b>Open</b> – Open a saved project - something you already worked on.  <b>Save</b> – Save your progress on this project. We recommend you often save.	 <b>Common style type</b> – You can set common style types that you like and then add them to any selected text by choosing them from the drop down menu. Default/Normal would be common paragraph formatting while Heading1 or Heading2 might introduce sections or important paragraphs as their titles.
 <b>New / Write</b> – This is the button you use to start a new message. When you arrive in your email you are in the reading portion, use this button if you would like to create a new email.	 <b>Font</b> – Fonts change the way your letters look. There are hundreds of fonts, most people choose from one of the fonts displayed in these icons because they are professional and are easy to read.
 <b>Print</b> – Start printing your document on the default printer.  <b>Print Preview</b> – View what your document will look like on paper and also view more printing options.	 <b>Text Size</b> – By selecting text and choosing a number within this list you can make your text larger or smaller.
 <b>Cut</b> – Remove selected object or text from the document and keep it ready to paste somewhere.  <b>Copy</b> – Copy selected object or text and keep it ready to paste somewhere.  <b>Paste</b> – Paste the most recent cut or copied object/text.  <b>Copy Formatting</b> – Highlight object or text with a desired format and click this button, then highlight some other object or text you want the format copied to.	 <b>Left Alignment</b> – Pushes all your lines of text as left as they will go.  <b>Center Alignment</b> – Puts the text within a line in the absolute middle.  <b>Right Alignment</b> – Pushes all your lines of text as right as they will go.  <b>Justified Alignment</b> – Spaces all the words within a line to fill the whole line.
 <b>Undo</b> – Undo the previous action. This can usually be done a few times.  <b>Redo</b> – Redo action previously undone. This can be done as many times as you used the Undo feature.	 <b>Numbered List</b> – Start a list or turn selected text into a list. When you press the enter / return key a number will appear in front of the next list item.  <b>Bulleted List</b> – Start a list or turn selected text into a list. When you press the enter/return key a number will appear in front of the next list item.
 <b>Insert Hyperlink</b> – Add a link to your document that will open in an internet browser. Be ready with the address ( <a href="http://www.address.com">http://www.address.com</a> ), highlight what you want to link and press the button. Insert the link and click <i>ok</i> or <i>apply</i> . 	 <b>Bold</b> – Use the style <b>Bold</b>  <b>Italics</b> – Use the style <i>Italics</i>  <b>Underline</b> – Use the style <u>Underline</u> You can combine any or all of these styles.
 <b>First Line Indent</b> – Location to indent the first line within a paragraph.  <b>Hanging Indent</b> – Location to indent all lines within a paragraph after the first line while leaving the first line unaffected.	 <b>Decrease Indent</b> – Pull selected paragraph to the left.  <b>Increase Indent</b> – Push selected paragraph to the right.
 <b>Spell Check</b> – Check the document for spelling errors. If there is more than one button then you can use the second one to turn on / off the red line under misspelled words.	 <b>Text Color</b> – Change the color of selected text or text you are about to type.  <b>Highlight Color</b> – Change the color behind the selected text or text you are about to type.
 <b>Attach Files</b> - Sometimes you want to send another document or photo along with your message. Do this by clicking the attachment button and finding the file/image. 	 <b>Find / Search</b> - Use key words from within the subject or body of an email to find emails within your folders quickly. When you search you will get a list of emails that all contain the word(s) you entered. 
 <b>Line Spacing</b> – Increase or decrease the amount of space between lines.	 <b>Add Photo / Image</b> - Add an image to your message. Click the button and then locate your image.

# EDUCATE YOURSELF!

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today." - Malcolm X

**College Correspondence Courses:** Be sure to ask about the Pell Grant!

### **Adams State University**

Correspondence Education Program  
208 Edgemont Blvd., Suite 3000  
Alamosa, CO 81101  
719-587-7671  
[www.adams.edu/academics/pep/print-based](http://www.adams.edu/academics/pep/print-based)

### **Colorado State University-Pueblo Division of Extended Studies**

2200 Bonforte Blvd  
Pueblo, CO 81001-4901  
719.549.2100  
[www.csupueblo.edu/extended-studies](http://www.csupueblo.edu/extended-studies)

### **Blackstone Career Institute**

1011 Brookside Road, Suite 300  
P.O. Box 3717  
Allentown, PA, 18106-0717  
610-871-0031  
<https://blackstone.edu/correspondence-paralegal-certificate-program/>

### **Ashland University**

401 College Avenue  
Ashland, OH 44805  
419-289-4142  
[ohio.edu/online/programs/print/correctional](http://ohio.edu/online/programs/print/correctional)

### **Rio Salado College**

2323 West 14th Street  
Tempe, AZ 85281  
480-517-8345  
[www.riosalado.edu/rio-specialized-programs/incarcerated/correspondence-learning](http://www.riosalado.edu/rio-specialized-programs/incarcerated/correspondence-learning)

### **Upper Iowa University**

605 Washington St  
Fayette, Iowa 52142  
800-553-4150 (the only number they offer for correspondence courses)  
<https://uiu.edu/academics/online-distance-learning/self-paced-paper-based/>

## MODERN STATES

<https://modernstates.org/>



**Any learner, anywhere, can take college-level courses and earn college credit for free.**

*Tell your family and friends! The program is only available online, but you can choose from the CLEP courses on the back of this page...so you can start studying now.*

We build online courses that are available to anyone and that teach the content tested on the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams. CLEP exams confer credit at 2,900 colleges nationwide. Our courses are free, and learners who complete them can take CLEP exams for free.

Modern States offers a digital public library of 32 online courses, taught by college professors and designed to prepare learners for CLEP exams. Learners can take the classes they want when they want and at their own pace, and use CLEP exams to validate their learning. Modern States covers the cost of CLEP testing for learners who complete Modern States courses, ensuring that the full benefit of our program is available to anyone.

Modern States 1633 Broadway 48th Floor, New York, New York 10019



# CLEP TESTS

<https://clep.collegeboard.org/>

Earn College Credit with CLEP! You can study on your own today and when you have access to the internet, you can test out of the courses below for college credits...generally 3 credit courses....for just \$95. There are plenty of online sources for practice tests to help you prepare!

## CLEP COURSES

### Composition and Literature

- American Literature
- Analyzing and Interpreting Literature
- College Composition
- College Composition Modular
- English Literature
- Humanities

### World Languages

- French Language: Levels 1 and 2
- German Language: Levels 1 and 2
- Spanish Language: Levels 1 and 2
- Spanish with Writing: Levels 1 and 2

### History and Social Sciences

- American Government
- History of the United States I
- History of the United States II
- Human Growth and Development
- Introduction to Educational Psychology
- Introductory Psychology
- Introductory Sociology

- Principles of Macroeconomics
- Principles of Microeconomics
- Social Sciences and History
- Western Civilization I Ancient Near East to 1648
- Western Civilization II 1648 to the Present

### Science and Mathematics

- Biology
- Calculus
- Chemistry
- College Algebra
- College Mathematics
- Natural Sciences
- Precalculus

### Business

- Financial Accounting
- Information Systems
- Introductory Business Law
- Principles of Management
- Principles of Marketing

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[www.openstax.org](http://www.openstax.org)

They provide free, open educational resources and affordable digital tools for high school, college, and beyond.

Free courses! No credit, but great for learning.  
Your study-buddies are at College Guild.

### College Guild

P.O. Box 696  
Brunswick, ME 04011  
207-729-0043

"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you."

- B.B. King



As of this writing, CLEP tests are not offered in prisons.

**Let's change that!**

# Welcome to the Wonderful World of Mathematics!

By Jason O'Malley <https://bridgegap.biz/>

Buckle up...because on this journey you will experience thrilling feats of mental acrobatics; you will endeavor to go to places no human has ever gone before; and you will discover a world that you create!

While we know that the language of math includes using formulas for science and economics, did you know that mathematics, algebra, will help you reason your way through life? Mathematics is a lens through which you can view the world.

**Count** on math to help you identify when an argument is on the right path, or when you need to call bull\$hit when it doesn't add up!

You can pursue a math-based career in a Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (**S.T.E.M.**) field.

With your mathematics and life experiences, you can hone your intuition to investigate and develop the world around you. If you can imagine it, you can use your math tools to create the infrastructure for the new tomorrow. Envision yourself being the next human being to see the world differently than anyone before you! Through programming, you can literally create the cyber world, while a strong math base will also help you to develop the mindset



needed to examine complex social issues through economics, psychology, and other social sciences.

And with the power of mathematics at your disposal, you may be the one to invent the next society-changing technology or design a architectural feat of engineering.

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## A few examples of math for **everyday living**:

- Budgeting
- Manage and grow savings
- Manage credit
- Carpentry and hobby projects
- Vehicle modification



- Sales tax at the store
- Investing
- Start a business
- 3-Dimensional art
- Tipp

Many of us know someone who is very good at staying ahead of bills, with extra money to spend. What we might not have realized is that underlying their uncanny ability to seem "rich", their mathematical thinking helped them navigate through budgeting and saving. They continuously add to, and subtract from, a running total that they hold in their mind - or in a ledger. Every financial decision they make has this total in mind.

If your goal is to learn math well enough to make great decisions

about money, then go get it: first, the math training; then, the \$\$\$! Ok, entrepreneurs, I know y'all are definitely thinking about them numbers! It is literally your *business* to think mathematically. Everything from your start-up costs, to your break-even point, to your profit and loss, has you thinking in terms of math. Mathematics will help you make decisions to be more effective and efficient in your organization. Your strength in mathematics will help you to create your marketing budget and increase your profits. It will help you determine how many employees you should hire and how

much you should invest in equipment to help your business flourish! These examples only scratch the surface of the numerous ways in which this powerful tool can be utilized. If you want to delve deeper into the power of math, try to find instructors proficient in the "coach approach" – or learning through questioning to draw forth deep level epiphanies - to help you become fluent in thinking and speaking mathematics. You will never regret knowing something as essential to the economy that we operate in. In fact, you will thrive in navigating the great maze of today's world!

## About the Author - Jason O'Malley:

With over 20 years of experience teaching mathematics – many within a prison setting - Jason has honed his craft using the "coach approach". His experience started at the age of 15, when he helped his mother get her G.E.D. He has experience with university-level mathematics, also: college algebra, calculus, and statistics.

Jason holds a number of certifications: As a Life Coach through the Institute for Life Coach Training; as a teacher's aide through the US Department of Labor; as a facilitator through the Facilitator Awareness and Competency Training System, Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) and Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS).

Finally, Jason believes that by embodying optimism and hope, he can help others see that circumstances do not have to define who we are: "We define who we are by the choices we make. So, be intentional and choose well."

# Improve Your Credit Score

It's amazing how many things today rely on our credit scores. We expect a bank to be interested in our credit when we are looking to borrow money, or credit card companies when we are looking for credit, but did you know all of these organizations can look at your credit information?

- Employers (only with your written consent)
- Insurance companies
- Landlords
- Credit card companies
- Lenders
- Organizations considering your application for a government license or benefit
- Child support enforcement agencies
- Government agencies
- Organizations you may do business with

If your credit score is not where you would like it to be, here is one way to build credit:

## Secured Credit Cards

Secured Credit Cards can help you build credit by helping you learn to feel comfortable using a credit card while you carefully manage your spending. They require a cash deposit which becomes the credit line for your account. You will probably need at least \$200 to open a secure credit card account.

By making your payments on time, and meeting the minimum payment requirements, you begin to build credit history. Your monthly statements are then reported to consumer credit reporting agencies and in this way you begin to shape your credit profile. It may take a while to build your credit back to a place where you can borrow money, but with patience, dedication and perseverance, it is possible!

## AnnualCreditReport.com

*Get a free copy of your credit report every 12 months!*

### Request Your Free Annual Credit Reports From A Correctional Facility:

Incarcerated individuals can request a free credit report by mail. In your letter, you can request credit reports from all three credit reporting companies: TransUnion, Equifax, and Experian. The credit reporting companies request the following information for mail requests:

- \* The applicant's first, middle, and last names, plus any suffix used
- \* A prisoner identification number
- \* Current address
- \* Address(es) during the two years preceding incarceration
- \* Social Security number
- \* Date of birth
- \* The name of the correctional institution as the return address and the prisoner identification number on the envelope used to mail the request.

Request your credit reports by mail: write to the address below and include the name of the companies from whom you would like a report:

### Annual Credit Report Request Service

P.O. Box 105281  
Atlanta, GA 30348-5281



[www.operationhope.org](http://www.operationhope.org)

Operation HOPE has a series of programs to support your path to improving your credit, reducing debt, increasing savings, buying a home or starting a business. Our programs and services, which serve youth and adults, are offered at no cost to you.

### Operation Hope

91 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 3840  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
888-388-HOPE (4673)

## InCharge

[www.incharge.org](http://www.incharge.org)

InCharge offers a free credit counseling service that provides help with budgeting, solutions for becoming debt free and tips to successfully manage your money. The goal of credit counseling is to provide a solution that helps you achieve debt relief and get on a financially healthy path.

## InCharge Debt Solutions

5750 Major Blvd, Suite 300  
Orlando, FL 32819



# FREE BOOKS PROGRAMS

Updated Jan 2026

Please let me know of any changes to this information! Fair Shake PO Box 63 Westby, WI 54667

## Alabama

Books to Prisons  
PO Box 130699  
Birmingham, AL 35213  
Serves AL, TX

## Arizona

Read Between the Bars  
PO Box 44014  
Tucson, AZ 85733-4014  
Serves: AZ

## California

Prison Library Project  
915 W. Foothill Blvd. #128  
Claremont, CA 91711  
Serves: All states except MA

Prisoners Literature Project  
c/o Bound Together Books  
1369 Haight Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
Serves: All states except TX

## District of Columbia

DC Books to Prisons Project  
PO Box 34190  
Washington, DC 20043  
Serves: all states except: CT,  
FL, IL, MA, ME, MI, NH, NJ,  
NY, OR, PA, RI, VT, WA, or WI

## Florida

Open Books  
Prison Book Project  
1040 N. Guillemard St.  
Pensacola, FL 32501  
Serves: FL only

## Illinois

Chicago Books to Women in  
Prison c/o RFUMC  
4511 N. Hermitage Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60640

Serves: women and trans  
people in BOP and AZ, CA,  
FL, IL, IN, KY, MS & OH

Haymarket Books  
P.O. Box 180165  
Chicago, IL 60618  
What kind of books interest  
you?  
Serves: entire US.

Liberation Library  
@ In These Times  
2040 N Milwaukee Ave  
Chicago, IL 60647  
Serves: Illinois youth in prisons  
and select jails

Midwest Books to Prisoners  
1321 N. Milwaukee Ave  
PMB #460  
Chicago, IL 60622  
Serves: Midwest

UC Books to Prisoners  
Box 515  
Urbana IL 61803  
Serves: Illinois

## Indiana

Midwest Pages to Prisoners  
PO Box 1324  
Bloomington, IN 47402  
Serves: AR, IA, IN, KS, MN,  
MO, ND, NE, OK, and SD

## Kentucky

Louisville Books to Prisoners  
McQuixote Books & Coffee  
Attn: Louisville Books to  
Prisoners  
1512 Portland Ave #1  
Louisville, KY 40203  
Serves: KY and VA

## Louisiana

Louisiana Books 2 Prisoners  
3157 Gentilly Blvd. #141  
New Orleans, LA 70122  
Serves: AL, AR, LA.

## Massachusetts

Great Falls Books Through  
Bars  
PO Box 391  
Greenfield, MA 01302  
Services US, except MA

Prison Book Program  
c/o Lucy Parsons Bookstore  
1306 Hancock St, Suite 100  
Quincy, MA 02169  
Serves: All US states Except  
CA, MI & TX (BOP ok, tho)

## Minnesota

Women's Prison Book Project  
3751 17th Ave S  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
Serves: All US states except  
CT, FL, IL, IN, MA, MI, MS,  
OH, OR, and PA

## Mississippi

Big House Books  
PO Box 55586  
Jackson, MS 39296  
Serves: Mississippi only

## Missouri

Missouri Prison Books  
c/o Subterranean Books  
6271 Delmar Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
Serves: Midwest

## New Jersey

Books Behind Bars  
PO BOX 2611  
Wildwood, New Jersey 08260  
Serves: NJ only

**New York**

Books Beyond Bars  
120 Wall St. Floor 29  
NY, NY 10005  
Serves: NY

NYC Books Through Bars  
c/o Bluestockings Bookstore  
116 Suffolk Street  
New York, NY 10002  
Serves: All US except AL, FL,  
LA, MA, MI, MS, NC, OH, PA

NY Prison Books Project  
POBox 132  
Beacon, NY 12508  
Serves: NY

**North Carolina**

Asheville Prison Books  
Program  
67 N. Lexington  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Serves: NC, SC

Prison Books Collective  
PO Box 625  
Carrboro, NC 27510  
Serves: DOC in NC, BOP in  
AL, KY, MD, NC, TN, VA & WV

Tranzmission Prison Project  
PO Box 1874  
Asheville, NC 28802  
Serves: LGBTQ nationwide

**Ohio**

Athens Books to Prisoners  
PO Box 45  
Rutland, OH 45775  
Serves OH

**Oregon**

Rogue Liberation Library  
PO Box 524  
Ashland, OR 97520  
Serves: CA, NV, OR, TX &  
BOP nationwide.

Portland Books  
PO Box 11222  
Portland, OR 97211  
Serves: entire US

**Pennsylvania**

Prison Book Project  
PO BOX 71357  
Pittsburgh PA 15213  
Serves: PA only

Books Through Bars  
4722 Baltimore Ave  
Philadelphia, PA 19143  
Serves: PA, NJ, NY, DE, MD,  
VA, and WV

**Rhode Island**

Providence Books Through  
Bars  
65 University Ave  
Providence, RI 02906  
Serves: All US except: AL, AR,  
FL, IL, KY, LA, MA, ME, MS,  
NY, NC, OH, PA, SC, WA, WI

**Tennessee**

Tennessee Prison Books  
Project  
P.O. Box 22846 901 Broadway  
Nashville, TN 80202 Serves:  
TN only

**Texas**

Inside Books  
P.O. Box 301029 Austin, Texas  
78702  
Serves: TX only

**Virginia**

Books Behind Bars  
Friends of the Jefferson-  
Madison Library  
attn: Books Behind Bars 1500  
Gordon Ave.  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
Serves: VA only

**Washington**

Books to Prisoners  
92 Pike St. Box A  
Seattle, WA, 98101  
Serves: US, except CA + MA

Lopez Books  
P.O. Box 327  
Lopez Island, WA 98261  
Serves: WA and AK only

**West Virginia**

Appalachian Prison Book  
Project  
PO Box 601  
Morgantown, WV 26507  
Serves: KY, MD, OH, TN, VA,  
WV

**Wisconsin**

LGBT Books to Prisoners  
1202 Williamson St.  
Madison, WI, WI 53703  
Serves: LGBTQ prisoners in all  
states Except TX

**Specific types of books****Jailhouse Lawyer's  
Handbook**

Center for Constitutional Rights  
666 Broadway, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY, 10009-8941  
Write for your free copy!

**Edgar Cayce's A.R.E**

215 67th Street  
Virginia Beach, VA 23451  
(757) 428-3588  
Books about dreams, wellness,  
meditation, ancient Egypt,  
karma and self-help. Connect  
to a mentor to discuss the  
books.

**Human Kindness  
Foundation**

PO Box 61619  
Durham NC 27715  
919-383 -5160  
spirituality, mindfulness and  
wellness.

**Free Magazine Subscription!**

They offer interviews, essays,  
fiction, poetry, and photos and  
invite reader feedback!

The Sun  
107 N. Roberson St.  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

# Free Religious and Spiritual Books

## BUDDHIST

### **Barre Center for Buddhist Studies**

194 Lockwood Rd.  
Barre MA 01005  
Free Theravada Buddhist tradition books.

### **Dharma Companions**

P.O. Box 762  
Cotati, CA. 94931-0762  
Free Buddhist books and mentoring correspondence for those practicing Buddhism without a teacher.

### **Liberation Prison Project**

PO Box 31527  
San Francisco, CA 94131  
Free Buddhist books, prayer and practice materials

### **Prison Dharma Network**

PO Box 4623,  
Boulder CO 80306  
Buddhist books and Buddhist pen pal program.

## HUMANIST

### **Humanism For All**

1821 Jefferson Place  
NW Washington, DC 20036  
202-238-9088

Email us! CorrLinks:  
aha@americanhumanist.org  
JPay:  
enewman@americanhumanist.org

\$2 membership. You can pay in unused stamps. Membership includes a one-year subscription to the *Humanist* magazine, a copy of Roy Speckhardt's *Creating Change*

through *Humanism* and an AHA bookmarker.

## ISLAM

### **Alavi Foundation**

500 5th Ave  
23rd floor, Suite 2320  
New York, NY 10110  
Individuals in need of the Quran and Islamic Literature, send your request to the nearest location:

\* *The Islamic Seminary Book Distribution Program*  
PO Box 2946  
Huntington Station, NY 11746

\* *Islamic Education Center*  
ATTN: Library  
P. O. Box 572385  
Houston, TX 77257-2385

\* *Islamic Education Center*  
ATTN: Book Distribution  
7917 Montrose Road  
Potomac, MD 20854

\* *Shia Association of Bay Area*  
ATTN: Book Distribution  
4415 Fortran Ct  
San Jose, CA 95134

### **Islamic Society of North America**

6555 S. County Road 750E  
Plainfield, IN 46168  
Sends Qurans and introductory books on Islamic study.

## CHRISTIAN

### **American Rehabilitation Ministry**

PO Box 1490  
Joplin, MO 64802-1490  
417-781-9100  
Bible correspondence courses.

**Catholic Home Study Service**  
PO Box 363

Perryville, MO 63775-0363  
Free correspondence courses on Catholic Church and Bible.

### **Catholic Worker**

36 East First Street  
New York, NY 10003  
Free bimonthly newspaper.

### **International Bible Society**

1820 Jet Stream Drive  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921  
Bibles and Christian literature in English and Spanish.

### **Jehovah's Witnesses**

1020 Red Mills Road  
Wallkill, NY 12589  
Free Mag: The Watchtower  
845-524-3500

## JUDAISM

### **The Aleph Institute**

9540 Collins Avenue  
Surfside, FL 33154  
Jewish Religious Educational materials, pen pal program, religious freedom advocacy.

### **Jewish Prisoner Services International**

PO BOX 85840  
Seattle, WA 98145-1840  
Religious services and materials to Jews in prison.

## PAGAN

### **Appalachian Pagan Ministry**

PO Box 162 Pomeroy, OH  
45769  
(740) 625-3619

### **Coven Oldenwilde**

113 Clinton Ave  
Asheville, NC 28806  
Provides religious information, legal information, and legal advocacy for Pagan inmates

**ATTENTION CURRENTLY AND FORMERLY INCARCERATED WRITERS!**

Fair Shake Authors page: This page has been created to showcase literary accomplishments, and to share opportunities with new and aspiring writers! If you are an incarcerated or formerly incarcerated writer with a book that can be purchased somewhere on the internet (I need to be able to post a link), please send your name, book title and where the book can be found and I'll post it on the page.

Writing Outlets:

**American Prison Writing Archive**

c/o Hamilton College  
198 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323-1218

"The mission of the APWA is to replace speculation on and misrepresentation of prisons, imprisoned people, and prison workers with first-person witness by those who live and work on the receiving end of American criminal justice." As of 2.18.20 they have 2323 titles in English and 17 titles in Spanish. <https://apw.dhinitiative.org/>

**Prisons Foundation**

2512 Virginia Ave. NW, #58043  
Washington, DC 20037

If you are an incarcerated person who has written a book, or would like to write a book, we want to publish it. All books on any subject are welcome. There is no charge to you to publish your book and no charge to anyone who wishes to read it. You retain full rights to your book if you later wish to place it with a literary agent or commercial publisher. It will be protected under common copyright law. When we receive your book, it will be scanned in its entirety, just as you submitted it to us, even if it's hand written. <http://prisonsfoundation.org/>

**WRITING TIPS** by Neil Postman

**Strive for three things:**

1. Clarity
2. Engagement
3. There is no third thing

Thinking Clearly: make an outline. if you think you can skip this step, you aren't thinking clearly.

Writing Clearly: Eschew baroque vernacular

Whenever possible do your level best to avoid at all costs the unnecessary words you should be avoiding but aren't.

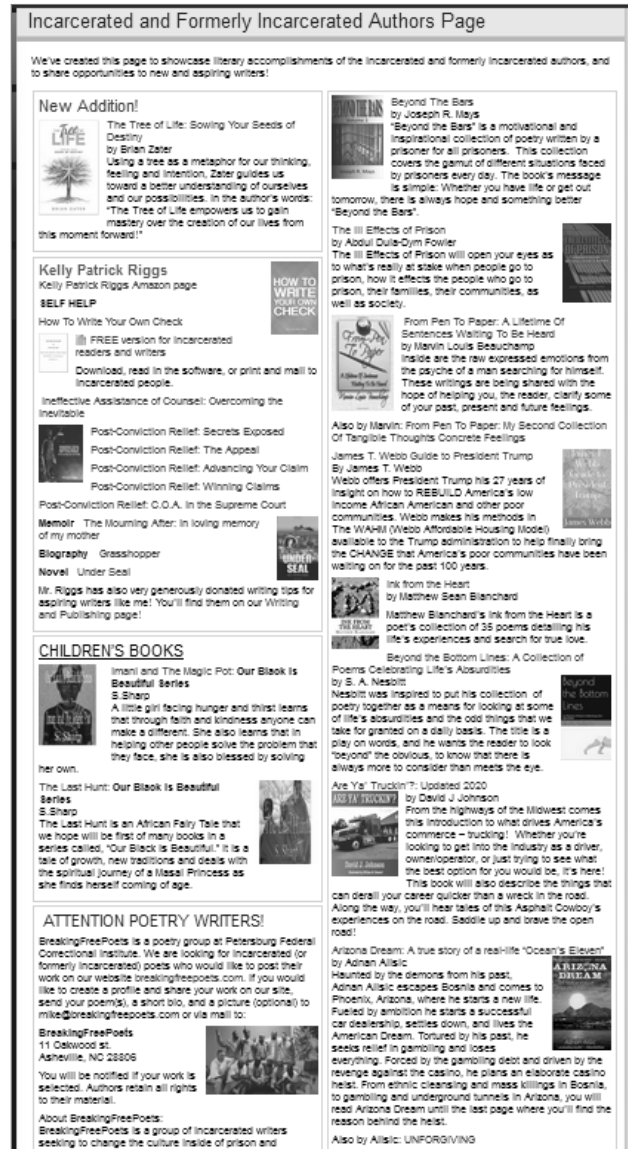
Slash and burn. Repeat. First drafts are always twice as long as they should be.

Say one thing big. If you have two big things to say, control yourself.

Use metaphors and examples. Provide maps and sign posts on the narrative journey (previews, pointers, summaries, and redundancies)

Accept Criticism: When readers tell you that you're writing is unclear or uninteresting, they are by definition correct

Writing Stylishly: don't try. The only style worth having is your natural speaking voice.





# Free School

AN EXPLORATION

*Expand  
Possibility!*

## Quotes Out of Context: *Education*

*"You either learn your way towards writing your own script in life, or you unwittingly become an actor in someone else's script."* - John T. Gatto

*"The most potent weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."* - Steven Biko

*"Children learn more from what you are than what you teach."* - W.E.B. Du Bois

*"Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change."* - Steven Hawking

*"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."* - Malcolm X

*"Books can let you chew on an idea without social risk."* - James Clear

*"...the cliché 'learning how to think, not what to think'...is actually shorthand for a much deeper, more serious idea: Learning how to think really means learning how to exercise some control over how and what you think. It means being conscious and aware enough to choose what you pay attention to and to choose how you construct meaning from experience. Because if you cannot exercise this kind of choice in adult life, you will be totally hosed."* - David Foster Wallace

*"Education doesn't need to be reformed – it needs to be transformed."* - Sir Ken Robinson

*"It takes considerable knowledge just to realize the extent of your own ignorance."* - Thomas Sowell

*"Education is not the filling of a pot but the lighting of a fire."* - W.B. Yeats

*"Wisdom begins with wonder."* - Socrates

*"Learning never exhausts the mind."* - Leonardo da Vinci

*"It doesn't matter how smart you are, unless you stop and think."* - Thomas Sowell

*"Grading has three predictable effects - less interest in learning, a preference for easier tasks, and shallower thinking."* - Alfie Kohn

*"A primary object should be the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? And what duty more pressing than communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?"* - George Washington

*"The mind, once stretched by a new idea, never returns to its original dimensions."* - Ralph Waldo Emerson

*"You ain't gonna learn what you don't wanna know."* - John Perry Barlow

*"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."* - Dr. Seuss

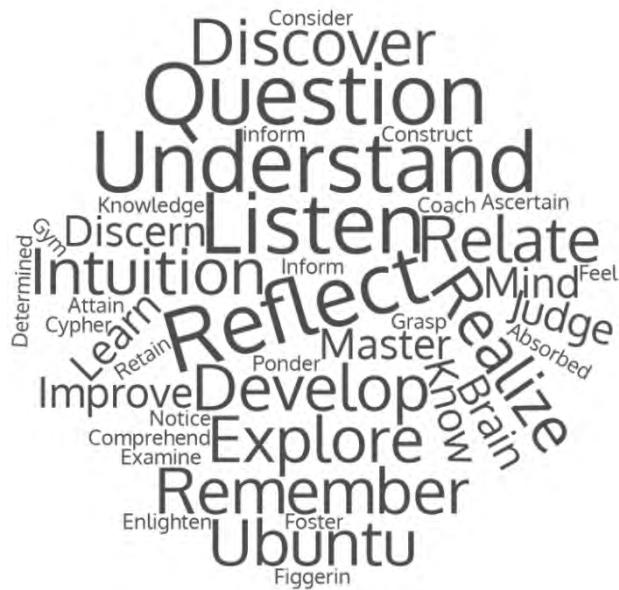
*"It is hard to learn when we think we know."* - Peter Block

*"There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening."* - Marshall McLuhan

*"A good teacher does not teach facts, he or she teaches enthusiasm, open-mindedness and values."* - Gian-Carlo Rota

*"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education."*

- Martin Luther King Jr.



# EDUCATION + LEARNING

In our early years, school is based on the old R & B method:

## RECEIVE and BELIEVE.

The teacher contains information, we simply need to receive it and accept it. We're tested – often – to make sure we're 'on track' with 'the average'.

This teaching method is called **PEDAGOGY**.

It means, roughly, 'leader of children'.

That method works for children, yes, and even some adults, but most adults and many children as they get older, learn in a different way. They no longer simply 'receive and believe', they now consider how what they are learning relates to their life today. They think about previous experiences they've had, and the perspectives they currently hold. This greatly influences the way we interact with the information and learn.

This is called **ANDRAGOGY**. It's the way older children and adults learn.

It is important to think about andragogy because **WE CONSTRUCT OUR KNOWLEDGE**. It is not 'given to us'. We decide which information we want to 'keep'; we incorporate the information in the way we want and we use it in whatever way is useful to us. We **DECIDE** what information **MEANS** to us. This gives us a great deal of power and ownership. Perception and belief are at the foundation of learning. *We do not see things as there are, we see them as we are.*

*"You ain't gonna learn what you don't wanna know."* John Perry Barlow

**Why continue to learn after childhood?** We never stop learning; we might as well learn with purpose!

### JUST A FEW REASONS TO MEANINGFULLY CONTINUE TO LEARN:

- To make sense of the world
- To combat the negative effects of
  - Fake news and deep fakes
  - Social media's behavior modification and emotion-hacking
  - The incomplete, emotional lure of the 'single story'
  - Dumbing us down ('Where is your expert?', "you just need a job – any job", "ask your doctor", "you can't do that alone", "you should fill your 'role", "you can't fight city hall", "that's not your problem", and other limiting and controlling beliefs.)
  - Advertising, movies, TV shows, fear-mongering
- To disagree convivially; to listen, share perspectives, walk away, reflect on the conversation
- To get a job. Yes...education can be important for getting a job. It's just as important to get a job that is right for you as it is to get a job that provides the opportunity, now or in the future for financial success. We are not robots. We require agency, dignity, acknowledgement. Education helps us understand our needs so we can address them **ALL**, not just the need for income.
- To adapt, to be flexible, and to be resilient to prepare for a complex future!

And for many more reasons. We can do so much together. And we can learn anything we want!

## LEARNING WHAT WE WANT TO LEARN!

When we were young, we were educated as if we were an 'empty vessel', now we can learn as persons-in-the-world!

### **UNLEARN:**

Much of what we've learned, we received without scrutiny or a filter. We simply accepted information given to us, norms expected of us, and beliefs to orient us. This was enormously helpful in our early years! Without occasional reflection and re-evaluation, however, the information, that may no longer be true, can become 'calcified' or stuck, and we may even defend it by saying 'that's how it is', or that's the way we've always done it. With intention and effort, we can remove mental 'plaque' and open our minds to new and improved information!

### **HEUTAGOGY:**

Since we learn all the time, why not direct our learning to increase our opportunities, possibilities and success? We can seek information in a library, in books, through conversation, and on the internet. (Be very discerning when looking for information on the internet!! "Information" is just 'stuff' and does NOT include truth; that is for you to figure out.) Self-determined learning can include critically reflecting on our early learning and discovering deeper meanings now.

*"It's hard to learn when we think we know something."*

– Peter Block.

### **UBUNTUGOGY:**

What we never learn in school in the U.S. is that we are constantly in relationship with everyone and everything around us. We are trained to see ourselves as 'individuals' who have to figure things out for ourselves. We are also taught that we are 'rational actors' and we behave in our own 'self-interest'. This is the story that continues to divide us. We can choose to let it go for the misleading falsehood that it is, and discover that our true nature is the balance between autonomy (agents in control of our destiny), and belonging (connected to others and the world around us). Creating a world that is fair and just for all IS in our self-interest! We will be secure and free, also!

### **EMBODIED COGNITION**

Our brains evolved with our body and our bodies evolved with the world around us. We experience life, and make decisions, based on feelings...so it's high time we recognize how we extend our cognition (thinking ability) to understand ourselves, others, and the world better! According to Erik Shonstrom,

*"Embodied Cognition research supports the idea that feelings and emotions are not obstacles to the process of rational thought, but part of it, inextricably intertwined. All decisions are "gut" decisions – they are formed, informed and carried out by the body and the mind in tandem."*

### **TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY (TLT)**

(Please find this information on the next page.)

## Styles of Learning

*Use one, some, or all!*

### **UNLEARN**

Letting go of the behaviors and mindsets that keep us stuck so we can transform the past, improve today, and prepare for the future.

### **HEUTAGOGY**

aka: Self-Determined Learning  
Learners decide what is important and act. They build knowledge on alone and with others. They learn the value of information. They listen, they ask questions to clarify and build empathy, they reflect, they consider others in their process. They also construct knowledge with them.

### **UBUNTUGOGY**

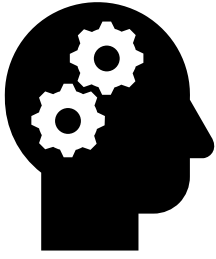
Learning through a lens of interdependence, knowing that everything is connected and that all learning must recognize, include and honor others now, in the past, and in the future. Ubuntuogy can be applied when we learn alone and when we learn with others.

### **EMBODIED COGNITION**

Learn how to "trust our gut."  
Developing an understanding of how we are informed by our body and our brain - together - when we 'think', including when we learn, pay attention, construct knowledge and meaning, and make decisions.

### **TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING THEORY**

The transformative learning theory (TLT) lens will equip learners with ways to foster critical self-reflection, challenge social norms, engage in dialog with greater confidence, and consider other perspectives, including changing their own. TLT supports capacity building, a deeper sense of compassion, and a healthy curiosity, to use as power-tools in a world of constant change, 'nudges' and emerging truth.



# PHILOSOPHY: our Human Operating System

"It's not fair!" "Good job." "Why can't I do that?" "You should eat more vegetables."  
These statements, which seem to have nothing in common, are all based on beliefs, values, and judgement. These statements are all philosophical expressions.

According to the City University of New York's website, "philosophy is a combination of two Greek words, *philein sophia*, meaning lover of wisdom". Philosophy celebrates all kinds of thinking and provides a 'wholeness' about knowledge, recognizing that our beliefs about things are connected, and form the foundation of our *epistemology* or 'how we know what we know'.

Discussions about philosophy are often considered 'academic' or pointless, and are generally avoided yet, as demonstrated above, philosophy forms the foundation of the way we view the world and act in it. It also forms the foundation of how we believe people-in-society ought to act.

Philosophy covers: morals and ethics (which we all have, whether we articulate them or not). It also covers beliefs, values, and reasoning or *logic*; and the questioning of our assumptions about all of them - known as critical thinking.

Philosophy guides all learning, including what we determine is important to learn or whether we want to learn at all. Sadly, we are systematically denied a pursuit of the 'love of wisdom' in our basic mandatory school years. Rather than teaching us *how* to learn, or simply to *love* to learn, we are instead trained to accumulate and memorize facts, followed by dehumanizing testing to demonstrate retention. But memorizing is not understanding. It does not help us become caring or creative problem solvers. It does not help us listen or value each other's contributions to a collective community project. Aren't these skills at least as important as remembering specific historical dates (which we can look up on our phones)? Testing kills our creativity..but it's never too late to revive it! We are never too old to learn, nor to learn to love wisdom.

Socrates was a philosopher who loved to ask questions and to encourage others to ask questions. Socrates was not necessarily looking for answers. Instead, he often asked questions just to understand how people think. Socratic questions, like the ones below, help us to understand each other:

- Why do you think that?
- What do you mean by that?
- Why is this question important?
- Could you put that another way?
- What do you think is the main issue here?
- Could you expand upon that point further?
- Why would someone make this assumption?
- Could you give me an example of what you mean?
- What assumptions can we make based on this question?
- Does this question lead to other important issues and questions?

As we will explore in the Moral Courage document, sometimes simply asking questions requires a great deal of courage. Although there is such a glut of information that it's difficult to make sense of it all, a lot of people are threatened when we ask questions...about the information, about beliefs or values and even about accepted norms, commonly called 'the status quo'.

But how can we learn if we don't ask questions? How can we grow if we don't question our own beliefs? How can we build a satisfying life if we don't determine what is valuable to us?

*"The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life."*

- Muhammad Ali

## WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY GOOD FOR?

Philosophy helps us:

- create meaning. Meaning guides our values, and values guide our lives.
- bolster our courage. People of all ages, all around the world, have endured and survived extremely difficult situations because of their beliefs.
- trust ourselves – our knowledge, our reasoning, and our beliefs! – and also to trust others, even when their beliefs are different from ours.
- understand identity: personal, group, national, global!
- recognize and address our desire to feel we have control over our lives, and help us grapple with our constant dual needs for autonomy and belonging
- interpret the world through different perspectives. We don't have to believe the perspectives, but understanding them can help us listen, understand, and 'walk a mile' in someone else's shoes

## Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) [www.moralfoundations.org](http://www.moralfoundations.org)

MFT was created by a group of social and cultural psychologists, including Jonathan Haidt, to understand why morality varies, yet shows many similarities and recurrent themes. In brief, the theory proposes the concept of “intuitive ethics” used to construct cultural virtues, narratives, and institutions around the world. They consider these as universal moral foundations:

### **1) Care / harm:**

This foundation is related to our long evolution as mammals with attachment systems and an ability to feel (and dislike) the pain of others. It underlies virtues of kindness, gentleness, and nurturance.

### **2) Fairness / cheating:**

This foundation is related to the evolutionary process of reciprocal altruism. It generates ideas of justice, rights, and autonomy. [Note: In our original conception, Fairness included concerns about equality, which are more strongly endorsed by political liberals. However, as we reformulated the theory in 2011 based on new data, we emphasize proportionality, which is endorsed by everyone, but is more strongly endorsed by conservatives]

### **3) Loyalty / betrayal:**

This foundation is related to our long history as tribal creatures able to form shifting coalitions. It underlies virtues of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the group. It is active anytime people feel that it's “one for all, and all for one.”

### **3) Authority / subversion:**

This foundation was shaped by our long primate history of hierarchical social interactions. It underlies virtues of leadership and followership, including deference to legitimate authority and respect for traditions.

### **4) Sanctity / degradation:**

This foundation was shaped by the psychology of disgust and contamination. It underlies religious notions of striving to live in an

elevated, less carnal, more noble way. It underlies the widespread idea that the body is a temple which can be desecrated by immoral activities and contaminants (an idea not unique to religious traditions).

### **5) Liberty / oppression:**

This foundation is about the feelings of reactance and resentment people feel toward those who dominate them and restrict their liberty. Its intuitions are often in tension with those of the authority foundation. The hatred of bullies and dominators motivates people to come together, in solidarity, to oppose or take down the oppressor. We report some preliminary work on this potential foundation in this paper, on the psychology of libertarianism and liberty.

To explore more ideas in philosophy, check out the **Morals in Brief, JUDGE, VALUE, and BOUNDARIES** documents; or the reading list at the back of this book!

## PHILOSOPHY:

*Let's explore*

# BELIEF



Belief is at the foundation of our thinking, our feeling, and every aspect of our daily existence. This document will not directly address religion, but much of the content applies to religious beliefs as well. We all believe!

### **BELIEF is how we steer our ship:**

- It influences what we acknowledge, perceive, hear, pay attention to, discover, attribute.
- It guides our values: how we invest in ourselves, how we value and treat others, how we see the value of things (money, cars, etc.), of information (education, news sources).
- It guides our emotions, which guide our thinking and our behaviors. For example: if we are afraid of dogs, we might shake and sweat, and even run away from a sleepy dog.
- It guides our feelings of self-worth, efficacy, and what we are capable of - all of which affect how we see our options, opportunities and potential.
- It can give us strength or make us weak. Belief has brought believers through amazing hardships!
- Belief guides our ability to trust; trust that we can do things, that we are important contributors to civilization, etc., and also how we trust others, and how we can grow our trust in relationships.
- Belief also guides how we make sense of things; our justifications and our logic.
- We tend to believe that others see the world the way we see the world, which is one of the reasons we can't believe that they have different solutions to problems.

***"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't -  
you're right."***

- Henry Ford



**LENSES TO SEE THE WORLD:** Our beliefs 'tint' the lenses we've created to see the world...and to see ourselves. Each of us has a variety of lenses to use, depending on our feelings and the situation. Each of us can decide which lens to use in any situation, but most of the time we simply react, using whatever lens is triggered by our subconscious. We believe our assumptions, and even assume that others see the same things that we see. This is why it is vitally important to ask others how they see a situation! We hope that others will be generous when they view us. Perhaps we could also use our curious, or our 'rose-colored', lenses with them as well.

### **Tom Asacker, author of *Your Brain on Story*, describes how our beliefs are formed:**

*"Everyone has been conditioned to think in certain, scripted ways. What you see today as 'you', wasn't consciously crafted by you. It's a product of unquestioned learning and unconscious assimilation - including limiting beliefs which were woven into you by others, especially by people you trusted. Those 'knots of beliefs' are everywhere and most of the time you fail to notice how they affect your emotions and your decisions, and how important they are to maintaining your story. Like our favorite sweaters, our identities are very precious to us."*

But we can outgrow beliefs that were given to us. When we reflect on how we became who we are today, we might find beliefs that are inconsistent with who we have become. We can let these beliefs go, and we can adopt new ones. Tom Asacker recommends: *"If you want to change your perspective, change your behavior - and your behavior will change your mind."*

See it to believe it? Not so fast! Here are some common, age-old phrases to ponder:

*We see things as we are, not as they are.*

*Don't believe everything you see.*

*The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.*

*Don't believe everything you think.*

**BELIEF IN YOURSELF:** also known as Confidence or Self-Efficacy *Affirmation:* "I can do this!"  
Your "Agency" is your sense of power to determine - and to drive your life toward - your destiny.

**Signs of Self-Determination, Self-Efficacy and Agency:**

- You feel like you can handle problems if you are willing to work hard
- You feel confident that you can achieve your goals.
- You feel like you can manage unexpected events when they arise.
- You are able to bounce back fairly quickly after stressful events.
- You feel like you can come up with options when you are facing a problem.
- You keep trying even when things seem difficult.
- You stay calm even in the face of chaos.
- You perform well, even under pressure.
- You can focus on your progress, chipping away, rather than getting overwhelmed by all you still have to do.

**Do you need to build your feelings of Self-Efficacy?** Here are some things to try:

- + Celebrate your achievements! Reflect on the hurdles you surmounted and how much more you know.
- + Observe others. See how they progress and then see if you can do the same, or in your own style.
- + Have positive affirmations ready when you start something new. Develop a 'positivity bias'.
- + Pay attention to your thoughts, your emotions, and your cues from your body.

***"Our belief in our ability to succeed plays a role in how we think, how we act, and how we feel about our place in the world."*** - Albert Bandura



**Bridging Our Beliefs**

Have you ever talked with someone who believes things that don't make sense to you? Our mind creates stories to make sense of what we know when new information comes in. It also creates shortcuts to connect information, save energy and reduce confusion. The mind will create bridges between beliefs that might not clearly connect. Some of these bridges are helpful, some are not good for us or for others. Some of these bridges are called 'magical thinking'. We make 'sense', or meaning, based on our beliefs and the way we connect them.

We also believe in others. We trust them to guide our sensemaking abilities. The level of trust we give them will contribute to the arch of assumptions that connects our beliefs. For instance, if we believe in one type of news source over another, the news source that we trust becomes part of the foundation of our assumptions; the things we believe to be true.

Questioning claims, statements, experts and evidence is not an attack. It is healthy. Questions support critical thinking, wisdom, reflection, dialog and discovery toward the truth.

**Obedience is not belief.**

**Skepticism: Curiosity or questioning of beliefs.** It is very important for us to consider building a healthy level of skepticism since our information channels are being flooded with 'fake', and misleading information.

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. - Albert Einstein

*The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones.* - John Maynard Keynes

*She believed in nothing. Only her skepticism kept her from being an atheist.* - Jean-Paul Sartre

*The repetition of affirmations leads to belief. Once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.* - Muhammad Ali

**POSSIBILITARIAN BELIEFS:** important to build the future

Self-Determination + Self-Efficacy + Self-Reflection + Intention + Opportunity + Agency + Respect

Questions are crucial! Everyone is valuable and important! Yes, We Can! Where there's a will, there's a way.

**No super-hero is coming to save us. Together, we can be the superhero we have been hoping for!**

# LIMINAL THINKING

**Create the change you want by changing the way you think**

A book by Dave Gray. Available through many online booksellers.

These excerpts are shared with permission by the author.

(SK marks my reflections of Dave's ideas. – Sue K)



Why do some people succeed at change while others fail? It's the way they think! Liminal thinking is the art of creating change by understanding, shaping, and reframing beliefs. What beliefs are stopping you right now?

You have a choice. You can create the world you want or live in a world created by others. If you are ready to stop making excuses and start making changes, read on.

No matter who you are or what your situation is, some change is always possible. If there's a situation in the world you want to change, liminal thinking can help.

Beliefs form the basis of everything people say, think, and do. When people change their beliefs, they change their behavior, which changes their lives.

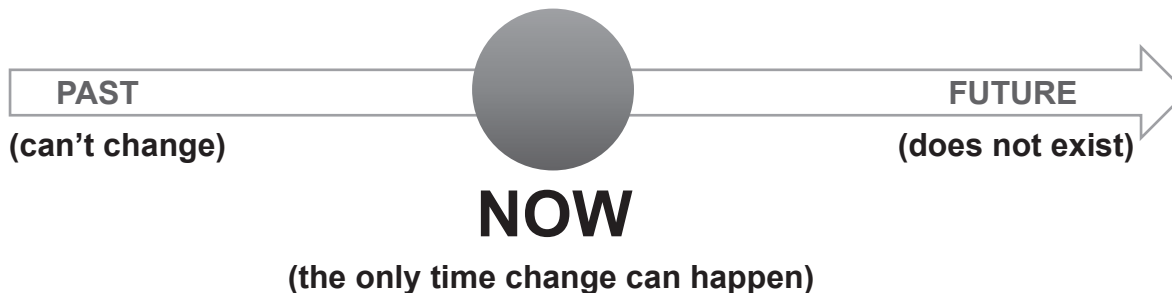
Liminal comes from a Latin word that means *threshold*. A threshold is a doorway; the beginning of a journey; a boundary that marks a point of transition between one state and another.

**SK:** *Reentry is a liminal time. Quiet, reflective time can be very difficult to find in our busy world. You may have a great opportunity right now to learn these new skills!*

## WHEN IS A GOOD TIME TO CREATE CHANGE?

There is no time like right now. In fact, the only place that change is possible is NOW.

### A moment in time.



**Liminal thinking is a set of skills that anyone can learn.**

You do not need any formal authority, budget, or official sanction to practice liminal thinking. If you can learn 6 principles and 9 practices, you will be able to minimize reality distortion, improve understanding, and open up possibilities. Liminal thinking is a kind of mindfulness that enables you to create positive change.

#### Three Simple Precepts

1. Get in touch with your ignorance.
2. Seek understanding.
3. Do something different.

*"The only constant is change."*

- Heraclitus 500 BCE

## Six Principles

These six principles constitute a theory of beliefs: how they come into being, why they are necessary, how they are reinforced over time, and why people cling to their beliefs, even when they are incomplete, obsolete, or invalid. They are beliefs about beliefs.

**1. Beliefs are models.** Beliefs seem like perfect representations of the world, but in fact they are imperfect models for navigating a complex, multidimensional, unknowable reality.

**2. Beliefs are created.** Beliefs are constructed hierarchically, using theories and judgments, which are based on selected facts and personal, subjective experiences.

**3. Beliefs create a shared world.** Beliefs are the psychological material we use to co-create a shared world, so we can live, work, and do things together. Changing a shared world requires changing its underlying beliefs.

**4. Beliefs create blind spots.** Beliefs are tools for thinking and provide rules for action, but they can also create artificial constraints that blind you to valid possibilities.

**5. Beliefs defend themselves.** Beliefs are unconsciously defended by a bubble of self-sealing logic, which maintains them even when they are invalid, to protect personal identity and self-worth.

**6. Beliefs are tied to identity.** Governing beliefs, which form the basis for other beliefs, are the most difficult to change, because they are tied to personal identity and feelings of self-worth. You can't change your governing beliefs without changing yourself.

## Nine Practices

Nine practices to help you minimize reality distortion, envision possibilities, and create positive change. These practices are based on **six principles**, which constitute a theory of beliefs.

**1. Assume that you are not objective.** If you're part of the system you want to change, you're part of the problem.

**2. Empty your cup.** You can't learn new things without letting go of old things. Stop, look, and listen. Suspend judgment. What's going on?

**3. Create safe space.** If you don't understand the underlying need, nothing else matters. People will not share their innermost needs unless they feel safe, respected, and accepted for who they are.

**4. Triangulate and validate.** Look at situations from as many points of view as possible. Consider the possibility that seemingly different or contradictory beliefs may be valid. If something doesn't make sense to you, then you're missing something.

**5. Ask questions, make connections.** Try to understand people's hopes, dreams and frustrations. Explore the social system and make connections to create new opportunities.

**6. Disrupt routines.** Many beliefs are embedded in habitual routines that run on autopilot. If a routine is a problem, disrupt the routine to create new possibilities.

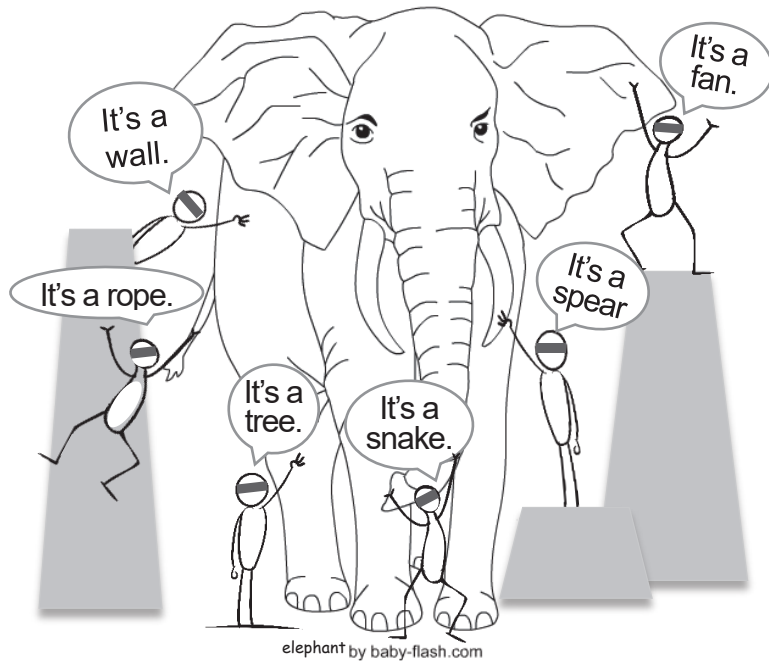
**7. Act as-if in the here-and-now.** You can test beliefs even if you don't believe they are true. All you need to do is act as if they were true and see what happens. If you find something that works, do more of it.

**8. Make sense with stories.** If you give people facts without a story, they will explain it within their existing belief system. The best way to promote a new or different belief is not with facts, but with a story.

**9. Evolve yourself.** If you can be open about how change affects you personally, you have a better chance of achieving your aims. To change the world, you must be willing to change yourself.

## A parable about beliefs (SK)

### The elephant and the blindfolded people.



There is an old story about blind men encountering an elephant which I'm modernizing a bit here. In my story we have a group of people who, amazingly, have never learned about elephants. They put on blindfolds and odor-eliminating masks. They each stand in a different spot in the room and then they are asked: **"What is an elephant like?"** Each one says something different: "It is like a spear!" says the one touching the tusk. "It is like a tree!" says the person with their arms around its leg. "No, it is like a fan." says the third, flapping the ear. The fourth person says "It is like a rope. I can swing from it!" The fifth person disagrees. "No, it's not like a rope, it is more like a large snake." Finally, the last person says: "Why are all of you saying those things? It is a huge flat surface. It is a wall!" Then a passionate debate ensues.

**SK:** Long before we learned to ask "why?," we were building our beliefs and our emotions through our experiences, and our senses. We've continued to construct our beliefs and our emotions throughout our lifetime, mostly without our awareness. Our feelings about our version of reality are so strong that we often believe that our truth is the truth.



*We are like the blindfolded people. We can speak our truth, but when we're with others, we might hear competing and conflicting truths! This happens everywhere in society, all the time. No two people see a tree the same way. And when a tree is not present, and people talk about the idea of a tree, the difference between their perspectives increases greatly.*

*Knowing that we see trees differently is easy to understand, but when we talk about deep beliefs that we have about ourselves as persons in the world, the conversation gets tough.*

### LIMINAL THINKING REQUIRES COURAGE.

Governing beliefs form the foundation of your (version of) reality. They generate feelings of self-worth, group identity, and social stability. They give order and meaning to life. When you feel that your governing beliefs are threatened, it's like you yourself, are being threatened.

The deeper you go, the scarier it gets, but at the same time, the greater the potential for change. When your beliefs are being threatened and your instinct says "defend the belief," you need to go toward that fear if you want to open the door to lasting change.

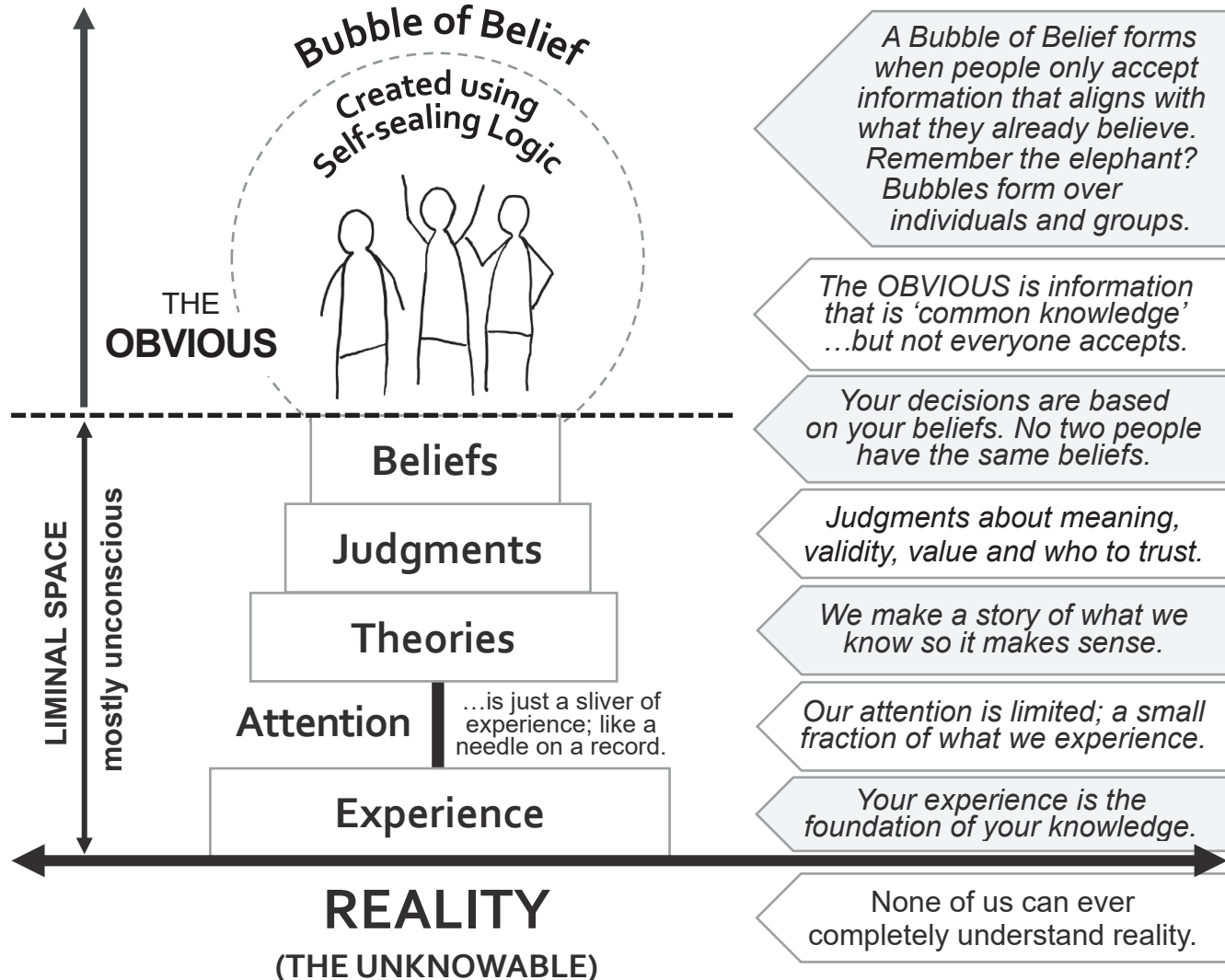
A truly significant change to your world will almost always require some kind of corresponding change to yourself.

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

- James Baldwin

# Pyramid of Belief

**SK:** We construct our beliefs layer by layer, over time, based on our experience of reality. We experience just a tiny slice of reality – pictured below - and what we pay attention to is just a tiny slice of that. From that limited amount of information we create theories, judgments and, finally, our beliefs. To shed limiting beliefs, modify old beliefs, or create new beliefs, we could expand our experience (try new things!), move our needle of attention, and/or learn about other people's beliefs.



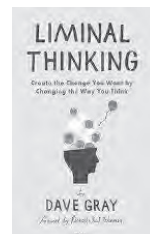
**Liminal thinking is a lot of work! Why would anyone do these uncomfortable things?** Because it matters. It matters because YOU matter. You owe it to yourself to be a whole, self-actualized person. It matters because the people who are close to you matter. They deserve to be understood, even when they disagree.

**SK:** And our future together matters. Building relationships, community, our nation and our world requires working through disagreements. Liminal thinking will help you, and it can help all of us.

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."  
- Albert Einstein



To learn more from the small and mighty book **LIMINAL THINKING: Create the change you want by changing the way you think,** ask for it in the library, or the free books suppliers, or purchase your copy from your usual bookstore.



## PHILOSOPHY:



# (to) JUDGE v.

OED: To form an opinion or conclusion



"Nice job!"

"That's a great haircut."

"You're amazing!"

We love to hear comments like this, and all of these statements are judgments.

One of the funny things about the word 'judge' is that it is almost always judged unfairly. One look through internet search pages – using a wide variety of search words – provided fewer than 5% of the results to the word 'judge' in a positive light (and then only when I used 'good' in the search; most of *those* results were from law firms and business websites!).

Judging well, so that we make good decisions, is one of the most valuable and important functions our brains can perform. But where can we learn to discern?

When we judge, we designate value. We determine if a thing is 'good' or 'bad', 'heavy' or 'light', 'beautiful' or 'ugly', etc. Judgements are relative to a belief system. To improve our ability to judge, we must expand our experience, and also our knowledge of ourselves and humanity.

We must judge when food is too hot to give to a child. We must judge if we have enough fuel to reach our destination. We judge our culpability in an unfortunate event. (Often generously. Flip this page to find out about the *Fundamental Attribution Error*)

Like many popular words and phrases, the word 'judge' is often referred to negatively, and is based on a fear or a projection of our own beliefs.

By reflecting on the word, we can open our minds and hearts to it's full potential, confront and de-escalate uncomfortable situations, and enlarge our feelings of humanity. We can understand that values, and the judgements that are made because of them, are personal; and that the judgments of others are no threat to our own.

Through understanding, we can own our judgments, and offer generosity when we hope that others, too, will judge us kindly.

Job interviews are all about judgments; an applicant must gather enough information to determine if the job that is available is one that will be satisfying, while the employer must also judge if the applicant will be a good match for the job and the team.

We must judge for safety. We must judge for nutrition content, carcinogenic (cancer-causing) content, and alcohol content. We must learn to say 'no'...which is a judgment about our limitations. We can be understanding and forgiving, which may be what we will want from others, too.

We can decide how we wish to judge, and see an opportunity to educate others when we know we are being judged. We have a lot of power!

Things we judge: FAIR \* GOOD \* BEST \* SAFE \* ENOUGH \* IMPORTANT \* VALUE \* RIGHT

**BELIEFS, MORALITY, VALUES AND JUDGMENT**  
They determine our choices and, hence, our possibilities!

*"Judge so that you can make the best decisions for yourself; some choices are better than others."*  
- Sheila Baranoski

*"Good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment."* - Anonymous

Examples of judging in action:

**Decide:** Should I articulate my boundary about this? If so, should I be gentle, forceful, or generous?

**Discern:** Is this partial story really just fake news? Does red dye #40 make me hyperactive?

**Determine:** Do I have enough time? Do I have enough energy / fuel to go the distance?

**Reflect...and double-check:**

When I think someone is judging me negatively, I can I stop to ask myself:

Is it ME who is judging THEM? Am I projecting my fears? Am I reading too much into the situation?

What behavior do they demonstrate that causes me to believe they are judging me negatively?

Could it be that I'm just hungry, hot (or cold), anxious about something else, or in a bad mood?

Is this just the **Fundamental Attribution Error** rearing its ugly head again?

<p><b>FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR:</b> (a common bias!)</p> <p>When we judge others differently than we judge ourselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- When 'good' things happen to us, we tend to believe we earned them or deserve them. When good things happen to others, we tend to believe they were lucky.</li><li>- When unfortunate things happen to us, we tend to blame others for our misfortune, or believe we had bad luck. But when bad things happen to others, we often attribute their difficulties to their character, as if they are careless or foolish.</li></ul>		<p>Who did it?</p> <table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>myself</td><td>someone else</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">Outcome</td><td>positive</td><td>personality</td><td>circumstances</td></tr><tr><td>negative</td><td>circumstances</td><td>personality</td></tr></table>			myself	someone else	Outcome	positive	personality	circumstances	negative	circumstances	personality
	myself	someone else											
Outcome	positive	personality	circumstances										
	negative	circumstances	personality										

**BIASES ARE SNAP-JUDGMENTS BASED ON OUR HISTORY.**

We can decide HOW to judge. We can be generous in spirit to others, as we often are for ourselves. Through our actions, we help the people that we love make better judgments.

Considerations to improve your judgment:

- Be aware of your biases and filters. Listen carefully and question assumptions, including yours.
- Question the quality of the information you receive. Consider topics through a variety of sources for a more complete picture. Get out of the 'confirmation bias' echo chamber.
- Reflect on your history with the topic: what you've learned through your life, and who the sources were that informed you. Were they biased? Is it time to let go of the filter of false beliefs? Look for ways to expand your experience!
- Consider what you feel and what you believe. Reflect on your values; your values drive decisions! Seek the input of a third party when you can.
- Can you see more options; esp. options that may not be offered?
- Can you consider others in a generous light: as people who are striving, and who are mostly good?
- Can you see how your behavior or comments could be misunderstood?
- Can you be flexible enough to change your perspective?

**"Replace judgment with curiosity."**  
- Lynn Nottage

Finally, here are a few helpful questions to ask before making an important judgement:

1. Do I tend to act on impulse and later regret it? If so, how can I slow down and weigh my options?
2. Is this unlike anything I've seen before? If so, what should I do to learn more before I decide?
3. Are the stakes high? If so, should I do more research and gather more perspectives from others?

**When we improve our judging abilities, we can help others improve theirs, too!**

*All Fair Shake documents are written solely as 'primers' or jump-off points to stir curiosity and desire for further investigation.*

# VALUES

This list of values has been pulled together over many years. Having a list can help us learn more about the things we value and the values we hold. What values are missing from the list? Please let me know and I'll add them!

## A few TYPES of Values:

Your Intrinsic Value

Value of Every Person

Value of Relationships

Value of Groups

Value of Things

Moral Values

Value of Experience

## A List of Values (264 so far!)

Acceptance	Certainty	Determination	Friendship
Accomplishment	Challenge	Development	Fearlessness
Accountability	Charity	Devotion	Feelings
Accuracy	Cleanliness	Dignity	Ferociousness
Achievement	Clear	Discipline	Fidelity
Adaptability	Cleverness	Discovery	Fitness
Adventure	Comfort	Drive	Flexibility
Agency	Commitment		Focus
Alertness	Common Sense	Economy	Foresight
Altruism	Communication	Effectiveness	Forgiveness
Ambition	Community	Efficiency	Fortitude
Amusement	Compassion	Empathy	Freedom
Anti-fragile	Competence	Empowering	Friendship
Assertiveness	Concentration	Endurance	Fun
Attentiveness	Confidence	Enjoyment	
Awareness	Connection	Enthusiasm	Generosity
Authenticity	Consciousness	Energy	Gentleness
Authority	Conservatism	Enjoyment	Giving
Autonomy	Consistency	Enthusiasm	Goodness
	Contentment	Equality	Grace
Balance	Contribute	Equanimity	Greatness
Beauty	Control	Essentialism	Gratitude
Boldness	Conviction	Ethical	Grounded
Bravery	Cooperative	Excellence	Growth
Breath	Courage	Experience	Generosity
Brilliance	Courtesy	Exploration	Giving
	Creativity	Expressiveness	Goodness
	Credibility		
Calm	Curiosity	Fairness	Happiness
Candor	Daunted	Faith	Hard Work
Capability	Decisive	Fame	Harmony
Care	Dedication	Family	Health
Carefulness	Dependable	Fidelity	Honesty
Centered			

Honor	Objectivity	Results-oriented	Talent
Hope	Openness	Reverence	Teamwork
Humility	Optimism	Rigor	Temperance
Humor	Order	Risk	Tenacity
Imagination	Organization		Thoroughness
Improvement	Originality	Satisfaction	Tranquility
Independence	Overwhelmed	Security	Transparency
Individuality		Self-	Thoughtful
Influence	Passion	Determination	Timeliness
Innovation	Patience	Selflessness	Tolerance
Inquisitiveness	Peace	Self-Reliance	Toughness
Insightful	Performance	Self-Respect	Tradition
Inquisitive	Persistence	Self-Worth	Trust
Inspiring	Personhood	Sensitivity	Trustworthiness
Integrity	Playfulness	Serenity	Truth
Intelligence	Pleasure	Service	
Intensity	Popularity	Sharing	Ubuntu
Intuitive	Potential	Significance	Understanding
Intimacy	Poise	Silence	Uniqueness
	Power	Simplicity	Unity
Joy	Present	Sincerity	
Justice	Productivity	Skill	Valor
	Professionalism	Skillfulness	Values
Kindness	Prosperity	Smart	Victory
Knowledge	Purpose	Solitude	Vigor
		Spirit	Vision
Leadership	Quality	Spirituality	Vitality
Learning		Spontaneity	
Liberty	Realistic	Stability	Wealth
Logic	Reason	Stamina	Welcoming
Love	Recognition	Status	Winning
Loyalty	Recreation	Stewardship	Wisdom
	Reflective	Strength	Wonder
Mastery	Reputation	Structure	
Maturity	Resilience	Success	
Meaning	Respect	Support	
Moderation	Responsibility	Surprise	
Motivation	Responsivity	Sustainability	
Multitasking	Restraint		

Newly added from readers sharing their thoughts: Positivity, Inclusion, Networking, and Quantity

# Spot the Bias:

## Fundamental Attribution Error

One of the most common biases!

The fundamental attribution error (FAE) is a cognitive bias which frames positive outcomes and negative outcomes differently, depending on the actor.

It refers to our tendency to attribute our success to our character and ability, and our failures to fate, other people, technical problems - in other words, to blame something or someone else. Not only is this not true, but on the other side of the error, we perceive the problems that others face as flaws in their character, and their success as luck.

For example, if I cut someone off in traffic, it's because I was in a rush or I happened not to see the other driver. But if *someone else* cuts me off in traffic, it's because they're a bad or selfish driver.

The same goes for positives: if I do well on an exam, it's because I studied hard and earned it. But if someone else does well, maybe the exam was too easy or they happened to guess well.

Of course, as the name implies, this is an *error*, so it's something we have to be aware of in order to fix it. Since the natural tendency is to be biased, it might be best to lean in the opposite direction. If someone else does something good, we can consider that it's more likely that it is the result of their choices. And if they do something bad, we can keep in mind that it's more likely to be due to circumstances.

Similarly, if you do something well, remember how much good fortune is involved; and if you do something bad or poorly, it may be a signal to look inward, to be more conscientious or careful next time.

The FAE is a foundational bias for many Americans through the lens of *meritocracy* or the belief that "we can make it if we try" or, in other words, we will "get what we deserve". The thinking error is so common, that it is "at the root of any misunderstanding in which human motivations have the potential to be misinterpreted", according to Patrick Healy.

The fundamental attribution error, like confirmation bias and overconfidence, affects every day behavior.

Cognitive biases shape how an individual interacts with the world around them. Understanding these biases and becoming aware of the ways that they influence your behavior – as well as the thinking and behavior of others - is vital to your self-efficacy and to creating success. It is equally important to understand biases to work with others!

Can you see this bias in yourself? In others? On TV, in newspapers (esp. by political parties) or in books?

BIASES and ASSUMPTIONS: our lazy brain relies on assumptions and limited information to make judgments.

We will never overcome our biases or our faulty logic, but if we pay attention to them, we will get much better at seeing them and stopping them....and creating better situations and opportunities by using our wisdom!

## SO WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

We can build an HONEST BIAS, where we check, repeatedly, to check our assumptions. We can also ask for feedback from people we can trust to help us see ourselves better than we could alone.



The table (below) and much of the writing is by alex petralia

Who did it?

		myself	someone else
Outcome	positive	personality	circumstances
	negative	circumstances	personality

# MORAL GUIDES



Although, one of our most fundamental values is freedom, it is a moral that we never discuss. Instead of discussions, arguments or debates, nations, cultures, religions, families, individuals and even the media, turn to stories to pass on moral "guides". We have the "E Pluribus Unum" story, the "rugged individual" story, the "good neighbor" story, the "melting pot" story, and many more.

Our lack of moral courage is affecting us greatly, which I address on another page, so I'm excited to explore morals – an important part of philosophy, both culturally and individually - here in the Fair Shake Free School.

Let's begin our study with those who were here before everyone else: the native peoples. Miigwetch (thank you) for sharing this timeless wisdom!

A GIFT FROM THE ANISHINAABEG

## Seven Grandfathers (and Seven Rascals) Principles for Living Well

Many people native to the Great Lakes region understand this teaching as what is needed for a community to survive. According to the authors at the Ojibwe.net website "Each Grandfather Teaching is a gift the Anishinaabeg carry, a potential tool for living a good life. Our understanding is that as we use these gifts our experience of living improves. Using these gifts in our lives is an ongoing challenge for each of us, requiring attention, discipline and perseverance."

The 7 Grandfathers are *Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Humility, Generosity*  
The 7 Rascals are *Greed, Revenge, Inferiority, Negative Attitude, Fear, Jealousy, Resentment*

**Nibwaakawin** - Wisdom. Sound judgment, ability to teach others what you have learned or experienced. Use good sense and form a good attitude and course of action.

**Zaagidiwin** - Love. Strong affection for another forming out of kinship or personal ties; attachments based on devotion, admiration, tenderness, unselfish loyalty, concern. Feel and give absolute kindness for all things around you.

**Minwaadendamowin** - Respect. Showing regards for the value of persons or things through courteous consideration and appreciation, to be upright with a good giving heart. Don't hurt anything or anyone on the outside or the inside.

**Aakodewewin** - Bravery. The personal inner strength to face difficulties, obstacles and challenges. Have courage and a strong heart to make positive choices.

**Debwewin** - Truth. Sincerity in action, character, and utterance. Learn truth, honor truth, know truth, see truth.

**Dibaadendiziwin** - Humility. A measurement or reflection of your own self-worth. To be humble, to be human.

**Miigwe'aadiziwin** - Generosity. Sharing your ability, time, and extra or non-necessary things. Standing together / Responding to needs

## THE STORY OF THE TWO WOLVES

A young girl told her grandmother that she was having a hard time. She said, "*I can feel a fight going on inside me, Grandmother. It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – she is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.*"

Her grandmother listened, and nodded gently.

*"The other wolf is good", the young girl continued. "She is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith."*

Her grandmother looked deeply into her eyes and said, "*I know it's hard, granddaughter. The same fight is going on inside me....and in every other person, too.*"

*The young girl reflected on what her grandmother said. Then she looked up and asked, "Grandmother, which wolf will win?"*

Her grandmother replied softly, "*The one you feed.*"

# BASIC HUMAN NEEDS



*It is clear that all humans have basic needs. What is not clear is exactly what they are.*

We can agree, for instance, that our physiological needs of water, food, air, and a reasonably comfortable environment are crucial to our survival. There is also broad agreement for the idea that humans have psychological needs for autonomy (to feel we have authority of ourselves) and belonging (to feel we are a part of a group) along with a need for physical and psychological safety. Beyond this, there are many different perspectives about what we need.

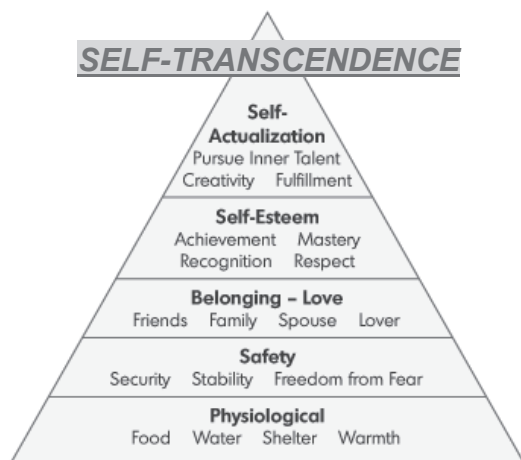
## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Most of us recognize this triangle. Abraham Maslow has been attributed with this triangle because his "Hierarchy of Basic Needs" is contained within it...as if the needs were stages of development where we reach a higher level after completing the one below it. This 'managerial approach' was not created by Maslow, however! It was created by business management writers in the late 50's specifically to look like a mountain that we must climb.



The idea for the triangle came from his 1943 paper "*A Theory of Human Motivation*" where he described our psychological and sociological needs in addition to physical needs as a "Hierarchy of Needs".

In his paper, however, Maslow clarifies that one need not be met before addressing others. He states: "There are some people in whom, for instance, self-esteem seems to be more important than love." He later adds "In actual fact, most members of our society who are normal, are partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time." He continues: "For instance, if I may assign arbitrary figures for the sake of illustration, it is as if the average citizen is satisfied perhaps 85 per cent in his physiological needs, 70 per cent in his safety needs, 50 per cent in his love needs, 40 per cent in his self-esteem needs, and 10 per cent in his self-actualization needs."



Why did we not learn this when we learned about the pyramid he never made?? This is a prime example of why school today is not providing the education we so badly need. Thankfully there is a great deal of information in books and on the internet so that we can dig for the real story.

## Kaufman Rocks the Boat!

Scott Barry Kaufman has studied Maslow intensely and discovered that later in life Maslow realized that we also have a deep need for transcendence.

He shares insights like "Maslow defines self-actualization as becoming everything that you're capable of becoming and that you're most uniquely capable of becoming" and "We feel much more fulfilled when we actualize our potentialities, our deepest

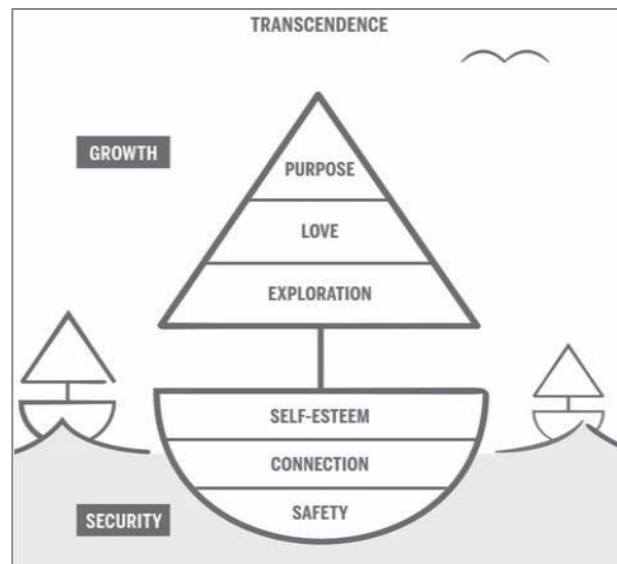
potentials, the things that make us unique, the things that we can uniquely contribute to the world in ways that have a positive impact on the world." He believes that self-actualization, to Maslow, asked the question "What do you most uniquely have to contribute to this world?"

Kaufman also tells us that in "the latter years of Abraham Maslow's life, he was working on a theory of transcendence, arguing that our highest motivation in life wasn't self-actualization but it was actually transcendence. What is good at the highest level of human development, the highest level of human motivation transcendence? What is good for oneself is automatically good for others."

Kaufman revised Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" and traded the pyramid for boat. He tells us:

*"I argue that a better metaphor than a static pyramid is a sailboat. With a sailboat we absolutely need to have a boat that is safe and secure or else we don't go anywhere. If you have a huge leak in your boat you're not going very far in life or in the ocean. But being safe and secure and having a secure boat is not enough or else we won't go anywhere. What we need to do is we need to open up our sail, as well. And when we feel very comfortable and safe enough to open up our sail, we can really move through the ocean in the direction that we want, usually it's in a purposeful direction. We have some sort of meaning or purpose in life.*

*But as we're moving, we're still moving in the vast unknown of the sea and the truth is we're all in this together. We're all in our own boats going in our own direction but we're all in the vast and unknown sea. Especially in this time that we're living in right now. We all see quite clearly how choppy these waters are. But it's important that we recognize that while safety is important in these unknown times, we must not neglect our higher possibilities in life. They're just as important."*



I appreciate Kaufman's boat and sea metaphor and his expanded perspective of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. You can find out much more about his insights in his book called *TRANSCEND: The New Science of Self-Actualization*.

Metaphors are great for giving ourselves our mental models, or frames of thinking, so we can more easily access them since there is so much information constantly swirling around us, vying for our attention. Kaufman's idea that the combination of the boat, and the water and even the air suggests that we affect one another. This is critical for development as individuals, keeping in mind that we develop together, since we constantly impact one another.

## Adding Ubuntu to Our Basic Needs

UBUNTU means: I am who I am because of who we all are.  
(for more about ubuntu, see page xx)

According to the philosophy of ubuntu, we are not fully human while we are thinking of ourselves as solitary individuals. We are, in fact, 'persons-through-other-persons'. The models above describe a solitary individual on their own unique journey. "Ubuntu" reminds us that we are always connected, always impacting one another, always on one shared journey together. Transcendence is important to understand that to improve my life I must do what I can to improve the lives of others, and ubuntu clarifies that the idea of 'others' is an illusion – an incomplete mental model. We are not only interdependent here and now, but that we continue to carry information and behaviors - and much more - from those who have gone before us and passed on their ideas of humanity and wisdom. To me, the ubuntu need differs from the need for belonging because in "belonging" we recognize ourselves as separate from others while the ubuntu recognizes that we are an inseparable part of others.

We constantly struggle with our needs. Our need for belonging and our need for autonomy and agency are often at odds, pulling us in different directions. Sometimes the most important thing for us to do is to reflect and weigh which one will be the better route: Should we take our own path and think and act for ourselves? Or suppress our desire to do something different this time and, instead, to go with the group? The answer is: 'it depends!' We decide, we act, we deal with the consequences, we reflect, we learn and we grow.

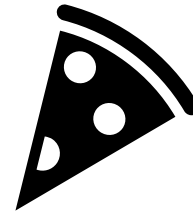
The question we must ask ourselves each day is:

## HOW AM I ADDRESSING MY BASIC NEEDS?

### Our need for UBUNTU envelopes us.



# INFLUENCE



Mmmmm...I can almost taste the steamy, hot pizza slice on the television screen. I know that what I see is just an image, but my mouth still waters. My mind and body have been influenced by advertising which, hopefully, will be short-lived.

Throughout our lives, and often unconsciously, we are influenced. Events, experiences and ideas can change our life without our permission (especially throughout our early years!). As we get older, we start to learn that we have some power to decide how things influence us. We still mostly react to what comes at us from friends, family, co-workers, other people in the world, movies, advertising, television, social media, weather, animals, history, our projections (including fear, expectations and overconfidence) and much, much more...but by our teens we learn that we can call BS on something we don't think is right.

We influence others, too, of course: we smile, we say a kind word or a cruel word, we try to convince others to see our point of view.

Popular culture encourages us to believe we are easily influenced. We are pummeled with TV advertisements telling us to 'ask our doctor' to give us drugs...but then the newscasters tell us that the Sackler family is responsible for our addiction. What no one says is that we can say 'no' to the whole game. You won't see an ad or a news story telling you that you don't need to buy one product or service to share your unique and awesome power and gifts with the world!

We are persuadable, certainly, but we can push back on at least some of what we don't like. We can be stubborn and immovable when we feel it's important. We can learn to include our intentions in our response, reducing the likelihood that these powerful attempts to influence us will distract us from our goals.

In our early years we were not able to choose the impact of the influencers. We were shaped by them. In our early teens, we were told that our choices were limited and we should just comply with the status quo: to believe authorities and experts know what's best.

But we're fickle. We may hear, we may comply, and play the part, but many of us today find ways to be our authentic selves. Sometimes we are accepted for being different, but often we are encouraged to fit into a group. Our boundaries are useful here; we can be open to ideas – even when they are delivered by a powerful persuader, but then we can stop...and think! We can 'hear them' and then – if we wish – we can defend our perspective, our ideas, our choices.

Influencers only have the power that we give them.

*"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*

*"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." - Eleanor Roosevelt*

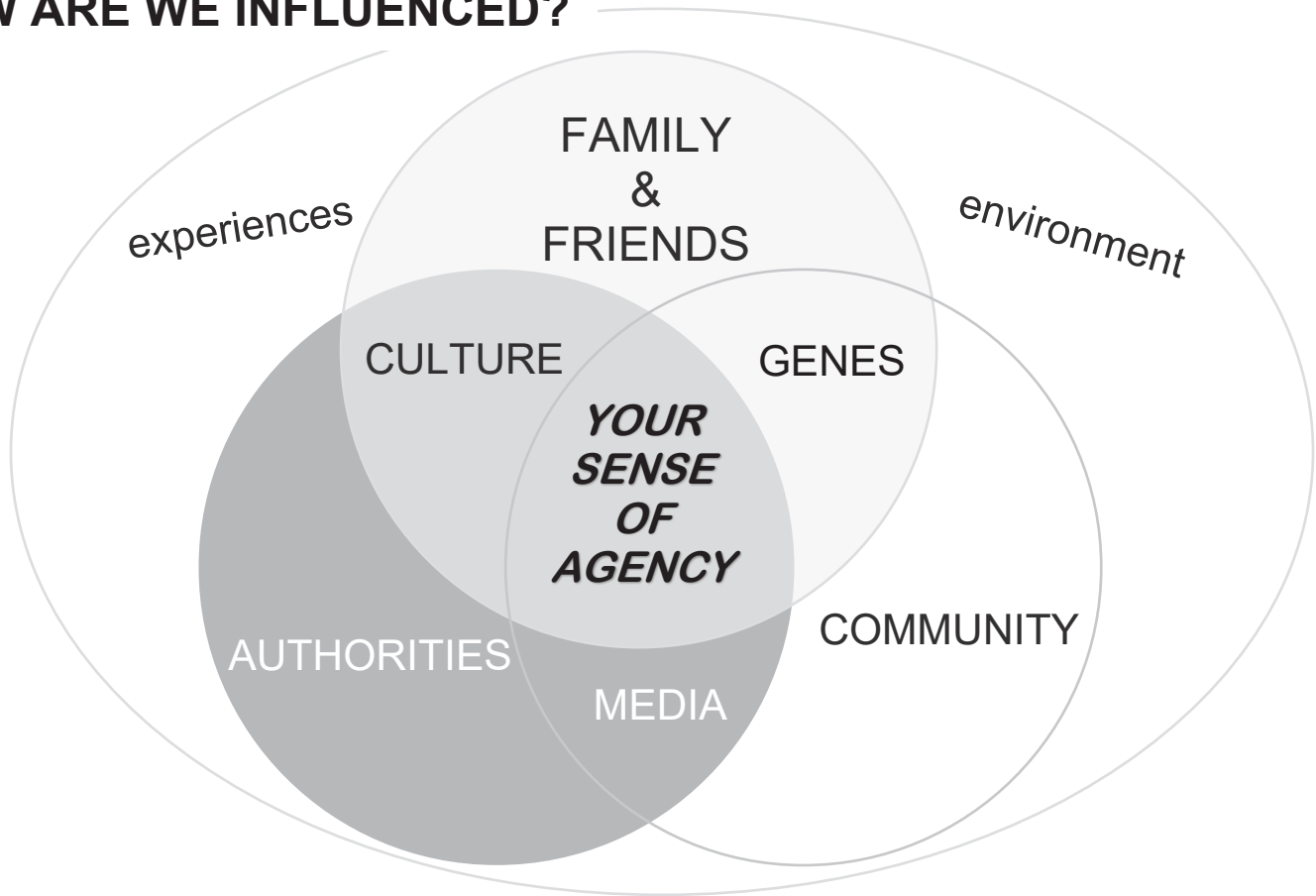
## Shortcuts to Remember Cialdini's Principles of Influence (formerly 6, now 7!)

1. **Reciprocity:** We feel obligated to return favors. For instance, if a sales person gives us something, we are more likely to say 'yes' to them.
2. **Scarcity:** We value things more if they seem scarce: this includes objects, information, food and opportunities.
3. **Authority:** We believe what experts say (the experts that we believe are 'trustworthy and credible').
4. **Commitment & Consistency:** People want to be consistent with what we've said or done in public.  
We are most likely to do what is consistent with what we've done in the past.
5. **Social Proof:** We trust the power of the crowd and like to be associated with popular things.
6. **Likability:** We like those who are like us. We say yes to people that we like by how they act or how they look.  
We are also more likely to say yes to people when we have things in common with them, receive complements from them, or share a cooperative endeavor with them.
7. **Unity:** What people have in common. "Inclusion fitness." Increased oneness and shared aspects of identity which reduces 'otherness' (Sue: one way to interpret our ubuntu nature ~ :)

Based on Robert Cialdini's *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion - New and Expanded* (2021)

(For more information on this topic, see *Resisting Influence* on page 103.)

# HOW ARE WE INFLUENCED?



## YOUR SENSE OF AGENCY and FEELINGS OF SELF-EFFICACY

Your belief in your ability to control your destiny. This includes creating and maintaining clear boundaries.

**FAMILY & FRIENDS:** Love and acceptance are influential. Alongside these important feelings, we may also feel a great deal of pressure to conform to the group, including traditions.

**CULTURE:** What society accepts as 'normal', status, roles: examples can include parenthood, age, physical abilities, gender, race, religion, character, employment, etc., and stuff: money, bling, cars, clothes, et al.

**GENES:** Clearly they influence us, but how much? And can we still write a new script for ourselves?

**AUTHORITIES:** Can include family and friends, teachers/classroom settings, employers, legal agents (lawyers, police, judges, elected and appointed politicians), and – recently – entertainers can fall into this category!

**MEDIA:** All forms of video: movies, news, commercials, games, All forms of audio: music, podcasts, advertising, talk radio, All forms of print: newspapers, magazines, books, ads and All social media.

**COMMUNITY:** Norms, language, 'word of mouth' information sharing, power of the group.

## Dr. Zimbardo's Hints About Resisting Unwanted Influences On You

1. Let go of illusions of 'personal invulnerability'.
2. Engage in life *and* think critically!
3. Be aware of Cialdini's principles. Look for attempts to persuade you.
4. Be okay with saying: 'I was wrong' and 'I've changed my mind.'

5. Separate your ego from your actions; laugh at yourself each day.
6. Be aware of wanting simple answers or short cuts!
7. Develop and learn to understand the vague feelings called intuition.
8. Play devil's advocate!

9. Think hard.
10. Reflect on when, where and why we have rules.
11. Insist on a second opinion
12. Consider possible situational forces before judging behavior as 'character'.

# What Makes You YOU?

## Exploring IDENTITY

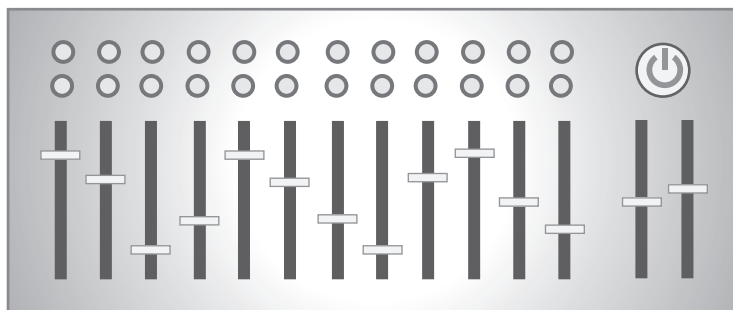
Who we are - at any given time - is a compilation of our experiences, our interests and intentions, our environment, our body, our mind (whatever that is) and our spirit (whatever that is). Mind and spirit are very important to us. They are at the foundation of our values and beliefs, and drive our desires, fears, goals and relationships, yet they cannot be located or clearly defined. That is a good thing. They defy empirical observation and they can't be quantified. This is our 'special sauce' of unlimited potential!

*"I am what time, circumstance, history, have made of me, certainly, but I am, also, much more than that. So are we all." - James Baldwin*

In a very real way, we became who we are today because of our relationships. Civilization is made up of people...including those who have been here and left their mark, and those with whom we currently share this planet. Other people have guided our lives and our development since we were born and other people continue to shape us today. We learned how to be a person from other people. We are who we are today because of who we all are (people in our family, our community, our region, our nation and our world). This is the foundation of the philosophy of UBUNTU. (We explore this philosophy more deeply in this booklet, but for now let's just explore YOU.)

I created a MIXING BOARD METAPHOR for this exploration so we can see the 'hard-wired' aspects of ourselves that are so frequently cited (and feel inauthentically limiting) and the 'plastic' aspects... which are the areas where we are always changing.

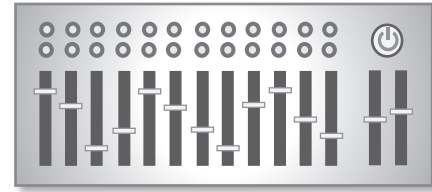
Mixing Your Unique Identity!



Although it may sometimes feel like other people are shaping us, we are at the wheel. Our bodies may be directed, controlled, or limited in one way or another, but our minds are free to choose how we will respond. We can surmount limitations by gently questioning some of the beliefs that were given to us when we were too young to question them. We can learn, and develop new skills, and do things that our family, friends, culture or the status quo may not do. The status quo wants us to fit into roles. But times are changing; the roles may no longer apply.

***"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."***  
*- Victor Frankl*

**WHAT ARE WE MIXING?** We are all unique, yet we share basic human needs (the 'hardwiring' we hear so much about). For instance, we all need to feel that we can do things by ourselves (Autonomy), but how we address that need is different for each of us. Look at the list of needs and wants below as if they are the sliders on a mixing board. You may be in one position today, and another in a year. We are changing all the time, and even in different contexts (at home, work, hockey practice, and when we take a personality test). Like sound through a mixing board, our needs and wants are steady, but where we open the gates or constrict the flow, the flow will change as we change. The sliders below are set to me, Sue Kastensen, on 7.21.21. Where will you move them to reflect who you are today?

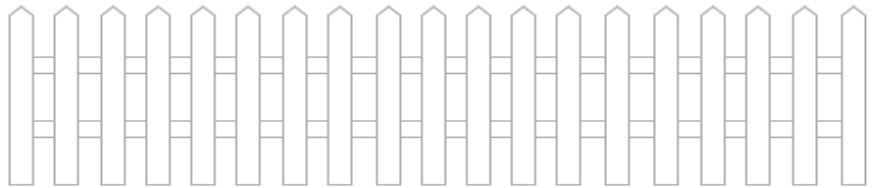


1. I prefer to be alone. I prefer to be with people.
2. I keep things close to take care of them. I share almost everything.
3. I'm on time, and often early. I'm not strict about schedules.
4. I prefer questions. I prefer answers.
5. I explore other cultures and values. I prefer traditional customs and values.
6. I like to plan for the future. I like to think about the past.
7. I prefer to let others make decisions. I like to make decisions.
8. I enjoy sharing my stories and perspective. I enjoy listening to stories and perspectives.
9. I am very trusting. I am very skeptical.
10. I like to think about stuff. I like to do stuff.
11. I am very curious. Almost nosy. I learn what I need to learn.
12. I learn through stories and experience. I learn through research and facts.

Go ahead, put pencil marks on this chart today, in 6 months, and in 6 years, and see how you change. And add 1000 more sliders! Or as many as you think it takes to consider what makes you you. Add or subtract dimensions of your unique style: your character, personality, choices, beliefs and more.

Remember: we are all always changing – we never stop. We are in charge of our change.

# Boundaries



*I didn't set this boundary to offend you or to please you.*

*I set boundaries to manage the priorities and goals that I have set for my life.* - Unknown

*If I can't say "no", then my "yes" has no meaning.* – Peter Block

*Boundaries define us. They define what is me and what is not me.* – Dr. Henry Cloud

Good boundaries protect you; they protect and preserve your goals, your time, your health and your identity.

I explore this crucial topic here with the help of several guides, including The School of Life, Mark Manson and Dr. Henry Cloud, who have written careful and thoughtful articles that illuminate tricky aspects of boundary setting.

From The School of Life: *because most of us have not been educated in this byway of emotional maturity, (our) boundaries are either non-existent or else get thrown up in a jerky and destructive manner. It takes a little self-confidence and courage to be able to notice just how bad we may be at the art of boundary-laying. We may have spent a large chunk of our lives already in an essentially passive relationship to everyday infringements by people close to us. But we aren't a piece of helpless flotsam on the river of others' wishes; we have agency, direction and – as it were – a rudder. The price to pay for affection isn't compliance. We can prove loveable and worthy of respect and at the same time, utter a warm-sounding and definitive 'no'.*

Mark Manson reminds us: *taking responsibility for your own actions and not blaming others are two of the pillars in Nathaniel Branden's Six Pillars of Self Esteem. People with high self-esteem have strong personal boundaries. And practicing strong personal boundaries is one way to build self-esteem.*

Boundaries protect and preserve our time for thinking (or not thinking) and doing for ourselves. Time that we need to work toward our own unique goals, including meeting with new people, outside our usual circles!

We also need to create healthy boundaries around our learning, our growth and our change. Once we start to make changes in our lives, we will find that some people do not support our growth and will try to convince us to stop, or to once again do what we used to do when we did not have the knowledge we have now. They are afraid of change, but we can't let their fears hold us back. We can politely let them know we respect and understand them, but we are on our own path, and we hope they can respect and understand us, too.

Boundaries liberate you to continue to become your unique, authentic self! (We are always becoming...)

Let's clarify a few words and concepts before we continue:

**Autonomy** - Humans have a deep need for autonomy. From the Stanford Philosophy website, the definition of autonomy is: *to govern oneself, to be directed by considerations, desires, conditions, and characteristics that are not simply imposed externally upon one, but are part of what can somehow be considered one's authentic self.* (plato.stanford.edu) Our AGENCY is our ability to ACT on our decisions.

**Belonging** - Humans have deep need for belonging, too. To be a part of a group, a family, to feel we contribute; in other words: *the feeling of being accepted and approved of by a group or by society as a whole*, according to the American Psychological Association.

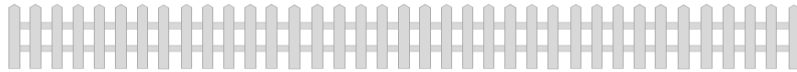
**Boundaries** - Our boundaries are shaped in the balance between our need for autonomy and our need for belonging. It is up to each one of us to determine where to draw our lines. We move the line as we learn new things, reflect on our values, make decisions and create goals. Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Thompson share this description: *Boundaries define us. They define what is me and what is not me. A boundary shows me where I end and someone else begins, leading me to a sense of ownership. Knowing what I am to own and take responsibility for gives me freedom.*

*Healthy personal boundaries (includes) taking responsibility for your own actions and emotions, while NOT taking responsibility for the actions or emotions of others.* - Mark Manson

*Laying down a boundary involves informing those around us – colleagues, parents, children, lovers – of a set of reasonable things that we require to feel respected and happy.* - The School of Life

*Your personal boundaries protect the inner core of your identity and your right to your choices.*  
- Gerard Manley Hopkins

## Boundaries and Our Health



Healthy boundaries increase our mental and physical health! Boundaries are determined by our core values. If you have not taken inventory of your values lately, there's no better time than now. It's good to check in on your values now and then because we're always changing, always becoming. As we change, our perspective changes and our values change. Reflecting on our changes, and then checking on our boundaries, helps us stay clear and consistent, even during our changes.

The Health Affiliates of Maine share this on their website: *Being consistent with implementing external and internal boundaries will increase your self-esteem, conserve emotional energy, and create more independence in your life. Once you've made your boundaries known in your life, it's natural for people to test them. We all have different values and boundaries and we all deserve to have them respected. What matters most to you? What are you unwilling to compromise on? Use meditation, prayer, journaling or time outside to allow for a space of self-awareness. These realizations may not all come immediately. That's okay—have patience and continue showing up for yourself.* ([www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com](http://www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com))

- + Look to your core values
- + Follow your instincts
- + Be assertive and consistent
- + Learn to say “no”
- + Communicate clearly

*"No" is a complete sentence.*  
- Annie Lamott

Build your 'courage' muscle. Brush up on the "delicate art of graceful objection"!

### Unhealthy Boundaries

"When we have unhealthy boundaries, we end up feeling like we have to hold everyone else's feelings but our own, and that leads to resentment, anger, anxiety, depression, and stress," says Babita Spinelli. People find it empowering to make decisions for themselves and experience their feelings rather than being told how they should feel. ([www.thehealthy.com](http://www.thehealthy.com))

**Boundary Maintenance:** Based on your core values, reassess your boundaries as you learn new things. Pay attention to your feelings and needs so you know when to protect and when to expand. How can we support others to explore their boundaries while maintaining our own?

From MindBodyGreen: "Boundaries are about honoring *your* needs, not about judging other people's wants. For example: I set boundaries around phone time because I get overstimulated by tech. This boundary is to decrease my stress level and not about avoiding others' phone calls."

Clearly communicate your boundaries! Unclear proclamations will ensure greater difficulty later on.

## Our Boundaries and Others



From Mark Manson: *A person with strong boundaries is not afraid of a temper tantrum, an argument or getting hurt. A person with weak boundaries is terrified of it. A person with strong boundaries understands that a healthy relationship is not controlling one another's emotions, but rather each partner supporting each other in their growth and path to self-actualization.*

Sometimes you have to make sacrifices for the people you love. If you make a sacrifice for someone you care about, it needs to be because you want to, not because you feel obligated or because you fear the consequences of not doing it. Acts of affection are only valid if they're performed without expectations. It can be difficult for people to recognize whether they're doing something out of perceived obligation or out of voluntary sacrifice. Here's the litmus test: ask yourself, "If I stopped doing this, how would the relationship change?"

People will tell you that they applaud your boundaries while they privately, or perhaps not-so-privately, hope that you will bend your boundaries in their favor. A little extra pressure, another chance to prove your devotion to them. But everyone is important. And it is important that you are able to recharge your own battery, so you can have good energy to share in the future, in an even more supportive way.

According to the School of Life: *three powerful anxieties bedevil the boundary-less person:*

- *If I speak up, they will hate me.*
- *If I speak up, I will become a target for retribution.*
- *If I speak up, I will feel like a horrible person.*

## A Note on Co-Dependency

Mark Manson writes: *In codependent relationships "victims" and "savers" both get kind of an emotional high off one another. The victim creates problems not because there are real problems, but because they believe it will cause them to feel loved. The saver doesn't save the victim because they actually care about the problem, but because they believe if they fix the problem, they will feel loved. In both cases, the intentions are self-sabotaging.*

*If the saver really wanted to save the victim, the saver would say, "Look, you're blaming others for your own problems. Deal with them yourself."*

*The victim, if they really loved the saver, would say, "Look, this is my problem. Don't fix it for me."*

*For the victim, the hardest thing to do is to hold themselves accountable for their feelings and their life. They've spent their whole existence believing they must blame others in order to feel any intimacy or love; letting that go is terrifying.*

*For the saver, the hardest thing to do is to stop fixing other people's problems and trying to force them to be happy and satisfied. They've spent their whole lives only feeling valued and loved when they were fixing a problem or providing a use to someone; letting go of this need is terrifying to them as well.*

*People who blame others for their own emotions and actions do so because they believe that if they put the responsibility on those around them, they'll receive the love they've always wanted and needed. If they constantly paint themselves as a victim, eventually someone will come save them.*

*People who take the blame for other people's emotions and actions are always looking to save someone. They believe that if they can "fix" their partner, then they will receive the love and appreciation they've always wanted.*

Co-dependency can take other forms as well:

We find it in the relationships where each party holds something the other wants, and they use it for manipulation: sex, money, children, access, etc.

And we also find it in relationships where one person is the authority (the parent, the controller), and the other is subservient, or the follower. We see this not only in personal relationships, but also in cultures.

Erich Fromm describes this in *Escape From Freedom*: *Is there not also, perhaps, besides an innate desire for freedom, an instinctive wish for submission? If there is not, how can we account for the attraction which submission to a leader has for so many today? Is submission always to an overt authority, or is there also submission to internalized...anonymous authorities like public opinion?*

## Prepare for Challenges



Not everyone will appreciate your boundaries. Some will even insist that they get to plow right inside your boundaries to 'should' on you. I've seen it all aspects of my life: casual, personal and business. I tend to believe people 'should' on women more than men, but that's just my perspective...because I'm a woman! After figuring out my own unique approach to life and work, I find it very hard to not to be offended when other people want to tell me how to live according to their world view. (I share an example of this in "Sue's Anger Story" within the Managing Anger document found in this publication): Anger may be evoked as a response to a perceived provocation when

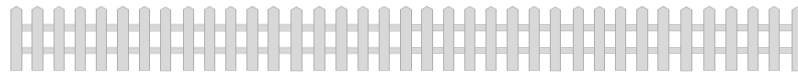
one's personal boundaries are violated; and anger may be utilized effectively by setting firm boundaries and avoiding unhealthy situations in the future. Power dynamics often add a complex level of difficulty to the situation.

**Problem:** When you show you are strong, capable, and operating with intent, people will want you to do even more for them, claiming they do not possess your abilities.

I know that my commitment to my boundaries demonstrates my dependability, tenacity and care so I get asked to manage things, run things, or follow up on things all the time. I'm grateful that others trust me. I get to help them build their own skills in those areas by politely saying 'no'. In asking me to do something, they say they cannot do that thing, so they want me to do it. I tell them "I had to learn to do it, too!" I am, first and foremost, an "Agent of Agency", so I must give them (back) the power they had hoped to give to me.

If you are thinking of starting your own business, clear, well-maintained boundaries is a must!

## We Are All Teachers



Teach others about healthy boundaries by enforcing yours. – Bryant McGill

We teach each other many things simply by doing them. We can teach our family and friends about boundaries. We can help them fortify their boundaries by demonstrating courage and strength as we define ours.

Wouldn't it be helpful today if we would have studied how our minds work when we were younger? Thankfully, it is never too late to reach out to the young people coming behind us. We can make sure they are not denied the education we all deserve: primarily the education about ourselves as individuals and as community members.

Do you want to help our youth make better decisions? There is no better way to teach than by showing: model boundary setting with courage and compassion. Where do we learn to build and maintain boundaries? Where do we learn to assess our values and build courage? School, television, and most adults will not model boundaries. We are encouraged to be acquiescent to authorities, professionals and experts.

"Very few of us were modeled the delicate art of "graceful objection" - School of Life

Children today deserve to learn how to protect themselves from predators of all kinds, including marketers. They need to learn how to say 'no', and how to recognize and avoid unhealthy situations and relationships. We can, and we must, show them how. Not by telling, but by doing.

Model courage! Model strength! And model the "graceful art" of saying "no".

Can you find one person, or a small group, to discuss the many challenges that arise from declaring and maintaining boundaries? Perhaps each person can research the topic, and then share what you find? Constructive learning increases our access to knowledge and widens our perspective, to ponder other viewpoints!

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# Flipping BRAIN SCIENCE on its head!

Predictive processing, owning emotions, and effective placebos can increase health and opportunity based on the groundbreaking research of Anil Seth, Lisa Feldman-Barrett and Andy Clark.



*We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are.* ~ anonymous

Discoveries in brain science offer powerful insights to help us build our future. Current research shows that our minds are more flexible, more intentional and more in control than previously understood.

For many years, we believed our brains passively accepted information from the world around us. We thought that our perception of a sad face, a red apple or the taste of chocolate, was unfiltered reality.

Many of us also learned that we possess a deep, primal, reptilian brain which controls our most basic responses to threats, such as fight, flight or freeze. This story continues to be widely repeated today.

Over the past twenty years, neuroscience researchers have disintegrated the myth of the 'reptilian' brain. New hypotheses have led to studies which show that our emotions are constructed throughout our lives; they are not 'hard-wired,' nor do they suddenly surface when we feel threatened. They do not 'happen' to us, we create them. And each person experiences them differently.

Instead of passively receiving information, our brains actively generate our models of reality. They are more like "prediction machines," making best guesses of the information that comes in through our senses, weighing it against a lifetime of experiences, predicting what is happening, and deciding our best course of action. Perception is strongly influenced by our past experiences and how we feel in the moment.

From infancy, through to this moment, we have accumulated an enormous amount of information. As we move about in our world each day, our mind filters all new information through past experiences to leverage the lessons we've learned in various settings. Tapping into our previous experiences is like taking a shortcut to making a decision: if it was this way in the past, it might be this way now; and this action that worked in the past may work again now. This 'quick thinking' can be very helpful when we need to act right now. It can also cause us to make hasty, biased or ineffective decisions, so be careful.

Consider this example: I win the imaginary 'baseball lottery' and I find myself standing at home plate in Wrigley Field, waiting for the perfect pitch. I've imagined it a thousand times: I watch the pitcher wind up, and release the ball, and... But the next thing I see is the ball in the catcher's mitt. I didn't even swing! Why? Since the ball flew toward me at 90 mph, my untrained brain did not have time to calculate, decide and act. I had no prior experience to guide me.

A professional baseball player has a very different experience. Because they have seen, and hit, many 90 mph pitches, they can watch the pitcher carefully and make a good prediction about where the ball will be when it crosses the plate. They start their swing long before the ball is within hitting range to maximize the force of the bat. Sometimes their guess is so accurate that the ball goes flying across the entire field and into the stands for a home run!

The baseball example demonstrates how our minds work all of the time. We act, or don't act, based on our prediction.

During our waking hours, our minds are constantly preparing us for the various settings in which we immerse ourselves each day. Because it uses so much information from the past, and because life moves so quickly, our brain may make the wrong prediction now and then, and we might find ourselves having to apologize (my hand is up here) or ice a swollen knee (I was sure I could land that jump!). Mistakes give our brain new information to improve our predictions for the next conversation or ride in the halfpipe.

And prediction processing doesn't only serve us in activities or conversations, it is also how we construct our emotions.

Although it seems like our emotions have always been a part of us, and show up on cue - like tears - they are not like tears at all. Tears have a physiological function in our body: their job is to keep our eyes moist. We produce tears constantly.

Emotions have no physiological foundation. We've been building them for a long time – since before we can remember. They are deeply ours. But ours alone...based on cues we gave meaning to through interactions with our families, friends, culture, schools, books, public events, TV, movies, and the world around us. We saw and heard how emotions were expressed in others, and we created our own.

Each person expresses and interprets emotion in a unique way.

We will explore this in the coming pages but, in short, like getting a zap from an electric fence, we will interpret future predictions

based on the adjustments we had to make now (ow!)...or those we made in the past. Something that was not great for us many years ago (school, for example) may cause us to steer clear of similar things now, even though the challenges from that time are gone. The prediction is strong, but it doesn't apply. This is one way emotions can block us from seeing opportunity.

Modern neuroscience may have shaken off the myth that emotions are 'hard-wired' and out of our control, but the hard work of sorting out fear, anxiety and other tough emotions remains.

The great news here is that we have a lot more power over our destiny than we might think!

"When you understand how something works, you'll be able to tinker with it," says neuroscientist Lisa Feldman-Barrett.

Learning to tinker with our minds, to get them to work to our advantage, could help us resist the 'fake' and stay on our own track.

The media is presenting a difficult quandary; it is becoming very difficult to figure out what is real. Our emotions are targeted through music, and our eyes are manipulated – potentially shifting a belief – through deep fakes. To properly brace ourselves for the world today, understanding how we construct our perspective and our emotions has become an essential life skill.

With increased understanding, we can tinker with our minds to reduce the impact of marketers and fear-mongers, and strengthen predictions to determine our destiny.

*The scientists on the following pages study predictive processing. You can read more about their findings in their books, or watch their fascinating TED talks!*

## ANIL SETH

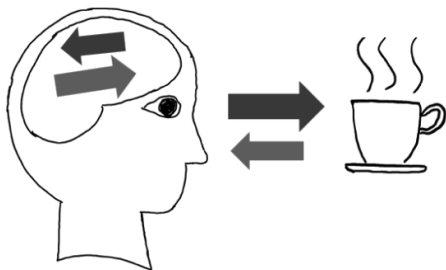
### Book - BEING YOU: A New Science of Consciousness

*We don't just passively perceive the world. We actively generate it. The world we experience comes as much, if not more, from the inside out as from the outside in.* - Anil Seth

What is it like to be you? At first thought, you might find that there are aspects of 'being you' that are like all living things, and upon a closer look, you might see aspects of you that are like all mammals, or all humans, but no comparisons will ever get close. What it's like to be you is an experience that is completely unique to you. No one else sees the world in the same way that you do. Your beliefs, perspective, gifts, emotions and experiences are yours alone.

And since you are so unique, your experience of reality is at least a little different from everyone else's, too.

Anil Seth studies consciousness, perception and what it means to be a 'self'. He knows we tend to believe that what we see and hear is reality. His research shows that our perception is not a direct reflection of what is happening in the world, but an active construction of it. He says we do not receive a direct, incoming flow of information into our brain because our brain receives only signals from our senses, and it has to guess what the signals mean based on prior experience. Perception, he says, is an inside-out best guess about what caused the sensory signals that the brain receives.



This theory can be hard to grasp. The belief that we see things as they are is very strong!

For example, when we look at a ripe banana, we believe that it is yellow. What we may not know is that the yellow color we see is just reflected off of the peel and not emitted from it. The yellow color will change as the light changes. When we see a rainbow, we see the familiar colors of various wavelengths of light, but what we see is just a narrow range of them. Many more wavelengths are not detectable by the human eye.

Although scientists and philosophers have been studying predictive processing theory for two decades or more, this theory is only now becoming more broadly known.

We once thought the sun revolved around the earth. We had evidence for our belief: we could watch the sun 'rise' on the eastern horizon and set in the west. But Nicolaus Copernicus didn't accept that belief. He introduced a theory claiming that the earth, and our nearby planets, revolve around the sun, and it is the earth, spinning on its axis, that creates night and day. He captivated people's attention with his theory in the early 1500s, but the heliocentric – or sun-centered – view of our solar system would not take hold for nearly 100 years.

This is the type of shift happening today in neuroscience. Understanding predictive processing will transform the way we conduct – and construct – everything...including ourselves, our world, and our future.

Anil Seth's TED talk: Your brain hallucinates your conscious reality, can be found here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyu7v7nWzfo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyu7v7nWzfo)

## LISA FELDMAN-BARRETT: BOOKS: 7½ LESSONS ABOUT THE BRAIN *and* HOW EMOTIONS ARE MADE: The Secret Life of the Brain

*Sometimes in life you are responsible for changing something, not because you are to blame, but because you're the only person who can.* – Lisa Feldman-Barrett

Our brains were not created to think, argues Lisa Feldman-Barrett (LFB), they were created to keep us alive. “The most important job your brain has is to regulate the systems of your body,” she says. “You see and think and feel in the service of that goal.”

She also says that because the brain is locked in the skull, completely dependent on senses and previous experiences, the predictive processing model is the best fit for how we interpret the world and express ourselves.

Her Theory of Constructed Emotions uses the predictive processing foundation, and includes our feelings, our beliefs, and our lifetime of experience to create our unique emotions.

The old story about emotions told us that they come from deep inside of us, from the two oldest areas of a triune (three parts in unity) brain. The theory, developed in the 1960s, claimed our reptilian brain - the oldest, instinctual part of the brain - drives the immediate emotions including fight, flight or freeze reactions. This story made us perpetually vulnerable to our own minds.

Lisa Feldman-Barrett's response to this view, which she argues in her small book *7½ Lessons About the Brain*, states, “The triune brain story is one of the most successful and widespread errors in all of science.”

If we accept that we create our emotions, we can see them for what they are and allow them to serve us well. For instance, we can learn to resist the subliminal pull of emotive music in commercials and news stories. And we can also learn to resist a knee-jerk reaction to say something we might regret later.

It feels like emotions grab hold of our minds and bodies, but that's because we don't understand what they are telling us. Emotions show us the meaning that we have built into situations, words, gestures, behavior and other cues. Because we've constructed them since we were infants, they seem like they are part of our body. They come from within us; not as physiological actions, but as messages that convey the ways we've learned to show pain, anger, frustration, sadness, etc. At their core, LFB says emotions are predictions about what is going on and how we should respond. By learning how to read our emotions, we can improve our responses in a number of ways.

We can start by naming the emotions that we feel. (Check out the new Feelings Wheel on page 83.) LFB says: “The more precisely you can describe your emotions, the better you can understand how to use them in a careful, thoughtful way. When we don't understand something, like emotion, we can get hurt, and other people can get hurt, too.”

*“Expanding your emotion vocabulary is like a mental well-being thesaurus, giving you a strong sense of agency over the situations and responses you experience.”* - LFB

Also, we can realize that we should not assume anything about another person based on how we see them. (*We see things as WE are, not as they are.*) According to LFB, no facial expressions are universal; “the same exact face can be used in different emotions, and the same emotion can have many faces. When we're happy, we laugh, cry, smile, scream, and have all kinds of facial expressions.”

We can also change the meaning we have given to emotions, which can alter their intensity and give us time to think about them before reacting. Rather than try to subdue our emotions, we can learn to recognize and leverage them.

We feel primarily through our senses: hunger, cold, etc., but to study emotions, we have to consider another set of feelings.

Remember, LFB told us that one of our brain's most important jobs is managing our 'body budget': checking on our levels of salt, glucose, oxygen, hormones, and other critical elements that keep us alive. The feeling that we receive from our body is called affect. According to LFB, "Affect is your brain's best guess about the state of your body budget."

Affect, also called *mood*, is a combination of your energy level and your valence: whether your body feels pleasant or unpleasant. Affect is with you every waking moment of your life.

Examples of Energy: Are you sleepy?  
enthusiastic? calm? exhausted?

Examples of Valence: Feeling comfortable?  
crummy (stomach ache, fever)? strong?

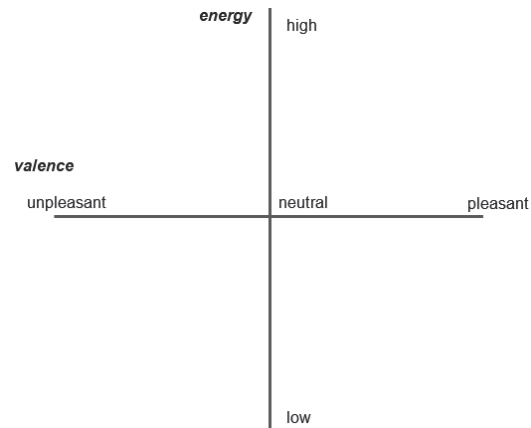
*"Every sense that you have, in every waking moment of your life, is colored by how you feel...and it has very profound consequences,"* says LFB.

## ANDY CLARK

**BOOK: THE EXPERIENCE MACHINE: How Our Minds Predict and Shape Reality** (He has written many other books on this topic.)

"Nothing we do or experience... is untouched by our own expectations." - Andy Clark

Andy Clark is a philosopher and cognitive scientist. He's the author of several books grounded in predictive processing. His work considers how our brains reach out of our skull and connect to the world. In a recent talk, he described how expectations can fill information gaps and greatly alter our experience.



Draw this template to chart your affect. Notice how the feeling changes over time. Can you see how your mood can impact your day?

Our brains are using past experiences to predict and create our current experiences. Our past experiences might not be the best guide for our current or future experiences, but we're not stuck. LFB reminds us of our power:

"You can challenge the beliefs that you were swaddled in as a child. You can change your own niche. Your actions today become your brain's predictions for tomorrow, and those predictions automatically drive your future actions. Therefore, you have some freedom to hone your predictions in new directions."

LFB's TED talk - You aren't at the mercy of your emotions -your brain creates them:  
[youtube.com/watch?v=0gks6ceq4eQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gks6ceq4eQ)

discomfort and gave him drugs to relieve the pain. At the hospital, doctors could see in the x-ray images that the nail had passed cleanly between two toes without touching his flesh at all. Yet his suffering was real.

Clark explained that this is an extreme example of the power of prediction; in this case, the expectation of a serious injury.

He says the brain is wired from the inside out. Even when we're at rest, our brains are constantly running a simulation of reality, weighing confidence in the predictions it makes. When we are fooled, as with optical illusions, our brains are confident that the prediction model is accurate. This is what happened with the nail.

The predictive processing theory includes taking decisive action. We can influence our brain's guesses with experiences that provide confidence, such as executing tasks successfully or using placebos to relieve pain.

If you're not familiar with the term, placebos are inert pills created to test the efficacy of new drugs. Several trials have shown that placebos can be as effective as the drugs themselves!

Ted Kaptchuk researches placebos, including *honest placebos*, where the patient knows they are taking sugar pills. He has been surprised by his results: in several studies, even treatment-resistant participants found relief using an honest placebo. Kaptchuk explains, *"A placebo's active ingredient is a person's psychological response to being treated."*

Clark sees this as evidence of our powerful predictions: "honest placebos appear to work by activating subterranean expectations through superficial indicators of reliability and efficacy, such as good packaging and professional presentation."

In 2013, I read an article about researchers who discovered that acetaminophen could reduce feelings of existential angst: dread, uncertainty, and meaninglessness. (Be careful here – the drug can also cause severe liver damage.) Although my feelings about the world are generally optimistic, there are occasions when I slip into despair thinking about the suffering that I can't reach or stop. These feelings can be so strong that I find it difficult to function. When I heard about the research, I purchased a very small bottle of Tylenol and covered the label with the words "Existential Angst Reliever." Thirteen years later, I have yet to open the bottle. Although I doubt that a philosophical problem can be resolved with drugs, when I feel the burden of my limitations, rather than put a real or fake pill into my mouth, I find relief just by going to the cabinet and looking at the bottle. I give it a shake if I really need a boost. And it works!

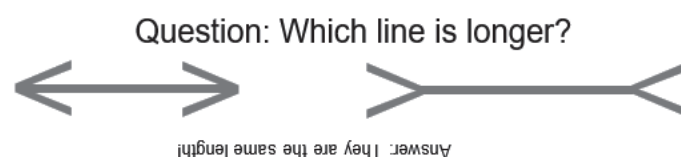
A few of the other conditions that respond well to honest placebos include depression, pain, allergies, fatigue, irritable bowel syndrome and insomnia.

Today, we can purchase branded 'honest placebos', such as Magic Bullet and Fukitol. They are effective, inexpensive, have no adverse side effects and activate systems of healing in our mind and body.

Learning more about predictive processing may prove a valuable investment for navigating our increasingly unpredictable world.

*"Since experience is always shaped by our own expectations, there is an opportunity to improve our lives by altering some of those expectations" ~ Andy Clark*

Andy Clark's TED-type talk at Royal Institution: How the brain shapes reality [www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1Ghrd7NBtk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1Ghrd7NBtk)



Do you find the predictive processing theory interesting? These scientists have all written very readable books which you might also enjoy. (Ask the library? The free books orgs? Ebook or paper book?)

## Words to describe our EMOTIONS

This is a BIG list of emotions! 275 so far... What else should we add? This list was found on the Berkeley Well Being Institute website, if you'd like to share it:

<https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/list-of-emotions.html>

\*\*Lisa Feldman Barrett: "Learning new emotions words is good because you can learn to feel more subtle emotions..and that makes you better at regulating your emotions. Understanding how emotions are constructed widens the horizon of control. You realize that if your brain is using your past to construct your present, you can invest energy in the present to cultivate new experiences that then become the seeds for your future. You can cultivate or curate experiences in the now and then they become, if you practice them, they become automated enough that your brain will automatically construct them in the future."

acceptance	brooding	disheartened	friendliness
admiration	calm	dislike	fright
adoration	carefree	dismay	frustration
affection	careless	disoriented	fury
afraid	caring	dispirited	glee
agitation	charity	displeasure	gloomy
agony	cheeky	distraction	glumness
aggressive	cheerfulness	distress	gratitude
alarm	claustrophobic	disturbed	greed
alarmed	coercive	dominant	grief
alienation	comfortable	doubt	grouchiness
amazement	confident	dread	grumpiness
ambivalence	confusion	driven	guilt
amusement	contempt	dumbstruck	happiness
anger	contentment	eagerness	hate
anguish	courage	ecstasy	hatred
annoyed	cowardly	elation	helpless
anticipating	cruelty	embarrassment	homesickness
anxious	curiosity	empathy	hope
apathy	cynicism	enchanted	hopelessness
apprehension	dazed	enjoyment	horrified
arrogant	dejection	enlightened	hospitable
assertive	delighted	ennui	humiliation
astonished	demoralized	enthusiasm	humility
attentiveness	depressed	envy	hurt
attraction	desire	epiphany	hysteria
aversion	despair	euphoria	idleness
awe	determined	exasperated	impatient
baffled	disappointment	excitement	indifference
bewildered	disbelief	expectancy	indignant
bitter	discombobulated	fascination	infatuation
bitter sweetness	discomfort	fear	infuriated
bliss	discontentment	flakey	insecurity
bored	disgruntled	focused	insightful
brazen	disgust	fondness	insulted

interest	offended	reticent	surprise
intrigued	optimistic	revulsion	suspense
irritable	outrage	ruthless	suspicious
isolated	overwhelmed	sadness	sympathy
jealousy	panicked	satisfaction	tenderness
joviality	paranoid	satiated	tension
joy	passion	scared	terror
jubilant	patience	schadenfreude	thankfulness
kind	pensiveness	scorn	thrilled
lazy	perplexed	self-caring	tired
liking	persevering	self-compassionate	tolerance
loathing	pessimism	self-confident	torment
lonely	pity	self-conscious	triumphant
longing	pleased	self-critical	troubled
loopy	pleasure	self-loathing	trust
love	politeness	self-motivated	uncertainty
lust	positive	self-pity	undermined
mad	possessive	self-respecting	uneasiness
melancholy	powerless	self-understanding	unhappy
miserable	pride	sentimentality	unnerved
miserliness	puzzled	serenity	unsettled
mixed up	rage	shame	unsure
modesty	rash	shameless	upset
moody	rattled	shocked	vengeful
mortified	rebellious	smug	vicious
mystified	regret	sorrow	vigilance
nasty	rejected	spite	vulnerable
nauseated	relaxed	stressed	weak
negative	relieved	strong	woe
neglect	reluctant	stubborn	worried
nervous	remorse	stuck	worthless
nostalgic	resentment	submissive	worthy
numb	resignation	suffering	wrath
obstinate	restlessness	sullenness	

\*\* Quote from a 2017 Interview with Lisa Feldman-Barrett as discovered in *The Verge*:  
<https://tinyurl.com/ymve328e>

### Lisa Feldman-Barrett Books:

How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain 2017

Seven and a Half Lessons About the Brain 2021



## **STEP ONE - Amygdala Hijack**

When your brain perceives it is under threat your amygdala reacts much faster than your rational, conscious mind. In what Daniel Goleman describes as an ‘amygdala hijack’ you experience the classic ‘freeze, flight, fight’ response and the chemical rush that follows is part of what we call emotions (Golman, 1996). This heightened state of mind can be very useful if you are under an imminent physical threat but more likely it will make you less able to respond in a rational and considered way to relational challenges and complex problems.

## **STEP TWO - Acknowledge and Appreciate Your Emotions: They Support You**

You never want to make your emotions wrong. The idea that anything you feel is “wrong” is a great way to destroy honest communication with yourself as well as with others. Be thankful that there’s a part of your brain that is sending you a signal of support, a call to action to make a change in either your perception of some aspect of your life or in your actions. (Robbins, 1991)

## **STEP THREE - Get Curious about the Message Your Emotions Are Offering You**

- What would I have to believe in order to feel the way I’ve been feeling?
- What am I willing to do to create a solution and handle this right now?
- What do I really want to feel?
- What can I learn from this?

## **STEP FOUR - Get Confident**

Get confident that you can handle this emotion immediately. The quickest, simplest, and most powerful way I know to handle any emotion is to remember a time when you felt a similar emotion and realize that you’ve successfully handled this emotion before. (Robbins, 1991)

- What strategies have I used in the past to deal with this emotion?
- Do I know someone who is great at dealing with this? What strategies do they use?

## **STEP FIVE - Get Certain You Can Handle This Not Only Today, But in the Future as Well**

You want to feel certain that you can handle this emotion easily in the future by having a great plan to do so. One way to do this is to simply remember the ways you’ve handled it in the past and rehearse handling situations where this emotion would come up in the future. See, hear, and feel yourself handling the situation easily. (Robbins, 1991)

## **STEP SIX - Get Excited, and Take Action Now go and do something!**



## **References**

Golman, Daniel (1996). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books. Robbins, Anthony (1991). *Awaken the Giant Within*. New York: Free Press.

# Self-Determination

## The Key to Motivation also supports mental health!



Self-determination: the process by which a person controls their own life.  
(Oxford Internet Dictionary)

### **The United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states:**

*All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.*

Self-determination refers to a person's ability to choose; to make decisions and feel in control. It is crucially important for citizens in a democratic society. So why don't we learn about it in school? It's never too late to learn, so in this short article we'll explore self-determination and Self-Determination Theory.

I've been an advocate for self-determination my entire life, but it wasn't until 2005 - when I attended college - that I discovered Self-Determination Theory.

I went back to school to gain skills and credentials to create Fair Shake. I was venturing into an area where I had no experience but strong ideas. Very few people around me believed that I could do it. My children were my main supporters; they believed I could make my vision a reality.

I had learned to expect this response in my life. From my earliest years, I remember being told what I must do, and that I was not capable of doing much of what I wanted to do. After getting kicked out of my parent's house at 13, I was determined to prove I had good ideas and I was capable of doing what I wanted to do. (I watched Billy Jean King beat Bobby Riggs!)

Being told that I am not capable has been a terrific motivator. Now that I'm 63, I realize that my no-burn-out fuel, that provides steady and sustainable power, is a mix of purpose, meaning, and care - with a splash of defiance.

The creators of Self-Determination Theory - Richard Ryan and Edward Deci - understood that my motivation was driven by my basic needs for autonomy and competence.

Humans are the only animals capable of reflection. We can wonder, imagine, and create new ways of doing things. Being able to choose is at the core of our being. Choice is also critical in a democracy and a fundamental component of mental health. Our sense of autonomy - our freedom to choose - has been vital to our development throughout our lives.

When we make poor decisions, especially those that cause us to feel that we are not capable of making good decisions, we can feel overwhelmed or defeated. Deci and Ryan discovered that building competence, a sense of skill and capability, "involves the feeling that one's actions are actually useful and lead to meaningful progress."

According to their theory, the final component to self-determination, and the motivation it provides, is the feeling of relatedness; the understanding that one is not isolated from others but is in tandem with others. Doing your own thing, while others do theirs, can create a world where we are independent yet connected and thriving; strong in mind and spirit.

Ryan and Deci's Theory of Self-Determination is based on three psychological needs: Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness.

When these needs are met, we will find that intrinsic motivation – the drive from inside of ourselves – can propel us through many challenges, toward our hopes and plans for the future. Their research has shown that extrinsic motivation - punishments or rewards - may move us to act in the moment, but will be far less likely to motivate us to continue to reach our goals.

In short: we are driven to do things when we choose to do them. Fear of punishment may work, but doesn't create lasting change. And rewards don't, either. (Volumes of research support this, yet prizes and threats continue to be used nearly everywhere.)

SDT encourages to trust ourselves; to be agents of our destiny and to feel confident that our behaviors and decisions will influence our lives in meaningful and satisfying ways.

According to Richard Ryan: "Self-determination theory suggests that when we strive toward wellness, self-efficacy and community, we will be motivated to act in ways that benefit ourselves and society. Self-determination theory assumes humans have an innate, fundamental trajectory toward vitality, integration, and health."

## A few helpful definitions:

**SELF-DETERMINATION:** the process by which a person controls their own life.

**NEED:** an essential nutrient for thriving and wellness. Needs are universal; they remain constant across cultures, contexts and our entire life span. We have physical needs and we have psychological needs. Our psychological needs require nutrients that are essential for growth, integrity, and well-being. These needs are autonomy, relatedness and competence.

**AUTONOMY:** the sense of being in control of our own behaviors and goals. It includes steering our life course and making decisions

according to our values and interests. It does not mean we must be alone; it simply means that we get to decide how and when to connect with others. **"I am able to do things that I really value in life."**

**RELATEDNESS:** the experience of feeling connected. It is a sense of belonging that is not just about being cared for, but includes caring for others, which is where we build meaning in our lives. This does not mean we 'get along' with everyone; we just become more aware of our relationships, especially with the people we can listen to and care about, and the people who will listen to and care about us, too. **"I feel that I can connect with other people."**

**COMPETENCE:** to gain mastery of tasks, learn different skills, and understand ideas. When we feel we have the skills required for success, we are more likely to take actions toward our goals. **"I can do things, and learn things, and achieve my goals."**

(BENEFITS of meeting psychological needs: Interdependence, good quality of life, healthy boundaries, more intentional and effective.)

**MOTIVATION:** moved into action

**EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION** (external): forces outside of us such as rewards, punishments and internalized pressure from others; which includes coercion: 'everybody is doing it', guilt: "they will be sad if you don't show up", and 'should'ing: "you should get that car."

**INTRINSIC MOTIVATION** (internal): inherent incentive to engage in challenges and tasks of our own volition (direction), regardless of any rewards or recognition. Intrinsic motivation is fueled by deeply held values, interest and enjoyment of the behavior itself.

**INTROJECTION:** when we internalize and act to satisfy cultural norms and expectations do things just because 'it's the way things are.'

Intrinsic motivation does not always begin with our desire. We may start something new through external motivation, and continue with it once it becomes internalized. For example, if you are training to compete in a marathon, you might be extrinsically motivated by a desire to join or to win, but once you start training, you may find that you simply enjoy high-energy, solo sports, like a run in the park each day.

We are not innately selfish, aggressive, or money-driven (aka “rational”). This view is not only wrong, it puts our thinking at odds with our needs, which doesn’t make any sense.

Deci and Ryan believe “we are normatively cooperative, social creatures, with robust capacities for kindness and benevolence. In societies across the globe, whether in cities or rural areas, whether among rich or poor, people are typically not only tolerant of others but even considerate and helpful.”

They found that when we help others without rewards (payment or recognition), we meet all three needs at once: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. This is why helping and volunteering feels so good.

A few more of their quotes:

### **On Autonomy:**

*“The primary agentic aspect of human beings is their intrinsic motivation. Being authentic involves effort and entails taking responsibility for oneself. Doing so is not always easy, and in fact, requires everyday acts of courage. Engaging our capacities for autonomy often means resisting or redirecting temptations, cultural pressures, and strong controlling forces, both external and internal.”*

### **On Relatedness:**

*“We have the capacity to connect with and learn from others. It is through communication that people come to appreciate what behaviors have more value and meaning than others and why. Relatedness is what brings people into dispositions of caring. Education and learning*

*enhance our capabilities for growth, integration, and autonomous functioning.”*

### **On Competence**

*“When people are competent, they are more likely to be creative, flexible, and able to deal with the complexities and ambiguities of life.”*

### **Mind Your Needs**

It's important that we remember to attend to all three psychological needs every day (or as often as we can).

Ryan tells us: “People cannot psychologically thrive by satisfying one need alone, any more than people can live healthily with water but not food, or plants can thrive on soil without sunlight.”

It's up to us to check to see if our basic psychological needs are being met.

When and how do you feel your sense of agency or autonomy?

When and how do you feel your sense of relatedness?

When and how do you feel competent?

Our basic needs - both physiological and psychological - drive us. Understanding our needs and addressing them in healthy, holistic ways will give us a better quality of life. We can help others achieve a better quality of life, too.

Our capacity for learning is present through our entire lives. It's never too late to learn!

### **With or without the theory:**

Self-determination is how I'm still here.

Self-determination is how Fair Shake exists.

This does not imply that I built Fair Shake, or my life, by myself. I didn't. I needed others! But I built them of my own volition and through my beliefs and vision – and supported by many people...including my children!

Words related to...

Autonomy (not independent of others, but being one's authentic self among others.)

Volition	Solo	Choice
Agency	Liberty	Decision
Intention	Will	Endorsing own behavior

Relatedness

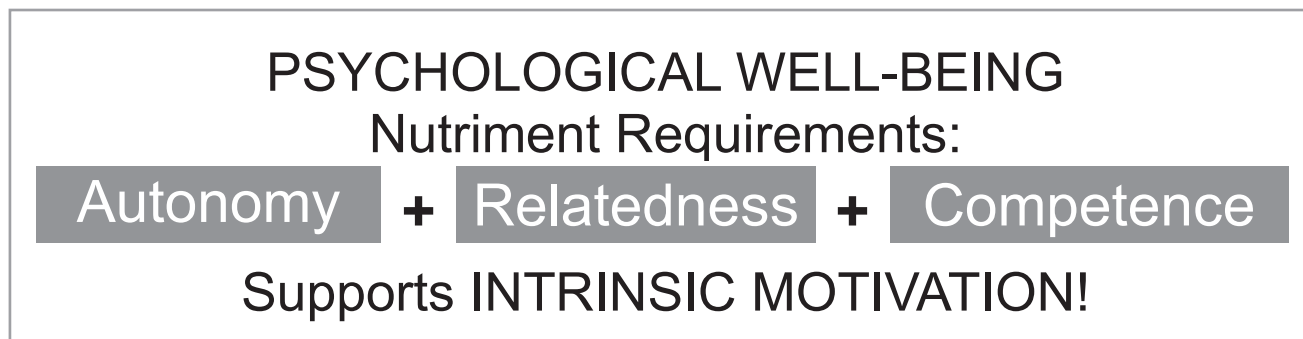
Connected	Caring	Belong
Group	Social	Interact

Competence

Control	Effective	Engaged
Mastery	Persistent	Determine
Capable	Achieve goals	

## Self-Determination Theory of Motivation

Developed by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci



**Autonomy:** You have the freedom to choose.

**Relatedness:** You are connected to others.

**Competence:** You have skills and knowledge.  
You are effective.

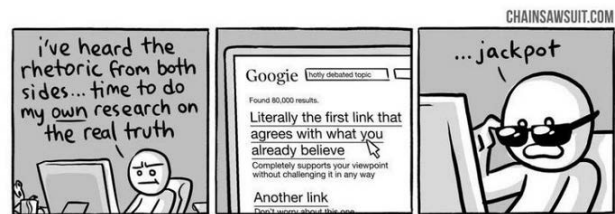


# COGNITIVE BIAS CHEAT SHEET

Because thinking is hard.

<https://medium.com/better-humans/cognitive-bias-cheat-sheet-55a472476b18>

By Buster Benson 2016 (edited by sk 2021)



<http://chainsawsuit.com/comic/2014/09/16/on-research/>

I've spent many years referencing Wikipedia's list of cognitive biases whenever I have a hunch that a certain type of thinking is an official bias but I can't recall the name or details. It's been an invaluable reference for helping me identify the hidden flaws in my own thinking. Nothing else I've come across seems to be both as comprehensive and as succinct.

However, honestly, the Wikipedia page is a bit of a tangled mess. Despite trying to absorb the information of this page many times over the years, very little of it seems to stick. I often scan it and feel like I'm not able to find the bias I'm looking for, and then quickly forget what I've learned. I think this has to do with how the page has organically evolved over the years. Today, it groups 175 biases into vague categories (decision-making biases, social biases, memory errors, etc) that don't really feel mutually exclusive to me, and then lists them alphabetically within categories. There are duplicates a-plenty, and many similar biases with different names, scattered willy-nilly.

I've taken some time to try to more deeply absorb and understand this list, and to try to come up with a simpler, clearer organizing structure to hang these biases off of.

## PROBLEM 1: TOO MUCH INFORMATION

There is just too much information in the world, we have no choice but to filter almost all of it out. Our brain uses a few simple tricks to pick out the bits of information that are most likely going to be useful in some way.

- We notice things that are already primed in memory or repeated often. Our brains are more likely to notice things that are related to stuff that's recently been loaded in memory. Look up: Availability heuristic, Attentional bias, Illusory truth effect, Mere exposure effect, Context effect, Cue- dependent forgetting, Mood-congruent memory bias, Frequency illusion, Baader-Meinhof Phenomenon, Empathy gap

- Bizarre, funny, visually-striking anthropomorphic things stick out more than non-bizarre, unfunny things. Our brains tend to boost the importance of things that are unusual or surprising. Alternatively, we tend to skip over information that

we think is ordinary or expected. Look up: Bizarreness effect, Humor effect, Von Restorff effect, Negativity bias, Publication bias, Omission bias

- We notice when something has changed and we'll tend to weigh the significance of the new value relative to the positive or negative direction of the change rather than re-evaluating the new value as if it had been presented alone. Also applies to when we compare two similar things. Look up: Anchoring, Contrast effect, Focusing effect, Framing effect, Weber–Fechner law, Distinction bias

- We are drawn to details that confirm our own existing beliefs.

I started with the raw list of the 175 biases and added them all to a spreadsheet, then took another pass removing duplicates, and grouping similar biases (like bizarreness effect and humor effect) or complementary biases (like optimism bias and pessimism bias). The list came down to about 20 unique biased mental strategies that we use for very specific reasons.

I made several different attempts to try to group these 20 or so at a higher level, and eventually landed on grouping them by the general mental problem that they were attempting to address.

Every cognitive bias is there for a reason — primarily to save our brains time or energy. If you look at them by the problem they're trying to solve, it becomes a lot easier to understand why they exist, how they're useful, and the trade-offs (and resulting mental errors) that they introduce.

Four problems that biases help us address:

- Information overload
- Lack of meaning
- The need to act fast
- What needs to be remembered for later

This is a big one. We also tend to ignore details that contradict our own beliefs. Look up: Confirmation bias, Congruence bias, Post-purchase rationalization, Choice-supportive bias, Selective perception, Observer-expectancy effect, Experimenter's bias, Observer effect, Expectation bias, Ostrich effect, Subjective validation, Continued influence effect, Semmelweis reflex, Bucket error, Law of narrative gravity

- We notice flaws in others more easily than flaws in ourselves. Yes, this list is not just how other people think; you are also subject to these biases. See: Bias blind spot, Naïve cynicism, Naïve realism

## PROBLEM 2: NOT ENOUGH MEANING

The world is very confusing, and we end up only seeing a tiny sliver of it, but we need to make some sense of it in order to survive. Once the reduced stream of information comes in, we connect the dots, fill in the gaps with stuff we already think we know, and update our mental models of the world.

- We find stories and patterns even in sparse data. Since we only get a tiny sliver of information, and we filter out information sources, we never have the full story. Our brain reconstructs the world inside our heads. Look up: Confabulation, Clustering illusion, Insensitivity to sample size, Neglect of probability, Anecdotal fallacy, Illusion of validity, Masked man fallacy, Recency illusion, Gambler's fallacy, Hot-hand fallacy, Illusory correlation, Pareidolia, Anthropomorphism

- We fill in characteristics from our past, stereotypes, and generalities when there are gaps in information. When we have partial information about a specific thing that belongs to a group of things we are familiar with, our brain has no problem filling in the gaps with guesses or what trusted sources provide. We then forget which parts were real and which were filled in. Look up: Group attribution error, Ultimate attribution error, Stereotyping, Essentialism, Functional fixedness, Moral credential effect, Just-world

hypothesis, Argument from fallacy, Authority bias, Automation bias, Bandwagon effect, Placebo effect

- We imagine things and people we're familiar with or fond of as better than things and people we aren't familiar with or fond of and make assumptions about the quality and value of the thing we're looking at. Look up: Halo effect, In-group bias, Out-group homogeneity bias, Cross-race effect, Cheerleader effect, Well-traveled road effect, Not invented here, Reactive devaluation, Positivity effect

- We simplify probabilities and numbers to make them easier to think about. Our subconscious mind is terrible at math and generally gets all kinds of things wrong about the likelihood of something happening if any data is missing. Look up: Mental accounting, Normalcy bias, Appeal to probability fallacy, Base rate fallacy, Murphy's law, Hofstadter's law, Subadditivity effect, Survivorship bias, Zero sum bias, Denomination effect, Magic

number 7+-2, Swimmer's body illusion, Money illusion, Conservatism

- We think we know what others are thinking and often assume that they know what we know. We may also assume they're thinking about us as much as we are thinking about ourselves. Look up: Curse of knowledge, Illusion of transparency, Spotlight effect, Streetlight effect, Illusion of external agency, Illusion of asymmetric insight, Extrinsic incentive error

- We project our current mindset and assumptions onto the past and future. Magnified also by the fact that we're not very good at imagining how quickly or slowly things will happen or change over time. Look up: Hindsight bias, Outcome bias, Moral luck, Declinism, Telescoping effect, Rosy retrospection, Impact bias, Pessimism bias, Planning fallacy, Time-saving bias, Pro-innovation bias, Projection bias, Restraint bias, Self-consistency bias

## PROBLEM 3: NEED TO ACT FAST

We're constrained by time and information, but we won't let that paralyze us. Without the ability to act fast in the face of uncertainty, we would have perished as a species long ago. With every piece of new information, we need to do our best to assess our ability to affect a situation, apply it to decisions, predict what might happen next, and act on our new insight.

- In order to act, we need to be confident in our ability to make an impact and to feel like what we do is important. Most confidence is overconfidence, but without it we might not act at all. Look up: Overconfidence effect, Egocentric bias, Optimism bias, Social desirability bias, Third-person effect, Forer effect, Barnum effect, Illusion of control, False consensus effect, Dunning-Kruger effect, Hard-easy effect, Illusory superiority, Lake Wobegon effect, Self-serving bias, Actor-observer bias, Fundamental attribution error, Defensive attribution hypothesis, Trait

ascription bias, Effort justification, Risk compensation, Peltzman effect, Armchair fallacy

- To stay focused, we favor the immediate, relatable thing in front of us over the delayed or distant. We value stuff more in the present than in the future, and relate more to stories of specific individuals than anonymous individuals or groups. I'm surprised there aren't more biases found under this one, considering how much it impacts how we think about the world. Look up: Hyperbolic discounting, Appeal to novelty, Identifiable victim effect

(Sue adds here Hasty Generalization, Jumping to Conclusions or "The Danger of a Single Story" as described by Adichie Chimamanda: "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.")

- In order to get anything done, we're motivated to complete things that we've already invested time and energy in (even if they are

unhealthy, not working or ineffective). Look up: Sunk cost fallacy, Irrational escalation, Escalation of commitment, Loss aversion, IKEA effect, Processing difficulty effect, Generation effect, Zero-risk bias, Disposition effect, Unit bias, Pseudocertainty effect, Endowment effect, Backfire effect

- In order to avoid mistakes, we're motivated to preserve our autonomy and status in a group, and to avoid irreversible decisions. If we must

choose, we tend to choose the option that is perceived as the least risky or that preserves the status quo. Better the devil you know than the devil you do not. Look up: System justification, Reactance, Reverse psychology, Decoy effect, Social comparison bias, Status quo bias, Abilene paradox, Law of the instrument, Law of the hammer, Maslow's hammer, Golden hammer, Chesterton's fence, Hippo problem

- We favor options that appear simple or that have complete information. We'd rather do the quick, simple thing than the important complicated thing, even if the important complicated thing is a better use of time and energy. Look up: Ambiguity bias, Information bias, Belief bias, Rhyme as reason effect, Bike-shedding effect, Law of Triviality, Delmore effect, Conjunction fallacy, Occam's razor, Less-is-better effect, Sapir-Whorf-Korzybski hypothesis

#### **PROBLEM 4: WHAT SHOULD WE REMEMBER?**

There's too much information in the universe. We can only afford to keep around the bits that are most likely to prove useful in the future. We need to make constant bets and trade-offs around what we try to remember and what we forget. For example, we prefer generalizations over specifics because they take up less space. When there are lots of irreducible details, we pick out a few standout items to save and discard the rest. What we save here is what is most likely to inform our filters related to problem 1's information overload, as well as inform what comes to mind during the processes mentioned in problem 2 around filling in incomplete information. It's all self-reinforcing.

- We edit and reinforce some memories after the fact. During that process, memories can become stronger, however various details can also get accidentally swapped. We sometimes accidentally inject a detail into the memory that wasn't there before. Look up: Misattribution of memory, Source confusion, Cryptomnesia, False memory, Suggestibility, Spacing effect

- We discard specifics to form generalities. We do this out of necessity, but the impact of implicit associations, stereotypes, and prejudice results in some of the most glaringly bad consequences from our full set of cognitive biases.

Look up: Implicit associations, Implicit stereotypes, Stereotypical bias, Prejudice, Fading affect bias

- We reduce events and lists to their key elements. It's difficult to reduce events and lists to generalities, so instead we pick out a few items to represent the whole. Look up: Peak-end rule, Leveling and sharpening, Misinformation effect, Duration neglect, Serial recall effect, List-length effect, Modality effect, Memory inhibition, Part-list cueing effect, Primacy effect, Recency effect, Serial position effect, Suffix effect

- We store memories differently based on how they were experienced. Our brains will only encode information that it deems important at the time, but this decision can be affected by other circumstances (what else is happening, how is the information presenting itself, can we easily find the information again if we need to, etc) that have little to do with the information's value. Look up: Picture superiority effect, Levels of processing effect, Testing effect, Absent-mindedness, Next-in-line effect, Tip of the tongue phenomenon, Google effect, Self-relevance effect

#### ***Great, how am I supposed to remember all of this?***

You can start by remembering these four giant problems our brains have evolved to deal with over the last few million years:

1. Information overload sucks, so we aggressively filter. Noise becomes signal.
2. Lack of meaning is confusing, so we fill in the gaps. Signal becomes a story.
3. Need to act fast lest we lose our chance, so we jump to conclusions. Stories become decisions.
4. This isn't getting easier, so we try to remember the important bits. Decisions inform our mental models of the world.

In order to avoid drowning in information overload, our brains skim and filter insane amounts of information and quickly, almost effortlessly, decide which few things are actually important and pull those out.

In order to construct meaning out of the bits and pieces of information that come to our attention, we fill in the gaps, and attach it to our existing mental models. We need to make sure it's relatively stable and as accurate as possible.

In order to act fast, our brains make split-second decisions that could impact our chances for survival, security, or success, and feel confident that we can make things happen.

And to try to be efficient, our brains remember the most important and useful bits of new information and inform the other systems so they can adapt and improve over time, but no more than that.

### ***Sounds pretty useful! So what's the downside?***

Well, the solutions to the four problems have problems of their own. Try to remember these four truths:

1. We don't see everything. Plus some of the information we filter out is useful and important.
2. Our search for meaning can create illusions. We can imagine details that were filled in by our assumptions, and then construct meaning and stories that aren't real.
3. Quick decisions can be seriously flawed and can be unfair, self-serving, and counter-productive.
4. Our memory reinforces errors. Some of the stuff we believe we remember makes all of the above systems more biased, and more damaging to our thought processes.

Nothing we do can make the biases or the 4 problems go away, but if we accept that there's room for improvement, we can continuously improve our thinking abilities and our understanding ourselves.

Cognitive biases are tools: useful in the right contexts, harmful in others. We might as well get familiar with them and appreciate that we have some ability to process the universe with our mysterious brains.

***"Since learning about confirmation bias, I keep seeing it everywhere!"***

### **Four Steps to Developing Honest Bias - Switching from "Fix" to "Maintenance"**

Step 1: OPT IN. Developing honest bias requires us to wake up to our own blindness; to stop pretending it doesn't exist. This means letting go of the false belief of permanent fixes and being open to answers that are complex. Only you can decide if you're up for the challenge!!

Step 2: OBSERVE (Beginner level). Take steps to reduce the amount of time and energy you spend trying to hide or ignore your biases and blind spots. For example: read articles like this to get familiar with the variety of biases. Notice when your defenses are triggered and check whether A) you're really in existential danger right now, or B) if there's an opportunity to learn from a new perspective (even in a small way).

We often have blind spots to things that: we don't identify with, aren't being talked about, don't come to mind, blend in, have been around for a while, don't feel immediately relevant, don't match our perceived stereotypes, don't match our personal experience, aren't certain, are outside of our control, require challenging our friends, family or general consensus, or those that challenge our existing beliefs.

Step 3: REPAIR (Intermediate level). Take steps to reduce the time and energy it takes for you to identify and begin to repair inadvertent damage caused by your biases and blind spots. For example: when you notice a blind spot, look into it and identify people and ideas that may have been undervalued or harmed by you and others. Look for ways to reverse that trend and repair damage.

Step 4: NORMALIZE (Advanced level). Take steps to reduce the time and energy others have to spend challenging your blind spots and recruiting you to address the damage that you've contributed to. For example: actively seek out information and perspectives that challenge your own. Invite the best representatives of positions you don't agree with to productive disagreements. Actively attempt to falsify your own beliefs.

## Ownership Tiny-Manual



**Locus of Control** - Do you see that you create your life or do you feel that fate is in control? If you want to be the master of your experiences and success, you will not be able to play the role of victim. Create your luck and design your success; you (and only you) can do it!  
"The only way to predict the future is to have power to shape the future." – Eric Hoffer

**Self Motivation** - While managers continue to try to find ways to motivate people from the outside, the best way to get things done is simply by wanting to do them! The more we align ourselves with our goals, the more easily we can find the necessary motivation to carry out our tasks.  
"Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right." – Henry Ford  
"He is able who thinks he is able." – The Buddha



**Change** - We cannot change change; we must change with change. Change we invite is exciting and change we have pressed upon us is challenging. We are always changing, whether we initiate the change or fight against it. Even when we cannot change a situation, we can still change the way we look at it.

"The only constant is change." - Heraclites

"Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely." - Karen Kaiser Clark

"When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are forced to change ourselves" - Viktor Frankl

**Satisfaction** - Reduce stress and physical illness by achieving satisfaction in your life! When you take responsibility for your own satisfaction at home and on the job, you will be able to create the life you desire. With all relationships, be yourself and state your boundaries. Remember this when it's time to interview! By interviewing your interviewer you ensure your own satisfaction at work.

**100%**  
**SATISFACTION**

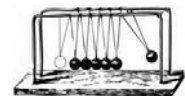
"One day your life will flash before your eyes. Make sure its worth watching." – Soren Kierkegaard



**Fear** - Fear is a healthy emotion for threatening situations. We also use fear to hide behind when we are challenged, which keeps us from learning, growing and trying new things. Fear can be physically and emotionally paralyzing. To break the chains that keep you from realizing your dreams, you must confront your fears. You will learn and grow, which cannot happen without taking action.

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear - not absence of fear." -Mark Twain

**Cause and Effect** - Every action and intention has an effect – on ourselves as well as others. Through negative feelings we radiate negativity, and in this way the negative energy grows. When we choose to feel great, we radiate love and positivity. When we offer encouraging vibes we receive them...and the positive energy grows! Smile!



"Everything you are against weakens you. Everything you are for empowers you." – Dr. Wayne Dyer



**Freedom** - What is your definition of freedom? At Fair Shake, we define freedom by exercising the rights and responsibilities of being a world citizen. You are free to make decisions that influence your relationship to all beings. You are free to make decisions that make your life miserable and you are free to make decisions that make your life wonderful and successful. We are free to be human and make mistakes; and we are also free to forgive others, and to ask for forgiveness.

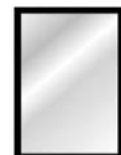
"While we are free to choose our actions, we are not free to choose the consequences of our actions."

- Stephen Covey

**Accept Yourself** - First you must see yourself for who you really are. Only then you can accept yourself with all your virtues and your weaknesses and see yourself as worthy of success, a good life, and quality relationships. When you acknowledge and accept yourself, you are free to make the necessary changes in your life that will get you on the path to your dreams.

"Growth begins when we start to accept our own weakness." - Jean Vanier

"Only when we accept ourselves can we change." - Fred Rogers





**Work** - Evaluate your skills, assess the careers that are best suited to your talents, critique your communication style and then set a course to create the work life you desire! Career development is in your hands. Often we must do work we do not favor as we gain the experience we need to find or create the career we want. Sometimes we find that it is not a particular job we are after but an environment we want to work in, tasks we like to do or experiences we want to gain. “Find something you love to do and you’ll never have to work a day in your life.” – Harvey MacKay

**Boundaries** - Do you say “yes” when you want to say “no”? Do you refuse to take “no” for an answer? To reduce stress, burnout and conflict, we need to establish boundaries in any relationship. When you speak from clear boundaries you simply state “what is”. Setting healthy boundaries gives you a sense of control and power in your life, which means you know yourself and the things that are good or bad for you. “Those who stand for nothing fall for anything.” - Alexander Hamilton.



**Degree of Agreeability** - Do you find you get along with people in social situations (family, friends, work, sports) or do you feel you are often “at odds” or not quite fitting in? You have the power to make relationships wonderful, exciting and fun! Take a minute to consider: do you try to really listen and understand others? What do you contribute to make situations enjoyable? Do you make it easy for others to work with or communicate with you? “Those people who are uncomfortable in themselves are disagreeable to others.” – William Hazlitt

**Equality** - As Americans, we agree that all people are equal. Still, we find we sometimes feel less valuable than others, confusing superiority with authority. This can happen with professionals such as professors, lawyers or doctors; and sometimes we even feel like we are worth less than people with great material wealth. We need to remember that, while some folks can have authority in an area where they have great knowledge or expertise, they are still equals with similar goals, desires and struggles. “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” – Eleanor Roosevelt



**Communication** - Using accurate terminology and body language to illustrate our ideas is only half of the communication equation. We must also interpret words and body language of others as they are offered to us. We must try to resist letting our own personal history decipher their meaning so we can truly listen.

“Listening to both sides of a story will convince you that there is more to a story than both sides.” – Frank Tyger

**O.A.R.S.** - Careful communication is critical in situations of conflict or opposing points of view. Remember these tools to find ways to work through problems: ask Open-ended questions, offer Affirmations, participate in Reflective listening and provide Support. This can be difficult in tense situations, but will reap priceless benefits.

“When you find yourself in deep water, use your OARS.” – Ron Schafer

*Open-ended questions:* What do you think? *Affirmations:* I understand what you are saying.

*Reflective listening:* What I hear you say is.... *Support:* It is important to me that we sort this out.



**Value** - Value and worth are relative to the degree of importance something has in our life. Our perception of value affects our desires, our morals, and our possessions. How do you value things? Based on money? Based on importance or sentiment? How about people? Do you share things with others, preferring to strengthen relationships; or do you keep things to yourself to keep them close and in good shape? We protect that which we value, and we must understand and honor that each of us values objects, people, commitments, and life in general differently.

“Every man stamps his value on himself... man is made great or small by his own will.” – J.C.F. von Schiller

**Relationships** - We often think of family or romantic involvement when we discuss relationships, but we are actually relating whenever we interact with others. From the neighbor that bangs on the wall when we play the music too loud, to the unhoused person that we offer a meal to, we share space and affect one another. Long-lasting relationships are the most valuable to us because in them we learn a great deal about ourselves and others. A commitment to long-term relationships demonstrates our character, integrity, tenacity and worth.



“The value of a relationship is in direct proportion to the time that you invest in the relationship.” – Brian Track



**Dependency** - Unhealthy dependencies come in many forms; the most obvious is substance abuse. Other, more subtle dependencies include: people, gambling, cigarettes, treatment, television and video games. If you hide behind any dependency you will not be able to realize freedom. When you can see that you encourage a dependency, you have the power to master it.

"There is no dependence that can be sure but a dependence upon one's self." – John Gay

**Tenacity** - Stick to it!! Hard work pays off. Learning this discipline is challenging, but will be a valuable attribute all of your life. Tenacity is one of the essential ingredients to success.

"Let me tell you the secret that has led me to my goal: my strength lies solely in my tenacity."  
– Louis Pasteur



**Denial** - Denial is an unconscious defense mechanism characterized by refusal to acknowledge painful realities, thoughts, or feelings. It is hard to recognize when we are in denial. If we listen to others when they tell us we are daydreaming, or when they say we should look at some aspect of ourselves they see as inconsistent with who we say we are, sometimes we can see that we have been covering up a challenge or justifying our behavior to suit our wishes.

"More people would learn from their mistakes if they weren't so busy denying them." – Harold J. Smith

**Commitment** - We are often afraid of committing, yet we appreciate a commitment from others. Commitment does not have to be frightening! Start by making a pledge that you will take care of yourself as well as you possibly can. Once you are comfortable with this, commit to small things and then grow into larger and longer- term commitments, very much like trust.



"Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes; but no plans." – Peter F. Drucker



**Time Control** - Can you set a schedule and stick to it? We can get a lot of things done in a day if we make time to do them all. If we don't make time, the clock ticks while we watch TV, mope, look for excuses for why we can't or don't act. While it is hard to initiate the motions, once you are up and running, it's hard to stop! Remember: we need to make time to relax, too!!

"Lost time is never found again." "You may delay, but time will not." – Benjamin Franklin

**Reality check** - How do you know you are being realistic? Do you have anyone to check in with? When making decisions, consider these three ideas: 1. Check in with a friend or family member 2. Can you see each step of the process from start to finish? 3. Is this goal / desire in line with your long-range goals and personal philosophy?



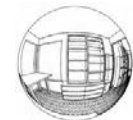
"How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg? Four. Calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg"  
– Abraham Lincoln



**Education** - What do you consider knowledge and how do you know what you know? What about when others know something that is different from what you know? If we remember that what we know is only true for us, it becomes easier to see how people have many different perspectives on any given subject. Through conversation we can learn to see things a new way and reinforce or increasingly appreciate our own beliefs.

"Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything one learned in school." – Albert Einstein

**Point of View** - Every situation can be viewed from several perspectives. Folks who want to see problems will certainly find and create them. Folks who want to feel good most of the time will create and be drawn to positive work and making positive situations.



"In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity." – Albert Einstein



**Understanding** - When we understand that other people seek to satisfy the same needs as we do, we can see that often we have more in common with each other than differences. This is an important consideration whether we are in a managerial or a subordinate position.

"When you judge another, you do not define them, you define yourself." – Wayne Dyer

**Permission** - Sometimes we need permission to proceed, but many times we look for permission just to validate our wishes (like advice) or get out of an uncomfortable position. When permission is not required, why wait? Dare to Think for Yourself! Do you actually need permission, or are you really looking for approval?



“Care about people’s approval and you will be their prisoner.” – Tao Te Ching



**Success** - What is your definition of success? Happiness? Being a good parent? Financial gain? Possessions? Staying out of prison for 3 years? You must define this for yourself, and create your goals accordingly.

“No one can cheat you out of ultimate success but yourself.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

**sWellness** - Good physical and mental health are necessary for success. It is easier and less expensive to maintain good health than to treat disease. When we are in good health we think clearly and reduce our risk of disease. Eat well, exercise, get enough sleep, and keep negative stress to a minimum.



“You can set yourself up to be sick, or you can choose to stay well.” – Wayne Dyer



**Stress** - Not all stress is bad! There is good stress (excited for the future) and bad stress (worry). We all handle good and bad stress differently. Some people embrace change, problems and conflict and some prefer to keep life safe, predictable and amiable. Regardless of our choice, however, we will all experience stress, and the bad side of stress can manifest itself in physically damaging ways. When we identify our stress causers and learn about our stress tolerance, we can become more comfortable in a variety of situations and reduce, eliminate or accept reasonable levels of stress in our lives.

“You don’t get ulcers from what you eat. You get them from what’s eating you.” –Vicki Baum

**Anger** - Conflict is neither good nor bad. Like stress, it can be useful if engaged in appropriately, and it can damage us if handled poorly. One out of control outburst can cost you your job. When you feel anger building, remember to take a breath, own your feelings and remember to identify your Trigger (what upset you?) your Feeling (how does that make you feel?) and Reason (what is the best way to resolve this?)



“Flying off the handle sometimes causes hammers and humans to lose their heads, as well as their effectiveness.” – William Arthur Ward



**Diet** - Although you may be on a constricted diet due to limited funds, fresh foods such as fruit and vegetables are relatively inexpensive and are the best source of nutrition for your money. While they may appear cheap on the shelf, foods with extensive processing, that are full of sugars (including corn syrup) and preservatives, can do more harm than good in the long run and cost you a great deal more later – in medical expenses. Our bodies are between 55% and 75% water, so be sure to drink between ½ and 1 gallon of water every day!

“Did you ever stop to taste a carrot? Not just eat it, but taste it? You can’t taste the beauty and energy of the earth in a Twinkie.” – Astrid Alauda

**Exercise** - As important as food, exercise keeps vital nutrients circulating to the places that need them most. Exercise is also important for mental clarity, keeping our vital organs in good working order and helping to reduce blood pressure. Physical activity can improve flexibility, build muscular strength and increase endurance.



“Movement is a medicine for creating change in a person's physical, emotional, and mental states.”

– Carol Welch



**Flexibility** - Often it takes great flexibility to keep our desires and commitments under control. Sometimes the burden is too heavy and we have to put some of it down. Sometimes we have to expand our capabilities temporarily, which is when we find out we can handle more than we ever thought possible. Life is unpredictable and we have to be ready for everything!

“If one does not wish bonds broken, one should make them elastic and thereby strengthen them.”

– Ardant du Picq

# Culture Shock!

Most of the information Fair Shake shares is for everyone to read, because everyone plays an important role in creating opportunities for success after incarceration. This document has been created to increase generosity and understanding between the people who are coming home from prison and the people who have not experienced prison. Whether family, co-workers, neighbors, or friends, it's important that they try to think about how hard it must be to 'hit the ground running' after living in such a stark and controlled environment, while gadgets, lingo, and trends are mutating quickly and constantly. Feel free to share this piece with folks who have never been incarcerated.

*In many aspects, life in prison functions in opposite ways to life outside of prison.*

Although we cannot grasp what prison culture is like, if we can imagine living for several years on a confined piece of land surrounded by fences while living, working and eating in cement buildings, we begin to scratch the surface of a very different daily life. Inside prisons (and outside of administrator's offices) we find few, if any, potted plants, curtains, pictures on the walls, or carpets on the floors to provide a little comfort and absorb sound. Sleeping quarters are often very small, sometimes made smaller by the addition of a toilet, a sink and possibly another person. Other sleeping spaces can include large dormitories filled with dozens of bunk

beds and little or no privacy or quiet.

People in prison do things in large groups frequently, like dining and going to work, while everyone in prison is living within their own unique story, too, which may include difficult news from the doctor, a lawyer, or family and friends, at any time. Oftentimes people must bear their hard news alone.

Prisons have unique cultures, which can vary a great deal: over the years, within one institution, between institutions, and amidst the types of institutions (federal / state; or security levels). Not only do the people change, but also the philosophy and directive of "corrections".

We all become acculturated or "institutionalized" to places where we spend a lot of time: where we work, go to school, our neighborhood, etc. When we return home after spending time in another culture, our own customs can feel a little strange. We can adjust to a wide variety of conditions over time and even assume new cultural norms without consciously deciding to do so. Just as we need time to adjust to a new neighborhood or job, people coming home need time, generosity and understanding to adjust, too.

We have power! We can build relationships, trust and understanding by reducing expectations and projections; and by increasing listening and care.

## Consider just a small sample of cultural and lifestyle differences:

### Persona

**IN PRISON:** Survival in some prisons may require a tough appearance. Gentleness and kindness may be perceived to be weak, leading to a person being taken advantage of mentally, physically, or both. Maintaining a stoic exterior, keeping thoughts to one's self can be useful in prison.

**OUT OF PRISON:** Friendliness, smiles, and engaging conversations can show others we are open to interaction. These sociable attributes are critical for success many jobs.

### Trust

**IN PRISON:** Trust is hard to give and hard to gain. Concealment of emotions is important in many circumstances but it can make trust more difficult to attain.

**OUT OF PRISON:** One of our most treasured character traits is honesty. Trust is an important element in any relationship; whether with family, friends, or work-related. We work hard to build long-lasting relationships. It is within these deeper relationships that we can learn more about ourselves.

### Choices

**IN PRISON:** In addition to having an established schedule in prison, incarcerated people have few choices about where to go, what to wear, what colors they would like to see on the walls, or what they would like to eat for breakfast.

**OUT OF PRISON:** We constantly make decisions. Life moves at a brisk pace with frequent changes. We're constantly adjusting our plans, and re-prioritizing our goals to accommodate others and still keep time for ourselves. Lots of choice!

## **Gizmos**

IN PRISON: There are few gizmos. One gizmo is the music player. For twice the cost that unincarcerated people pay for a single song, an incarcerated person – who often earns about 1/100th of what they would earn outside of prison – can add a song to their MP3 player. Another gizmo is the 'public computer', which offers email and news within the institution. The most advanced gizmos are the tablets, which may or may not be free to the user. They offer email, music and movie services that generally come with a cost, and may include free services, too, such as books from Project Gutenberg, prison and education programming, or even Fair Shake's free app.

OUT OF PRISON: Gizmos, such as phones, tablets and laptops are ubiquitous. The devices demand attention which many of us eagerly provide. They offer non-stop distractions from 'real life' in the form of videos (many of which people make and post themselves), TV, social media, email, music and radio. Gizmos are also able to offer two-way communication through text, voice or video options.

## **Social Media**

IN PRISON: People watching TV together, people reading the same article and then talking about it, and even teleconferencing visits with family or friends are pretty much the extent of social media.

OUT OF PRISON: Social media is on almost every gizmo, and the pressure to join facebook, twitter, instagram and many others is great.

Many of us claim social media is 'pro-social' and boosts our awareness of current events and their meaning, but it has been tied to anxiety, depression and suicide.

## **Quiet Time**

IN PRISON: Prisons are noisy places. They offer few quiet places or opportunities for time alone. The buildings are made of concrete and offer few furnishings to reduce noise. When people get upset, they may become loud. Many incarcerated people keep earplugs with them at all times.

OUT OF PRISON: Life is very busy and we are constantly interacting; the gizmos make sure of that. We have to be strong and determined to carve out time to be alone...to reflect on our day, our perspective, and life, or to sit quietly and listen. Quiet time can be rejuvenating and reaffirming.

## **Care-giving**

IN PRISON: Incarcerated people are not able to provide daily, in-person physical or emotional care for children, partners, parents, or pets.

OUT OF PRISON: Caring for others is constantly affirming, taxing, challenging, and invigorating! We need to be needed, and we feel good supporting those we care about. Caring for others enhances our health!

## **Humanness**

IN PRISON: Incarcerated people may be referred to as "offender", inmate, or by their last name or ID number.

OUT OF PRISON: We can insist upon being treated with respect.

## **Physical Contact**

IN PRISON: Affectionate touch is brief and has been limited to family and close friends when they visit. Since COVID began, many visits have been replaced with teleconferencing.

OUT OF PRISON: Handshakes, hugs, back-patting, and other signs of affection are welcome and encouraged among relatives, friends, teammates and colleagues.

## **Information**

IN PRISON: Incarcerated people can access a limited amount of information through magazines, newspapers, television, radio, and letters. But a person can think, weigh options, and philosophize with others, and without a gizmo buzzing at them constantly.

OUT OF PRISON: We are overloaded with information, misinformation and disinformation, with very few tools to differentiate one from another and very little desire to hear things from outside of our bubble. Online, we have limitless reinforcements for our beliefs.

## **Patience**

IN PRISON: Incarcerated people must ask for - and wait for - assistance, services, and professional help including doctor visits, rides to see specialists, meetings with administrators, phone calls, and daily meals.

OUT OF PRISON: We are impatient. We want 'urgent care' and we can get medical help immediately, if necessary. We arrange meetings according to our schedule and we can spontaneously do things.

## **Consider these similarities, too!**

- In prison, people continue to love children, partners, parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, other relatives, friends, colleagues, clergy, advocates, etc.
- We all appreciate humor and many of us support our favorite sports people / teams
- We all feel sad, scared, excited, angry, caring, anxious, blue and vulnerable at times.
- We are all concerned about safety, security, and the future.
- We all need - and deserve - feelings of self-worth, agency, dignity and belonging.

## Transition Tips

Reentry can be both exciting and frustrating! Popular attitude toward release from prison is that it should be a simple matter of getting resettled, resuming routines, and reestablishing your relationships; but, of course, there is much more to it than that. Here is a list of tips to consider that might be helpful for any transition process:

1. **Mentally prepare for the adjustment process.** Be prepared for anything... especially the most challenging things like rejection, depression, anger and disappointment. Also, be prepared for things to be NOT as you expect them to be.
2. **Give yourself permission to ease into the transition.** Allow yourself the space and time to acclimate to your new environment. Don't worry if it takes you a little while to get used to things again. You'll need time to reflect upon what is going on around you.
3. **Understand that the familiar will seem different.** You have changed, and everyone and everything has changed. You will view familiar people, places, and behaviors through a new perspective.
4. **Expect to do some 'cultural catching up'.** Clothes, trends, phones and language have changed!
5. **Reserve judgments.** Reserve all judgments of others, but especially negative judgments; just as you would like to have others reserve judgments of you. Try to resist the impulse to make snap decisions.
6. **Expect mood swings.** It is entirely possible for you to feel ecstatic one moment and completely deflated a short time later. It's okay; it is a part of the process.
7. **Allow sufficient time for reflection and self-analysis.** Your most valid and valuable analysis of an event is likely to take place after allowing time for reflection. Consider your core values and determine how you can live within them.
8. **Respond to inquiries thoughtfully and carefully.** Prepare to greet surprise questions with a calm, thoughtful approach. If you find yourself being overly defensive or aggressive, take a deep breath and relax.
9. **Seek support networks.** Don't isolate yourself! There are people who want to help you through your transition. You will find them if you look.
10. **Volunteer.** It's a great way to ground yourself, to connect to community, to build references, reduce depression and anxiety, and network with people and possibilities!

To prepare yourself for upcoming challenges, it is safe to expect the following:

- You will have to prove yourself (over and over and over).
- People will make many assumptions about who you are now.
- You will be different than when you left; your family and friends will be different, too!
- People will expect a lot from you.
- The way you'd hoped things would be will be different from the way they are.
- You will feel down or depressed after the initial return 'honeymoon' period. Please share and discuss our Culture Shock! page with folks around you for further transition considerations. Feel free to contact me to share your thoughts: [sue@fairshake.net](mailto:sue@fairshake.net)



## Quotes Out of Context:

### Shifting Gears

"Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall." - Confucius

"The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change." - Carl Rogers

"Too much challenge makes life hard, but so does too little." - James Clear

"When I am locked into my personality, which is a result of my conditioning, it's like I'm looking at the world through a lot of filters." - Rafia Morgan

"The most precious gift we can offer anyone is our attention." - Thich Nhat Hanh

"The things you take pride in are the same things you are likely to be biased about." - James Clear

"Motivation is what gets you started. Commitment is what keeps you going." - Jim Rohn

"Let me fall if I must fall. The one I will become will catch me." - Baal Shem Tov

"Showing up every day and having integrity about the way you live your life: that's really the magic." - Min Jin Lee

"When you're the boss of the ideas in your head, you're always willing to revise them. When there is no amount of evidence that will change your mind about something, it means that idea is your boss. Humility is the awareness that no idea is worthy of being your boss." - Tim Urban

"Never expect to fail, but always plan for it." - James Clear

"It is often an assumption that because we are sitting in the same room, we are sitting in the same reality." - Orland Bishop

#### LETTUCE PARABLE

"When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need nutrients, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce.

Yet, if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce.

Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding."

- Thich Nhat Hanh

#### NOTES

## Relationships – Proceed With Caution

The Mental Health Foundation defines relationships as ‘the way in which two or more people are connected, or the state of being connected’. Relationships include the intimate relationships we have with our partners, ties that we form with our parents, siblings and grandparents; and the bonds that we form socially with our friends, work colleagues, teachers, healthcare professionals and community.

*If you don't trust people, people will not trust you.* – Lao Tzu

*You don't see things as they are. You see them as you are.* – Talmud

*More from the Mental Health Foundation:*

Relationships are one of the most important aspects of our lives, yet we can often forget just how crucial our connections with other people are for our physical and mental health and wellbeing. People who are more socially connected to family, friends, or their community are happier, physically healthier and live longer, with fewer mental health problems, than people who are less well connected.

It's not the number of friends you have, and it's not whether or not you're in a committed relationship; it's the quality of your close relationships that matters. Living in conflict or within a toxic relationship is more damaging than being alone. As a society and as individuals, we must invest in building and maintaining good relationships and tackling the barriers to forming them.

Having close, positive relationships can give us a purpose and sense of belonging. Loneliness and isolation remain the key predictors for poor psychological and physical health. Having a lack of good relationships, and long-term feelings of loneliness, have been shown by a range of studies to be associated with higher rates of mortality, poor physical health outcomes and lower life satisfaction. In seeking to combat loneliness and isolation, however, we need to be aware that poor-quality relationships can be toxic and worse for our mental health than being alone. Research shows that people in unhappy or negative relationships have significantly worse outcomes than those who are isolated or have no relationships.

Longer working hours, money problems and less time to spend with family have been reported as some of the most important stress factors for relationships. Having few close relationships has been linked to higher rates of depression and stress in older adults.

Engaging in community helps us feel connected and supported, and it gives us a sense of meaning and belonging. Involvement in local activities, such as volunteering or playing sports as part of a team, has been shown to improve mental health and wellbeing.

When it comes to keeping physically well, we recognize that exercise and eating well require commitment and dedication. We need to adopt a similar approach to building and maintaining good relationships! For many of us, our approach to building and maintaining relationships is passive – it is something we do subconsciously and without deliberate effort. We often overlook that it requires an investment of time to maintain good relationships.

Five things we can do to build our feelings of connection:

1. Put more time aside to connect with friends and family.
2. Try to be present in the moment and be there for your loved ones. Slow down, notice things.
3. Actively listen to what others are saying and concentrate on their needs in that moment.
4. Share how you are feeling, honestly, and allow yourself to be listened to and supported.
5. Foster healthy relationships: being around positive people can increase our mental and our physical health!

### Tips for building relationships and learning to trust:

- Be honest with yourself. If you are honest with yourself, you can be honest with other people
- Express your concerns
- Go slowly! Do not idealize the situation; consider the relationship clearly and thoughtfully
- Build trust step by step. Start trusting each other in small matters
- Trust is a perception of honesty; competence and value similarly are essential
- We creatively build our reality through social interaction using social structure as our guiding behavior
- Remember: The judgments we make about others depend not only on their behavior but on our interpretation of the social situation

### Love and Relationships

Regardless of how old we are, if we can think, we have thought about love. We know the definition is very broad, but we often allow ourselves to be duped into thinking "love" means "romantic relationship". Love certainly includes romantic relationships, but it is really so much more.

#### **Almost everyone wants:**

- To feel valued / valuable.
- To love and feel loved.
- To feel safe.
- To make sense of our life.
- To share joys and sorrows with close friends or family.

### Why do we lie?

- To look good. We choose to present an image of ourselves as attractive and desirable. We are afraid to share information that may make us look bad.
- To avoid unpleasantness. We conceal information that we believe may cause conflict. We go to great lengths to create false, superficial harmony. We get to know ourselves and each other better as we reveal and negotiate our differences.
- To avoid hurting feelings. We don't want to upset people by saying something that might hurt or make them angry.

Detecting lies can be difficult. Scrutinize three elements: voice, body language, and facial expression. Other possible signs of loss of trust: withholding information, mixed messages, refusing to negotiate.

## Basic Sociological and Relationship Concepts

### Uncertainty Reduction Theory:

Uncertainty is unpleasant and therefore motivational; people communicate to reduce it.

Strangers, upon meeting, go through certain steps and checkpoints in order to reduce uncertainty about each other and form an idea of whether one likes or dislikes the other. The contents of the exchanges are often demographic and transactional. What do you do? Do you have any pets? Demographic information can relate to gender, age, hobbies, interests, etc.

When the new acquaintances are ready to get to know each other better, they begin to explore the attitudes and beliefs of the other by asking questions about values, morals, and personal issues. They feel less constrained by rules and norms and tend to communicate more freely with each other. One factor which reduces uncertainty between communicators is the degree of similarity individuals perceive in each other (in background, attitudes, and appearance).

### Three basic ways people seek information about another person:

- Passive – observation only, no contact
- Active – ask others about the person in question
- Interactive – communicate directly with the person

The primary determinant of individual behavior is the social situation in which that behavior occurs. Social roles, competition, or the mere presence of others can profoundly influence how we behave. We usually adapt our behavior to the demands of the social situation, and in ambiguous situations we take our cues from the behavior of others.

## Terms

**Social Construction of Reality:** Refers to the process by which individuals build reality through social interaction. While statuses and roles structure our lives, we shape our patterns of interaction with others. People build reality from the surrounding culture. Therefore, perceptions of reality vary both within a single society and among societies the world over.

**Social Norms:** “Unwritten rules.” Adjustment to a group typically involves discovering its social norms., usually in one of two ways: noticing uniformities and observing negative consequences.

**Social Reality:** Subjective interpretations of other people and of our relationships. Social Reality determines whom we find attractive, whom we find threatening, whom we seek out and whom we avoid. The judgments we make about others depend not only on their behavior but on our interpretations of the social situation.

**Principle of Proximity:** Frequent contact best predicts our closest relationships.

**Self-Disclosure:** Sends signals of trust. “Here is a piece of information that I want you to know about me, and I trust you not to hurt me with it.”

**Nonverbal Communication:** This concept refers to communication using, not speech, but body movements, gestures, and facial expressions. Types of body language – smiles, eye contact, and hand movements. Most nonverbal communication is culture-specific. Three ways in which emotional life differs cross-culturally include: (1) what triggers an emotion, (2) how people display emotions according to the norms of culture, and (3) how people cope with emotions.

**Similarity:** People usually find it more rewarding to strike up a friendship with someone who shares their attitudes, interests, values, and experiences. If we have just discovered that we share tastes in music, politics, and attitudes toward education, we will probably hit it off because we have, in effect, exchanged compliments that reward each other for our tastes and attitudes. Most people find marriage partners of the same age, attitudes, and values.

## Terms Continued...

**Expectancy-Value Theory:** People usually decide whether to pursue a relationship by weighing the value they see in another person against their expectation of success in the relationship. People with low opinions of themselves tend to establish relationships with people who share their views, that is, with people who devalue them. On the other hand, individuals who appear to be extremely competent can be intimidating; we fear they will reject our approaches. When highly competent individuals commit minor blunders, however, we like them better.

**Cognitive Dissonance:** The term is used to describe the mental discomfort that results from holding conflicting beliefs, values, or attitudes...which causes feelings of unease or discomfort. This inconsistency motivates people to minimize their feelings of discomfort in different ways, such as by rejecting, denying, explaining away, blocking or avoiding new information. This explains how smokers rationalize their habit.

**Becoming an Ex:** This experience is common to most people in modern society. Unlike individuals in earlier cultures who usually spent their entire lives in one career, one marriage, one religion, or one geographic locality; people living in today's world tend to move in and out of many roles in the course of a lifetime. It's hard to shake former roles, however, so the 'ex' must repeatedly demonstrate the behaviors of the new roles they are in.

**Cooperation can change people:** Working with diverse people we learn all people are just people, not objects to be hated and/or loved for their perceived and distant media or culture-derived social value. We share a small country and a small planet! We are mutually interdependent. Whether we recognize this or not, we have a working relationship based on shared goals, such as breathing, eating, striving and belonging.

**Power of the Situation:** A basic premise of social psychology that assumes people's thoughts, actions, and emotions are influenced substantially by the social setting. Philip Zimbardo - creator of the Stanford Prison Experiment - said that it's not "a few bad apples", our problem is with bad barrels. The barrel corrupts.

**Discrimination:** A negative behavior, an action taken against an individual as a result of her or his group membership.

The source of discrimination and prejudice that is perhaps the most pervasive is an unthinking tendency to maintain conditions the way they are:

- Even when those conditions involve unfair assumptions prejudices and customs. If similarity breeds liking, then dissimilarity can breed disdain.
- Find commonalities! Diversify the groups you belong in, expand your associations, visit new places, try different cuisines!

**Fundamental Attribution Error:** We tend to attribute other peoples actions and misfortunes to their personal traits rather than to situational forces. This helps explain why we often hear attribution of laziness or low intelligence to people who aren't wildly financially successful.

For ourselves, however, we attribute our success to internal factors, such as motivation, talent or skill. We attribute our failures to external factors beyond our control, called a self-serving bias; probably rooted in the need for self-esteem due to social pressures to excel.

**Ubuntu:** A person is only a person-among-persons. Or, as the late Rev. Desmond Tutu said "the 'solitary individual' is a contradiction in terms". Or, as the author Wei Wu Wei phrased it: "Why are you unhappy? Because 99% of every thing you say, and everything you do, is for yourself...and there isn't one." We have a deep need to be unique, authentic and self-directed, and we can do this best while we are within a group of others who are also self-directed. We can reduce feelings of depression by volunteering, for instance.

## Dealing With Rejection

When we put ourselves in a position to be vulnerable to another person's opinion, we risk rejection.

Sometimes the risk is very small. Example: I tell a joke but my audience doesn't laugh. They look at me like I am speaking a language they don't understand. What does this mean? Do they reject my joke? Do they reject me? Maybe they don't share my sense of humor. Maybe they don't understand the joke. Maybe it's just not a good joke or maybe I need to learn how to deliver jokes. There are so many variables!

When I'm standing there in the silence, however, I find it hard to think of anything but "I'm not funny." or "I failed." I may even internalize these words and start to feel pretty rotten, as if I am incapable or unappealing. I told the joke to have fun and win approval; instead I feel deflated and rejected.

When I take a much larger risk, such as applying for a job, an apartment or a loan - where I've invested so much more of myself (time, information, hope, dedication) - the stakes are much higher. I may become discouraged when I hear 'we've chosen another applicant', 'we've rented the apartment to another person', or just plain 'no'. Again, it's hard for me to not internalize it. But just as in the case of the joke, there may be many variables that I am not considering. At this crucial time, I must remember to believe in myself and continue to pursue my goal.

It is hard to stay positive when we internalize rejection, and yet that is exactly what we need to do to persevere toward what we want. When we feel defeated, we would be wise to remember that we have taken many risks in the past and we have been successful. We must risk failure and rejection to feel the power of success. It is both scary and exhilarating!

Consider using these tools to keep your perspective as favorable as possible:

- First, remember you are important! Do not let rejection from any person or group lead you to believe you are not important, valuable, creative and necessary to the well-being of everyone.
- Be open to the possibility of rejection or criticism as the push you need to improve your approach, consider making other changes. Find ways to be positive. Positivity is magnetic!
- Consider the source. If you are doing what you believe is the right and best thing for you, keep doing it. It's okay to be rejected by people or groups that we do not wish to be a part of. Perhaps it's not a good fit and our view is clouded by a fog of unrealistic hopefulness. Try to remember to not take feedback or rejection personally.
- Keep focused on the big picture! Don't let minor set backs keep you from achieving your goals.
- Persevere! Keep doing what you are doing. Remember that you are the pilot of your goal, challenge, or position and you will not let rejection hold you back.
- Believe in yourself! If you don't believe in yourself, how can you expect others to believe in you? There are so many things that are special and incredible about you; don't forget what they are!
- This is an opportunity to build resilience. Getting through difficult challenges makes you stronger and more capable for your next challenges. Summon your fighting spirit that says "I will not quit"!
- Find your gratitude. Be grateful for the opportunity. Be grateful for allowing yourself to FEEL. Be grateful for the freedom to create your life, even though it may be very challenging. Be grateful for your critics. If it wasn't for them, we would not learn about ourselves.

## Handling Frustration

Life is full of frustrations. From the minor irritations of forgetting where you put your car keys, to the major anxieties of continued failure towards a goal, frustration is not a pleasant emotion in any magnitude. Because of the unpleasantness of this emotion, people will often avoid anything that might lead to it. Unfortunately, many of the things we truly want to experience such as triumph, joy, victory and purpose require a great deal of frustration. Being able to manage frustration allows us to remain happy and positive even in trying circumstances.

In order to successfully manage frustration, you need to first understand what causes it. Frustration is simply caused whenever the results you are experiencing do not seem to fit the effort and action you are applying. Usually frustration is caused by a narrow focus on a problem that isn't resolving itself as you had hoped. This is a very simple concept, but it is an important step to solving frustrating problems.

### Frustration is Energy Consuming

Our energy as human beings is our primary currency we use to do anything. Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energies all fuel discipline, creativity, courage and motivation. Anthony Robbins includes energy as the first key to success in any area of life. Stress in excessive doses is a negative emotional state that weakens the immune system and raises blood pressure as the direct result from a lack of energy. When we run out of energy we become useless.

Frustrating problems are incredibly energy consuming. Because these problems consume our energy in such great quantities, we need to be extremely careful that we don't try to keep running with an empty energy reserve. When this happens we burnout and require a long time to recover. The initial reaction of most people is to work harder when they encounter frustration. Although the intention to work harder makes sense, it often results in trying to spend more energy than we have available.

Why are frustrating problems more energy consuming than normal tasks? The answer to this is relatively simple. Because your action is not producing the results you expect, your brain naturally goes into full gear, rapidly consuming mental energy to solve the problem at hand. In this time it is very easy to run out of energy. When your energy stores are depleted this is when you become irritable, tired, stressed and sometimes even angry.

To get a little perspective on your issue, try broadening your focus from your current problem outwards. Try thinking about how the problem looks when you view it from a few weeks, a year, or ten years from now or compared to your lifetime?

Go outside and look up at the sky. Viewing the incredible expanse of space and time will ultimately make your problems look very small indeed.

Getting perspective when you are frustrated isn't a particularly difficult practice; the difficulty is in remembering to do it. It will be difficult to do this at first, but after diligent practice it will become a habit and happen automatically.

Nobody likes to feel frustrated. Unfortunately, frustrations are part of life. Learn to manage your frustrations so they don't leave you stressed, burned-out or depressed. Take breaks from your frustrations to recover your mental and creative energies. Reward your actions, not just your results and remember to gain a little perspective when you begin to feel overwhelmed. Don't let your frustrations prevent you from setting goals and living your life to the maximum.

Thank you Scott Young! Find more about this information here:  
<http://www.scotthyoung.com/blog/2006/06/10/dealing-with-frustration/>

## Motivation Tips

From the Fair Shake Ownership Tiny-Manual:

**Self Motivation** - While managers often try to find ways to motivate people from the outside, the best way to get things done is simply by wanting to do them. The more we align ourselves with our goals, values and interests, the more easily we can find the necessary motivation to carry out our tasks. Sometimes we have to keep our 'eyes on the prize' and work through things we really don't like – and sometimes we have to wait patiently - to get to the ultimate goal that we value the most.

"Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right." - Henry Ford

"He is able who thinks he is able." – The Buddha

Often people use - and many people want - **EXTRINSIC MOTIVATORS** (outside forces) to get us to do things we don't desire to do. Do we want to be lured by a Carrot? Do we prefer to be scared by a Stick? Bribe... or... Threat? Lured to buy a gizmo with a coupon or Afraid you will feel inadequate if you don't have the gizmo? Do you recognize these *extrinsic motivators*? You will find more examples of extrinsic motivators all around you once you start to take notice. Alas, extrinsic motivators whether fear or bribes - work well to get us to do some things, but not everything.

We cannot always be pulled or pushed. Sometimes we just want to be interested in what we're doing!

The forces that can energize us through our most challenging and creative tasks are often our **INTRINSIC MOTIVATORS** (inside forces) that bring satisfaction when we do tasks we don't care for but can find meaning in. For example, hanging laundry may be your least favorite thing to do, but you need clean clothes. This mundane task can transform to something beautiful when it happens on a warm, sunny day in the early spring. Just knowing that a beautiful day of hanging laundry is possible makes it easier to hang laundry on less desirable days. Intrinsic motivators make the tough stuff tolerable and can even connect us to the rest of the people on the planet who are going through tough stuff. And also to the people who are enjoying the spring sun while hanging out their laundry.

When we have an inner goal, a desire to solve a puzzle, the wish to work out something by ourselves, we are often motivated with speed, stamina, determination and creativity! Often our values and beliefs provide the fuel for our intrinsic motivation motors.

### Motivation Tips:

1. **Systematically and deliberately create success.** Decide what you want to do and what you will do when you get there. Now explore the steps you need to take to get you to where you want to be. Remember to anticipate the hurdles!

2. **Don't let your excuses get in the way.** Your tricky brain will come up with every excuse in the book to not move forward. You will even believe many of your excuses are legitimate. When you believe your excuses you can become stuck. Can you listen to your fears, and then remind yourself that you are strong enough and capable enough to take this on, and then just go and do it?

3. **Imagine Yourself Afterward:** Can you see yourself *after* you've reached your goal?

3. **Change habits and behaviors that lead you to procrastinate.** Are you doing things that are holding you back? Schedule time to do nothing and other than that time, stay on track with your goals.
4. **Several small jobs done over short periods of time are more manageable than one large task.** Instead of focusing on the difficulty of the large task, break it into smaller jobs and create a timeline for finishing them.
5. **Try tackling the more undesirable tasks early** so that you can pursue more pleasant activities later in the day.
6. **Exercise self-discipline.** Say 'no' when you need to...to yourself and to others. Keep your "eyes on the prize!"
7. **Overcome procrastination and block out human and media obstacles.** Sometimes we have to just get started, even when we don't feel like we're ready, or even up for, the task. Often just the ACT of getting started is enough to get engaged and encouraged. Refuse to let others divert you from your path! Procrastination is a self-defeating behavior that develops - in part - due to the fear of failure and paradoxically, the fear of success!
8. **Reward yourself.** Your self-motivation will increase enormously if you give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done. It feels great to accomplish tasks!
9. **Have fun!** Learning to enjoy yourself keeps you enthusiastic and motivated and helps you keep stress to a minimum. After all, good vibes create more good vibes!
10. **Imagine what the rewards will be when you finally reach your destination and keep that thought foremost in your mind.** You can also imagine the bad consequences (pain, frustration, the feeling of defeat) that may occur if you don't, if you prefer to look at it that way. Carrot or stick?
11. **Tell someone about your goals.** Show them or mark stages on a calendar to emphasize and visualize your goal. Check in with them periodically to tell them of your progress.
12. **Review your habits:** do you see yourself accomplishing your goals? You must change the habits that lead you to procrastinate in the first place. Lose, shorten or refuse to participate in demotivating habits during inappropriate times of the day (watching TV, disengaging from your goals) and replace them with habits that lead to engaging in and control of your life.
13. **Find your true interest.** If you dislike certain tasks, just look at them in the big picture...they are character building steps on the path of getting you to your greater goal.
14. **Make lists of the smaller jobs then tick off the work that you have completed.** Prepare a list of the things you have to do. Prioritize the list and then start ticking off tasks as they are completed. If you do this right, you may become motivated to complete them all!

## Managing Anger



*Flying off the handle sometimes causes hammers and humans to lose their heads...as well as their effectiveness.* ~ William Arthur Ward

Everyone gets angry.

We are all familiar with anger; we see it demonstrated frequently. We see angry people in TV shows and movies; we hear angry politicians and radio hosts. Sometimes we experience anger with others around us, and we also experience anger in ourselves.

People sometimes try to use anger to solve problems or to relieve stress...but that often creates more problems, more stress and even more anger.

We can't eliminate anger, but we can manage it. We can make it a useful tool instead of one that demolishes relationships and other things.

Anger is often glorified as a key to unlock hidden strength and passion. Anger *feels* powerful.

Power alone is not good or bad. We need to feel powerful to feel capable. Feeling powerful is an important element of our American cultural self-image. But power alone...without caring emotions such as reflection, kindness, and humility...can cloud our perception of situations, others, and ourselves.

When we feel painful emotions such as sorrow, or hurt, because we've been rejected, disrespected, offended, forgotten, etc., we can find ourselves feeling like we have a loss of power. To try to reduce our discomfort, sometimes we respond with a powerful emotion like anger.

It's hard for us to feel pain! We are 'wired' to go toward pleasure and away from pain. Anger feels like it stops pain - at least momentarily.

The process of dealing with painful emotions is very hard and requires a great deal of strength and self-control. We become more powerful, capable and intuitive as we develop deeper problem-solving skills and tools for life's constantly challenging situations. Used positively, anger can help us realize deeper feelings about things so we can construct ways to avoid anger in the future.

Processing anger-energy through 'venting' (to ourselves; not others!) can be beneficial for focusing on and clarifying a problem. If we can be critical and clear about what is going wrong, we can then drive ourselves to go deeper to get the picture of what it would look like to go 'right', and then we can make changes to turn the situation around. Once we deeply reflect on the situation, other people's points of view (if applicable), and our deeper feelings, then we can see what we can do to make things better. We can then show others how we'd like to be treated!

Many of us experience a great deal of discomfort when we disagree with others. Many of us were not taught the value of listening or engaging in friendly arguments or debates. We say we believe that another person's opinion can be as valid and 'right' as our own, but do we mean it? For *every* person? Believe it or not, it's possible for people with opposing view points to work together to create the best possible solutions!

Anger needs to be expressed, yet aggressive displays of anger can result in violent eruptions that further hurt us socially, mentally, and physically. We need to find ways to process our emotions effectively. An out-of-control outburst could cost us a job. Or worse.

A hammer is a great symbol for anger because hammers can demolish....and they can build!

When we feel our anger building we need to stop and recognize triggers that can seize control of our power.

**When you feel anger building, try to remember to:**

- Take a breath (or many!)
- Identify
  - o your TRIGGER (what upset you? And then look again...was it something deeper?)
  - o your FEELING (how do you feel about what is upsetting you?)
  - o your REASON (why does it bother you and what is the best way to resolve this?)

Then ask yourself some questions about how and when you get angry. Questions like:

- Do I always get angry about this issue?
- Could I have seen this coming?
- Could I have avoided feeling angry by taking a different approach to this situation?
- What is my goal here? What do I hope to achieve?

Blaming others for our anger or frustration seems like an easy way to solve our problem: we want to say that someone or something “did this to me”. But blaming leaves us powerless and ineffective! How can we expect a situation to improve - in the way we would like to see it improve - if we put the task on someone else?

Did you know that no one else can *make* us feel angry? We choose to respond with blame and/or anger...and we can choose a different response. We are FREE to improve our relationships and live without rage when we decide to deal with our feelings in effective and purposeful ways.

**Consider deeply what makes you angry and why. DIG for the answer that will transform anger!** Here are a few examples from my (Sue) usual challenges:

Why do I feel angry when others try to tell me what to do?

- Do I feel disrespected? As if they think I haven't thought about something carefully?

Why do I feel angry when it feels like others don't listen to or acknowledge me?

- Do I believe they think that my opinion is not valid or important?

Why do I feel angry when others are not respectful of an agreement we made?

- Do I feel like they think I am less important than they are?

Why do I feel angry when I stub my toe?

- Am I embarrassed because I missed something right in front of me?

Why do I feel angry when other drivers make travel difficult?

- Do I feel they are selfish, dangerous, disrespectful, and not paying attention?

Can you find the solutions you are looking for in your answers?

**Be aware of your temper: your 'anger energy'.**

Here are some ideas to help you keep your temper under control:

- **Try the Thermometer Technique** - Imagine your temper is red mercury in a large thermometer. When you're HOT, don't react! Wait until you are 'cool' to respond.
- **Count to 10, or 100!** – Count...and think of a time when you were calm and relaxed....to take your mind out of the immediate situation. Counting is an anger management tip that has worked for centuries! The Roman poet Horace (65 - 8 BCE) said, "When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, one hundred."
- **Inhale deeply** - Can you breathe so deeply that you get clean air deep down into your belly? Walk outdoors if possible! Your brain and your body work better with fresh air and plenty of water. Be sure to communicate with anyone you might be in a confrontation with that you are not leaving the problem; you're just clearing your head.
- **Exercise!** - Daily exercise allows you to work out stress. When you have less stress, you will feel angry less often. Regular exercise, including yoga and meditation, help you stay centered and keep things in perspective.
- **Vent** - Finding a safe spot to articulate your feelings...and maybe even yell (I find this particularly effective when I hammer my finger) can relieve enough stress to see the problem - and the solution -more clearly. Do not 'blow off steam' when anyone is nearby. Instead, try to find a place where you can be alone, or run and talk to the wind, or maybe stomp on aluminum cans to relieve frustration.
- **Ask Questions:** What will anger do? What can I do that would be more effective? I wonder if other people have experienced this before? What would a problem-solving hero do right now?

Our best way of dealing with anger is to find ways to make it useful. A powerful example is when someone uses the energy from anger to find the courage they need to protect someone who needs an ally.

**Be Careful - When anger turns into poison:** Sometimes we think that being angry and bitter all the time means we are smart, savvy and aware of the ways in which people and the media want to persuade us; as if it shows we are 'on to them'. Soon we are cynical, crabby people and, although people may think we are smart, they may also think we are just 'haters' and and they might not want to hang out with us. It's hard to have fun with angry people.

**Sue's Anger Story**

I live in a small town. We see our neighbors out and about and everyone knows I frequently ride my bike on the nearby bike trail. My dentist has an office just across the street from our bike trail and sees me on it all the time. He also likes to exercise outdoors; he runs.

One day I went to see my dentist for a routine check up. I enjoy talking with everyone when I'm there. When he checks my teeth we often 'catch up' for a minute, too.

After one of these friendly little chats, my dentist stood up and told me that his white coat identifies him as a health authority and added: "in the interest of health I have to tell you that I think you should wear a helmet".

I told him that I consider wearing a helmet sometimes, but most of the time I am comfortable - and prefer riding – without one.

I wish our discussion would have stopped right there.

Instead, he continued by saying "It's not like you're going to find a date out there." *WHAT?* Because helmets are ugly? I sat there, stunned, and thought: *Did you just say that? Is that sexist, or just stupid?*

Apparently he did not think that was enough reasons because he went on to say: "My wife just broke her pelvis riding her bike. Of course, the helmet did not protect her, but if she would have hit her head it would have." Oh, *REALLY???* Well, now I was outraged!!! I yelled at him in my mind: *Your wife's injury has NOTHING to do with wearing a helmet! You don't even know what kind of a rider I am! You don't know that I have fallen a lot and I know HOW to fall!*

Out loud I said "I know that you think you are showing me that you care...but I like riding without a helmet." In my mind I *added "and I will never sacrifice my joy, ability, confidence or strength to pander to your controlling and unjustified fears."*

Even though I was piping mad, I held my tongue and went out for a bike ride. I talked sternly to myself - out loud - in to the wind. I may have cussed. I talked and talked ...to him...to me...to really work through my frustrations to understand WHY I was so angry and upset.

It all came flooding in: I felt disrespected! I felt like I was treated like I was stupid! Like somehow being a dentist makes him a 'health authority' over me? Like I've never considered wearing a helmet before? Looking for a date? Really? He did not ask what I thought, he just told what he thought and expected me to comply.

So...what did I do? Well, it took me until my next appointment to decide.

I considered going in and talking with him. I also considered sending a letter stating that I was so offended that I will no longer be a patient. I considered making a point to have a talk with him the next time I go in for a check up. And then I considered saying nothing and just letting it go.

But wait! That answer was clearly *not* an option. I realized I needed to tell him that I want to be respected.

I mean, if I really want to resolve my anger - to eliminate this frustration of disrespect - well, then I must talk with him; to help him realize how to understand that 'caring' can feel an awful lot like 'controlling'. How could he know if he didn't hear my point of view? I realized he needed to hear how thin and lame his arguments were so he could see things differently, *and* respect that I am also a health authority...of me! I have been healthy for nearly all of my 58 years. So I resolved to discuss this with him during my next appointment.

I wonder if my dentist would have told me I needed a helmet if I rode to his office on a Harley.

I've been working on using my "angry energy" appropriately for most of my life. Every year my new year's goals are 'be kinder and more patient'. I will not need another resolution; I still have a long way to go. This is big, tough, complicated work!

For me, the first step to managing my anger is to decide that anger will no longer be used for demolition; that my feelings of anger will be used to construct new, better alternatives to challenges.

## Resisting Influence

*This is a shortened version of the original which was prepared by Dr. Philip Zimbardo and Cindy X. Wang  
You can view the full Resisting Influence Guide here: <http://www.lucifereffect.com/guide.htm>*

Our daily lives are wrought with compelling social tensions. Many of us hope that we are immune to compliance tactics, have the courage to resist unjust authority, and would never abandon our core beliefs and principles in the face of social pressures.

This document was created for learning how unwanted and unjust influence can impact your daily life and to better equip you to resist these forces. By understanding the contexts of influence and social compliance, we hope you will be able to identify the principles and strategies that professional agents of influence may use to gain your compliance.

We will look at frameworks to understand social influence and identify how you can apply these ideas to your own life, we will discuss ways to utilize your new understanding of the principles of social influence for positive social change, and finally we provide hints from Dr. Z on how to resist unwanted influences.

### Varieties of Influence

We listen to a debate with each side presenting seemingly compelling reasons to endorse one or another point of view. We get messages from advertisers, from the government, from assorted authorities to take particular actions, like buy a product, vote for a candidate, give blood, avoid impending disasters, and more. Such attempts to influence our attitudes, values or actions are considered forms of persuasive communication. "**Do as I say**," is the persuasive motto.

Other times the influence comes not dressed up in words in persuasive messages or visually appealing ads, but simply when the members of a group you are in, or want to belong to, act in a particular way. They don't have to tell you what to do; they simply exhibit the behavior or the style of action that is expected of "good team members." That form of social influence is known as conformity. "**Do as we do**," is the conformity motto.

Go along with the majority and be accepted. Refuse to dress as they do, talk like they do, value what they value, or act in ways that are the accepted social norm for this group, and you are rejected, isolated, expelled, ridiculed. The power of groups in our lives to influence our thoughts and actions can be enormous, especially when we desperately want to be accepted by the group. But you don't need a group to put pressure on you to act as they expect you to do; in fact, much social influence comes from a singular source - another person.

Compliance is a form of influence in which direct pressure is put on individuals to take some specific action, such as doing a favor or buying a product. The influence agent doesn't want to change your mind, only to get you to act on his or her request. Sometimes the request is pro-social, like donating blood, but more often than not, the request is to get people to purchase products that they might not need or even want initially.

All of these sources of social influence are external; they are imposed from the outside of you through influence agents (people who work hard to convince you to think a certain way).

One of the most powerful forms of influence is self-persuasion, which encourages individuals to engage in personal thought and decision processes. One tactic for inducing self-persuasion comes from role-playing positions that are contrary to one's beliefs and values. When we engage in public behavior that does not follow from our personal beliefs, cognitive dissonance is created. To the extent that we come to believe we made that commitment freely, without (awareness of) external situational pressures, we rationalize it and convince ourselves that it was the right action and the right position to hold.

What can you do to weaken or counter each of these varieties of social influence? Knowledge of how these influence settings work and what you can do to resist them is the first step in becoming a wiser consumer of social influence. You have to be continually vigilant and continually put into operation these resistance tactics for you to inoculate yourself against their insidious power.

### How We Are Persuaded

Communicators are most effective if they are perceived as Credible, meaning they have both expertise relevant to their message and are trustworthy - honest, and unbiased.

Communications come in many forms: some rational, some hit at our emotions, some inform us of the action we should take, and others leave the action hidden. Some messages are simple, others complicated, some lead with the request, others build up to it. Ideally, we need to process communications systematically, that means taking the time to figure out what is being requested, what evidence is being presented, and how contrary views are dealt with. Too often, we take short cuts and process the information only peripherally: too focused on the packaging and not the product. We may give excessive value to the speaker's tone of voice, or his or her good looks; and too little to what they are actually hawking. Always try to figure out who the message is intended for and what action are they requesting.

### Why We Conform: The Power of Groups

Whenever we change our behavior, views, and attitudes in response to the real or imagined presence of others, we are experiencing conformity. Two main types of conformity have been studied: *informational* and *normative*. **Informative conformity** often occurs in unfamiliar situations when we are likely to shape our behavior to match that of others. The actions of others inform us of the customs and accepted practices in a situation: what is right to do, how to behave.

**Normative conformity** occurs when we want to be liked or approved of by the group. This is the dominant form of social conformity. Though we may disagree secretly with the group opinion, we may verbally adopt the group stance so that we seem like a team player rather than a deviant.

Both of these pressures impact us everyday. A staple of a functioning society is that people follow social norms such as obeying traffic laws, respecting others' property, and diffusing aggression in non-violent ways. However, conformity can have deleterious effects if one conforms automatically without questioning of the validity of social norms. In Nazi Germany, many ordinary people did not dissent to the ongoing atrocities because few other people resisted.

In our daily decisions, we should also examine whether our reasons justify our actions. In an unfamiliar situation, first ask yourself whether the actions you observe others performing are rational, warranted, and consistent with your own principles before thoughtlessly and automatically adopting them.

Similarly, in a situation in which you want to impress and be accepted by others, ask yourself whether the action conflicts with your moral code, and consider whether you would be willing to compromise your own opinion of yourself just so others would have a higher one of you. Ultimately, you are the only one who has to live with your actions. Be sure to take a time out to find out the correct information.

### Cialdini's Principles of Social Influence

Having begun to understand the strength of social influence, we now move on to the principles of influence studied by social psychologist Robert Cialdini; a renowned social psychologist that has done extensive research on the domains in which social influence is most powerful. The following principles play on fundamental human instincts and can be exploited both intentionally and unintentionally.

Many of these may seem like obvious tactics that advertisers and influence agents will utilize to sway our opinion. However, when we are not prepared to scrutinize and resist them, these principles will often work subliminally and quite powerfully. An important part of resisting these influence tactics is awareness of their operating principles, contexts in which they are provoked, and methods to avoid falling prey to them.

We hope that by learning about these principles of persuasion, you will be better able to recognize the situations you are in that may lead to act against your will and then to have the tools to resist unwanted social influence. There are six basic principles, and each one is set in a specific Context. When you are aware of the Context, or the behavioral Setting, you will better recognize the principal at work, when you see the principal operating, you will understand the Context in which it is embedded

### **Reciprocity [Context: Obligation]**

The rule of reciprocity requires that one person try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided. Supports the giving of favors since repayment is expected from the recipient

#### *The Basics*

- Sense of future obligation makes it possible to develop continuing relationships and exchanges
- We are trained from childhood to abide by the reciprocity rule or suffer social disapproval

#### *How It's Exploited*

- Rule can spur unequal exchanges
- "Door-in-the-face" – relies on persuader making an outrageous, extreme request first, then conceding to a comparatively small request (one desired all along) that will likely be accepted because it appears to make a concession

#### *Best Defense*

Reject initial offers, favors, concessions; redefine them as tricks and refuse to feel obligated to respond reciprocally

### **Consistency [Context: Commitments]**

#### *The Basics*

- People desire to look consistent within their words, beliefs, attitudes, and deeds
- Consistent conduct provides a beneficial approach to daily life and is highly valued by society
- Shortcut through complex decision-making reduces processing time in future decisions

#### *How It's Exploited*

- Profiteers exploit the principle by inducing people to make an initial commitment, take a stand or position that is consistent with requests that they will later ask of them
- Commitments are most effective when they are active, public, effortful, and internally motivated.
- If they are successful, abiding by this rule may lead to actions contrary to one's best interests

#### *Best Defense*

- Do not be pressured into accepting requests that you do not want to perform.
- Be sensitive to situational variables operating on your decision

### **Social Proof [Context: Consensus]**

#### *The Basics*

- A means to determine what is correct by finding out what other people think is correct
- Principle can be used to stimulate a person's compliance by informing the individual that many other individuals have been complying (compliance by famous or authoritative people is very effective)
- A shortcut for determining how to behave – while making us vulnerable to persuasion experts
- Most influential under two conditions:
  - o Uncertainty – situation is ambiguous; more likely to accept the actions of others as correct
  - o Similarity – people are inclined to follow the lead of similar others

#### *How It's Exploited*

- The Bandwagon effect – everyone who is anyone is doing it, why not YOU?
- The "In Crowd" has it right, do you want them to accept you or not? So act like them

#### *Best Defense*

- Develop counterarguments for what people are doing; their actions should not form yours
- Be aware that the others may have a biased reason for the action they are advocating
- Be aware that the others may be misinformed
- Remember the entire group might be wrong-headed because the leader has biased their opinions

## Liking [Context: Friendship]

### *The Basics*

- People prefer to say “yes” to individuals they know and like
- We want people to like us and we like those who show that they like us

### *How It's Exploited*

- Persuasion experts manipulate factors that influence their likeability.
- Features that influence liking:
  - Physical attractiveness – attractive people are more successful in getting requests granted
  - Similarity – we like people who are like us; we are more willing to say “yes” without thinking
  - Praise – compliments generally enhance liking and compliance
  - Familiarity – repeated contact with a person or thing normally facilitates liking
  - Association – making connections to positive things
  - Shadowing - persuader exhibits behaviors that match those of the target individual

### *Best Defense*

- Developing a special sensitivity to suspicious and undue liking from the requester
- Separate the requester from the request, and make decisions based solely on the merits of the offer – not your feelings about the requester.

## Scarcity [Context: Competition]

### *The Basics*

- People assign more value to opportunities when they are less available—if there are fewer resources and less time to get them, we want them more
- Principle holds true for two reasons:
  - Things that are difficult to attain are typically more valuable
  - As things become less accessible, we lose freedoms and want them more than before
- Optimizing conditions for scarcity principle:
  - Value newly scarce items more than items that have been restricted all along
  - Most attracted to scarce resources when we must compete with others for them

### *How It's Exploited*

- Use of this principle can be seen in compliance techniques as ‘limited number’ and ‘deadline’ tactics

### *Best Defense*

- Step back and assess the merits of the opportunity, the value of the item, and why/if we want it
- Give an objective evaluation of its personal value; not overvalue it because it appears to be scarce

## The Science of Social Influence – Anthony Pratkanis

Anthony Pratkanis has meticulously studied social influence tactics and classified numerous methods that humans utilize to manipulate and change the attitudes and beliefs of others.

### **Landscaping (Pre-persuasion tactics)**

The following methods are some of the ways influence agents can have contexts working for them even before you know you're being influenced.

1. Define and label issue in a favorable manner
2. Association
3. Set expectations
4. Agenda setting
5. Establish a favorable comparison point or set
6. Control the flow of information
7. Limit and control the number of choices and options

### **Tactics that rely on social relationship (Social credibility and social rules)**

One of the most important elements of convincing arguments is a reputable source. We are constantly bombarded by commercials that report experts such as dentists support a brand of toothpaste or professional athletes eat certain breakfast cereals. These tactics are surprisingly effective! By utilizing the following traits and characteristics, people can play on social relationships in order to persuade.

Tactics that rely on social relationship (continued)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Authority                                | 6. Social modeling                           |
| 2. Attractiveness                           | 7. Social reinforcement                      |
| 3. High Status                              | 8. Multiple sources                          |
| 4. Similarity – “just plain folks like you” | 9. Arguing against one’s own self-interest   |
| 5. Role-play                                | 10. Draw on well-being of friends and family |

### Effective message tactics

Effective communication depends on the strength and logic of the message. Here, we cite a few examples of how messages can induce the target to generate reasons for adopting recommended action:

1. Self-generated persuasion – give the target a chance to persuade themselves
2. Vivid appeals – emotionally interesting or compelling
3. Let the message recipient draw his or her conclusion
4. Rhetorical questions
5. Pique interest in message
6. Message fit with pre-existing beliefs, experiences, knowledge
7. Placebic reasons – arguments that appear to make sense but actually lack information
8. Defusing objections – acknowledging objections and refuting them before a target can raise them
9. Asking for small contributions initially
10. Message length = message strength
11. Repetition of message
12. Primacy effect – order of presentation

### Emotional tactics

Emotions are often thought to infringe on our rationality and better judgment. Pratkanis presents this set of emotional tactics that take advantage of our subjective feelings, arousal, and tensions as the basis for securing influence.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Fear  | 8. That’s not all – sweetening the deal |
| 2. Guilt   | 9. Commitment trap                      |
| 3. Embarrassment   | 10. Low-balling                         |
| 4. Threat of insult  | 11. Bait-and-switch                     |
| 5. Flattery  | 12. Scarcity                            |
| 6. Empathy   | 13. Anticipatory regret                 |
| 7. Reciprocity   |   |
| 14. Door-in-face – ask for a large favor, retreat and ask for a much smaller favor |   |
| 15. Foot-in-the-door – ask a small request than ask for a larger request           |   |

## Defensive and Offensive Tactics for Resisting Influence

**Defensive** – learn how to detect propaganda

1. Play devil’s advocate
2. Generate questions to ask

**Offensive** – steps that will identify common propaganda forms and stop them at their source

1. Know the ways of persuasion and know that you personally may be the victim of propaganda
  - o Distinguish source credibility
  - o Realize your level of personal vulnerability
2. Monitor your emotions
  - o If you’re having an emotional response to a communication, ask yourself why
  - o Look for things that induce false emotions of fear, guilt, reciprocity
3. Explore the motivation and credibility of the source: what does the source have to gain and is it an overly manufactured image?
4. Think rationally about any proposal or issue: What is the issue? Arguments for and against?

### Defensive and Offensive Tactics for Resisting Influence (continued)

5. Attempt to understand the full range of options before making a decision; relate to your values.
6. If you hear something repeatedly, ask why it is being repeated.
7. If the deal looks too good to be true, it probably is such as free gifts and time-sensitive offers.
8. Develop counterarguments to propaganda and compare performance with advertising.
9. Support efforts to prevent vulnerable groups against exploitative persuasion.
10. Avoid being dependent on a single source of information.
11. Separate news from entertainment (FS note: The 'news' often consists of entertainment 'news'.)
12. Use 'communication style' as one criteria in making decisions and judgments.
13. Increase your personal involvement, knowledge, and awareness in important issues; take some time to find out more on your own.

### Positive Social Influence and Civic Virtue

While most psychological research is focused on the negative aspects of social influence, principles of social influence can be used for good, to enhance basic social and political values. Making sensible adjustments and achievable objectives can help us reach goals that improve on our lives and those near us. Moral behavior can be cultivated by rewarding positive behavior. Government, education, and social institutions can be re-designed to facilitate critical thinking and responsible conduct. The following highlights some ideas that we can bring into our own lives and those of our children.

1. Supporting critical thinking abilities. Asking Why? How does this relate to my values? Resist living on mindless "auto-pilot" and instead reflect on details of the immediate situation; think before acting!
2. Rewarding moral behavior: Social recognition for good deeds; acknowledge bravery.
3. Encouraging respect and appreciation for diversity and human variability reduces biases and discrimination.
4. Not allowing stereotyping and dehumanization of other people.
5. Changing social conditions that make people feel anonymous; support conditions that encourage people to feel valuable, special and worthy.
6. Encouraging admission of mistakes, accepting error in judgments – to reduce justification for continuing wrong, immoral behavior and motivation to minimize dissonance.
7. Promoting personal responsibility and accountability of one's actions. Blaming others is a disguise for one's own role in the consequences of actions.
8. Supporting independence over group conformity; recognize when conformity to the group norm is counter-productive and when independence should take precedence despite possible rejection.
9. Reducing poverty, inequities, and entitlements of the privileged.
10. Never sacrificing freedom for promised security.
11. Discouraging even small transgressions: cheating, gossiping, lying, teasing, bullying.

### Dr. Z's Hints About Resisting Unwanted Influences On You

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Let go of illusions of "personal invulnerability". If it can happen to them, it can happen to you.</li> <li>2. Be modest in self-estimates – it's better to perceive yourself as vulnerable and take precautions.</li> <li>3. Engage in life as fully as possible, yet be prepared to disengage and think critically when necessary.</li> <li>4. Be aware of Cialdini's contexts and principles of compliance; look to the relevant context being manipulated on you and pull back.</li> <li>5. Be ready to say the three most difficult phrases in the world: "<i>I was wrong</i>", "<i>I made a mistake</i>", and "<i>I've changed my mind.</i>" Dissonance and consistency go limp in the face of self-honesty.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Separate your ego from your actions; maintain a sense of positive self-esteem, that is independent from the occasional failure and your stupid actions at times (Laugh at yourself once a day.)</li> <li>7. Separate the messenger from message in your mind, be aware of mental fatigue, wanting simple answers or short cuts, and giving in to non-verbal tricks. There are no free lunches and no quick paths to anything worthwhile – sloth and greed breed gullibility.</li> <li>8. Insist on a second opinion; think about opportunities, contracts, proposals and requests for commitments away from the situation; never immediately sign on the dotted line.</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

9. Develop mental and intuition systems that acknowledge your vague feelings of something wrong.
10. Try playing devil's advocate; be the deviant in a positive way! Assess the reactions against you when the influence agent says he/she is only doing this for your good.
11. In all authority confrontations: be polite, individuate yourself, describe the problem objectively, do not get emotional, state clearly the remedy sought, and the positive consequences expected.
12. Never allow yourself to be cut off emotionally from your familiar and trusted reference groups of family, friends, neighbors, co-workers – do not accept putdowns against them.
13. Remember all ideologies are abstractions used for particular political, religious, social, economic purposes – always relate these to your values and question if the means justify the ends.
14. Think hard before putting abstract principles before real people in following others' advice to act in specific ways.
15. Trust your intuition and gut feelings. When you sense you are becoming a target of influence, put up your counter-arguing mentality and dig down for sources of resistance.
16. Rules are abstractions for controlling behavior and eliciting compliance and conformity - consider when, where and why we have rules. Ask: who made the rule? What purpose does it serve? Who maintains it? Does it make sense in this specific situation? What happens if it is violated?
17. When trying to figure out reasons for unusual behavior - yours or others - start by considering possible situational forces and variables vs. judging the behavior as "character".
18. Imagine Dr. Z as your conscience, your personal Jiminy Cricket (from Pinocchio) sitting on your shoulder and saying be cool, be confident, be collected - to avoid becoming a Jack Ass.

## A Ten-Step Program to Build Resistance and Resilience

Here is my 10-step program toward resisting the impact of undesirable social influences, and at the same time promoting personal resilience and civic virtue. It uses ideas that cut across various influence strategies and provides simple, effective modes of dealing with them. The key to resistance lies in development of the three S's-- **Self-Awareness, Situational Sensitivity, and Street Smarts**. You will see how they are central to many of these general strategies of resistance.

### **"I made a mistake!"**

Let's start out by encouraging admission of our mistakes, first to ourselves then to others. Accept the dictum that to err is human. You have made an error in judgment; your decision was wrong. You had every reason to believe it was right when you made it, but now you know you were wrong. Say the six Magic words: "I'm sorry"; "I apologize"; "Forgive me." Say to yourself that you will learn from your mistakes; grow better from them. Don't continue to put your money, time, and resources into bad investments. Move on. Doing so openly reduces the need to justify or rationalize our mistakes, and thereby to continue to give support to bad or immoral actions.

Consider how many years the Vietnam War continued long after officials knew that the war could not be won. How many thousands of lives were lost, when acknowledging failure and error could have saved them? It is more than a political decision to 'save face' - it is a moral imperative to do the right thing.

### **"I am mindful."**

In many settings smart people do dumb things because they fail to attend to key features in the words or actions of influence agents and fail to notice obvious situational clues. Too often we function on automatic pilot, using outworn scripts that have worked for us in the past, never stopping to evaluate whether they are appropriate in the here and now. We need to be reminded not to live our

lives on automatic pilot, but always to take a Zen moment to reflect on the meaning of the immediate situation, to think before acting. For the best result add "critical thinking" to mindfulness in your resistance. Ask for evidence to support assertions; demand that ideologies be sufficiently elaborated to allow you to separate rhetoric from substance. Imagine scenarios of future consequences of current practices. Reject simple solutions as quick fixes for complex personal or social problems. Support critical thinking and become vigilant about deceptive ads, biased claims, and distorted perspectives. Become wiser and warier knowledge consumers.

### **"I am responsible."**

Taking responsibility for one's decisions and actions puts the actor in the driver's seat, for better or for worse. Allowing others to determine our actions or opinions makes them powerful back-seat drivers, and makes the car move recklessly ahead without a responsible driver. We become more resistant to undesirable social influence by always maintaining a sense of personal responsibility and by being willing to be held accountable for our actions. Always imagine a future time when today's deed will be on trial and the judge and jury will not accept your pleas of 'only following orders', or 'everyone else was doing it'.

**“I am Me, the best I can be.”**

Do not allow others to deindividuate you, to put you into a category, in a box, a slot, to turn you into an object. Assert your individuality; politely state your name and your credentials, loud and clear. Insist on the same behavior in others. Make eye contact (remove all eye-concealing sun glasses), and offer information about yourself that reinforces your unique identity. Find common ground with dominant others and use it to enhance similarities. Anonymity and secrecy conceals wrongdoing and undermines the human connection. It can become the breeding ground that generates dehumanization. Go a step beyond self-individuation. Work to change whatever social conditions make people feel anonymous. Instead, support practices that make others feel special, so that they too have a sense of personal value and self worth. Never allow or practice negative stereotyping—words and labels can be destructive.

**“I respect just authority; I question unjust authority.”**

In every situation, work to distinguish between those in authority who, because of their expertise, wisdom, seniority, or special status, deserve respect, and those unjust authority figures who demand our obedience without having any substance. Many who assume the mantle of authority are pseudo-leaders, false prophets, confidence men and women, self-promoters, who should not be respected, but rather openly exposed to critical evaluation. We must play more active roles in critical differentiation. We should be polite and courteous when such a stance is justified, yet be wise by resisting those authorities that do not deserve respect. Doing so, will reduce mindless obedience to self-proclaimed authorities whose priorities are not in our best interests.

**“I will balance my Time Perspective.”**

We can be led to do things that are not within our values when we allow ourselves to become trapped in an expanded present moment. By developing a balanced time perspective in which past, present and future can be called into action depending on the situation and task at hand, you are in a better position to act responsibly and wisely. Situational power is weakened when past and future combine to contain the excesses of the present.

**“I can oppose unjust Systems.”**

Individuals falter in the face of the intensity of some systems and resistance may involve physically removing one's self from a situation in which all information and reward/ punishments are controlled. It may involve challenging the “groupthink” mentality, and being able to document all allegations of wrongdoing. Systems have enormous power to resist change and withstand even righteous assault. Here is one place where individual acts of heroism to challenge unjust systems, and their bad barrel makers, are best taken by soliciting others to join one's cause.

**“I will not sacrifice personal or civic freedoms for the illusion of security.”**

The need for security is a powerful determinant of human behavior. We can be manipulated into engaging in actions that are alien to us when faced with alleged threats to our security or the promise of security from danger. More often than not, influence peddlers gain power over us by offering the Faustian contract: You will be safe from harm if you will just surrender some of your freedom, either personal or civic, to that authority. Reject that deal. Never sacrifice basic personal freedoms for the promise of security because the sacrifices are real and immediate and the security is a distant illusion.

**“I want group acceptance, but value independence.”**

The power of the desire for acceptance will make some people do almost anything to be accepted, and go to even further extremes to avoid rejection by The Group. We are indeed social animals, and usually our social connections benefit us and help us to achieve important goals that we could not achieve alone. However, there are times when conformity to a group norm is counter-productive to the social good. It is imperative to determine when to follow the norm and when to reject it. Ultimately, we live within our own minds, in solitary splendor, and therefore we must be willing and ready to declare our independence regardless of the social rejection it may elicit. Pressure to be a “team player,” to sacrifice personal morality for the good of the team, are nearly irresistible. We must step back, get outside opinions, and find new groups that will support our independence and promote our values. There will always be another, different, better group for us.

**“I will be more Frame Vigilant.”**

The way issues are framed influence us without our being conscious of them, and they shape our orientation toward the ideas or issues they promote. We desire things that are framed as being “scarce,” even when they are plentiful. We are averse to things that are framed as potential losses, and prefer what is presented to us as a gain, even when the ratio of positive to negative prognoses is the same. We don't want a 40% chance of losing X over Y, but do want the 60% chance of gaining Y over X. Linguist George Lakoff clearly shows in his writings that it is crucial to be aware of frame power and to be vigilant to offset its insidious influence on our emotions, thoughts, and votes.

This 10-step program is really only a starter kit toward building resistance and resilience against undesirable influences and illegitimate attempts at persuasion. It takes your awareness and sensitivity to such influence settings, and a willingness to think for yourself, as you practice being independent and as autonomous as is possible.

## Working Through Depression

**Depression** *noun* Severe, typically prolonged, feelings of despondency and dejection, typically felt over a period of time and accompanied by feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy. (source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)

As Americans, it is common to feel like we are supposed to be happy. TIME magazine\* recently announced “Americans are wired to be happy”, and reminded us that we made the pursuit of happiness “a central mandate of the national character” when we declared it a basic human right.

With so much emphasis placed on feeling good, it should come as no surprise that when we don't feel happy, we may feel like something is wrong.

In fact, when we feel lonely, inadequate or disheartened as we search for meaning in our lives, our friends and family and even professionals often encourage us to strive to feel good again as soon as possible; whether through distractions (shopping, media and other activities) or pain relievers (drugs, alcohol, food). It is rare to receive sympathy and support to simply *feel* our discomfort as we reflect, contemplate, ask questions, grow, and become stronger and more capable through a natural and important process.

When we experience painful emotions we often feel alone. Sometimes we think we are the only person who feels this sad, hurt, alone or lost. However, people all over the world experience these difficult feelings.

Painful emotions are not bad; they are actually powerful guides to self-fulfillment.

- They help us clarify our values.
- They help us find meaning in our lives and see our unique perspective and qualities.
- They allow us to stop moving forward for a moment so we can reflect and think critically.
- They can motivate us through tough spots to more deliberately plot out our life course.
- They help us understand the suffering of others; and realize that we are not alone when we suffer.

All of our emotions - the pleasant ones *and* the difficult ones - are vital for our well-being!

We will most likely feel grief, loss, powerlessness, disrespected, compromised, inauthentic, abandoned, anxious, overwhelmed, unworthy, melancholy, or even a sense of hopelessness at some point in our lives, yet none of us will experience depression in the same way as anyone else. The good news is: we can work through most forms of depression without drugs. Everything we need is either already in our possession or can be found in the natural world around us.

There are many books, classes, groups, articles, and television shows on depression. The content of this brief document does not support or refute any existing information. Our sole intention here is to reinforce a positive and enabling perspective about growing through tough emotions rather than denying them through distractions or pain relievers. We grow in important ways through our human challenges.

Depression is related to our thinking; our perception of our memories, our fears, our failures, our hopes. It's mostly a modern illness and has been growing consistently since the industrial age which, paradoxically, is celebrated for making our lives easier. According to Dr. Stephen Ilardi, author of *The Depression Cure*, many cultures where people are dedicated to living in connection to their environment and to each other, do not experience depression.

When we feel sad, hopeless or depressed, we often feel like we don't have a choice in how we experience these feelings....but we almost always do. We can't eliminate depression by pretending we can 'let it go' without effort. We begin to rise out of it by looking at our situation through a different perspective. We can see different perspectives by considering philosophical, psychological and sociological concepts. This sounds rather 'academic', but we've been using techniques identified in these fields of study everyday since we were very young.

\* TIME magazine: July 8, 2013

Below are just a few of these perspectives that we use everyday:

**Pessimism vs Optimism:** (inspired by Dr. Martin Seligman)

**Optimism** *noun* Hopefulness and confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something. *(source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)*

**Pessimism** *noun* A tendency to see the worst aspect of things or believe that the worst will happen; a lack of hope or confidence in the future. *(source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)*

**Optimists** believe that tough times are temporary, that hurdles build character and that most problems are surmountable. An optimistic perspective uses a Specific, External and Temporary lens (see below). We are optimists when we can see solutions, and also when we realize situations will change and beneficial opportunities will again present themselves.

*Optimism is a tool with a certain clear set of benefits: it fights depression, it promotes achievement and produces better health.* ~ Dr. Martin Seligman

**Pessimists** focus on what's wrong and what's difficult; they believe they are victims. They blame others for their situation. They believe that they are inadequate to fend off tough times, which are constantly threatening. A pessimistic perspective looks through a Permanent, Personal, and Pervasive (PPP) lens. We are pessimists when we believe we are incapable of doing whatever it is we need / want to do, when we blame outside forces for our situation or experience, when we want to give up, and when we believe we cannot create the life we want.

The difference between Optimistic (SET) vs. Pessimistic (PPP) perspectives:

**Pervasiveness:** Specific (*I'm great at fixing bikes.*) vs. Universal (*I can fix things.*)

**Personal:** External (*I have no luck.*) vs. Internal (*I have no talent.*)

**Permanence:** Temporary (*I am not good at this right now.*) vs. Permanent (*I am bad at this.*)

**Hope:** Hopeful (*I'll be able to fix this.*) vs. Hopeless (*It can't be fixed, I have to buy a new one.*)

Each perspective can be interpreted as a personal belief system, a self-fulfilling prophesy. Most of us are both pessimists *and* optimists, depending on the situation and our perception of our capabilities. Just as we can pick up good habits and let go of bad habits, so, too, can we learn to be optimistic and to drop pessimism.

And as with any habit, we can improve our ability and change our perspective over time by staying focused on meaning, values, and the long-term results.

To lift ourselves out of depression, and switch from a pessimistic to an optimistic perspective, we need to have faith.

**Filters of Faith:**

**Faith** *noun* Complete trust or confidence in someone or something *(source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)*

We have faith when we believe in something even when we don't have proof.

Example: I have faith that I will get to the grocery store without getting into an accident.

*Faith* itself does not require belief in a particular religion; but belief in any religion requires *faith!*

To switch from a pessimistic perspective to an optimistic one, we need to have faith that optimism will help us reach our goal; and that pessimism is not how things really are. Remember *The Little Engine That Could?* "I think I can, I think I can." We are capable of doing very difficult things!



Can you **believe**

- that you have inherent worth, and that you are as important and valuable as everyone else?
- that your situation, problem or feeling is temporary?
- that a series of complex circumstances is what brought you to this point; not who you are?
- that all things change?...and that your situation is temporary and you will be able to get through it?
- that you have the power to change your attitude, your perception and your opportunities?

**Dr. Stephen Ilardi**, author of *The Depression Cure*, has been inspired by studying the resilience found in aboriginal groups who rarely suffer from depression. He suggests we integrate the following six elements into our lifestyle. Try the item that feels the most comfortable for you...and after a while add another. After a week or so, reflect on how you feel. Then add a 3<sup>rd</sup> and reflect on that experience, etc.

**1. The Omega-3-Rich Diet:** Sources of omega-3 essential fatty acids include fish, kidney and pinto beans, soybeans, canola and flaxseed oils, walnuts and vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, spinach, and salad greens.

**2. Exercise:** Dr. Stephen Ilardi says: *Even moderate physical activity - brisk walking three times a week - has been shown in two landmark studies to fight depression as effectively as Zoloft. Simply put: exercise changes the brain.* You can start with small increments of time. Make exercise one of your healthy habits!

**3. Plenty of natural sunlight:** Get outside, even when it's cloudy. Sunlight supports the creation of vitamin D, a necessary nutrient for mental health and strong bones.

**4. Quality Sleep:** Sun, fresh air, exercise, and fully engaging in life will help you get a good night's sleep.

**5. Social Connections:** One of our most basic human needs is belonging. Calls and letters with family and friends, participating in team sports and/or book clubs, volunteering and helping others all contribute to the feeling we belong and are cared about. Another basic need is independence. Remember to take thoughtful and creative time just for you, then you can share your thoughtful and creative self with others!

**6. Participation in Meaningful Tasks:** This leave little time for negative thoughts. Consider concepts in philosophy. Another basic human need is having a sense of purpose, self-worth, and meaning. We determine these by our thoughts; we demonstrate them through our actions. Volunteer! Help someone else.

### **Inspiration from great thinkers:**

"Participating in meaningful tasks" has been a central theme to many philosophers, psychotherapists and other great thinkers, and has played an important role in of the process of reducing or transforming suffering for thousands of years.

**Buddhism**, a 2500 year old philosophy practiced like a religion, focuses on creating a meaningful life to alleviate suffering. By studying Buddhist ideas, we can learn to understand why we suffer. People can participate in any religion and still benefit from The Four Noble Truths:

**First Noble Truth:** To live is to experience physical and psychological suffering. We have to endure physical suffering like sickness, injury, tiredness, old age and eventually death; we have to endure psychological suffering like loneliness, frustration, fear, embarrassment, disappointment, anger, etc.

**Second Noble Truth:** All suffering is caused by craving. (Getting what you want does not guarantee happiness / satisfaction). Rather than constantly struggling to get what you want, try to modify your wanting. Wanting deprives us of contentment and happiness.

The Third Noble Truth: Suffering can be overcome and happiness attained.

The Fourth Noble Truth: This is the path leading to the overcoming of suffering. This path is called the Noble Eightfold Path and consists of Perfect Understanding, Perfect Thought, Perfect Speech, Perfect Action, Perfect Livelihood, Perfect Effort, Perfect Mindfulness, and Perfect Concentration.

**It's easy to find out more about Buddhism.** Hundreds of books are available.

Some Buddhist authors include: Thích Nhất Hạnh, Pema Chodron, the 14th Dalai Lama and Alan Watts

**Friedrich Nietzsche**, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century German Philosopher offers some bolstering quotes:

- *To live is to suffer; to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering.*
- *He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.*
- *That which does not kill us makes us stronger.*

**Victor Frankl** – Psychiatrist, neurologist, Holocaust survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning* has many empowering thoughts on this topic. Frankl observed that depression is a person's 'warning light' that something is wrong and needs to be worked through. He believed that each of us needs to identify a purpose in life to feel positively about (meaning), and then immersively imagine that outcome. According to Frankl, the way a prisoner imagined the future affected his longevity.

*The one thing you can't take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me.  
The last of one's freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance.*

He believed that meaning can be found through:

- Creativity and self-expression
- Interacting authentically with others and with our environment
- Changing our attitude when we are faced with a situation or circumstance we cannot change

More recently, **Dr. Martin Seligman**, considered the father of the Positive Psychology movement, professor emeritus at Pennsylvania State University, and author of many books on improving one's quality of life, believes that meaning and character play an important role in creating a satisfying life. Seligman articulated an account of the good life, which consists of five elements called the PERMA model:

#### **P: Positive Emotion**

For us to experience well-being, we need positive emotion in our lives. Any positive emotion like peace, gratitude, satisfaction, pleasure, inspiration, hope, curiosity, or love falls into this category – and the message is that it's really important to enjoy yourself in the here and now, just as long as the other elements of PERMA are in place.

#### **E: Engagement**

When we're truly engaged in a situation, task, or project, we experience a state of flow: time seems to stop, we lose our sense of self, and we concentrate intensely on the present. This feels really good! The more we experience this type of engagement, the more likely we are to experience well-being.

#### **R: Positive Relationships**

As humans, we are "social beings," and good relationships are core to our well-being. Time and again, we see that people who have meaningful, positive relationships with others are happier than those who do not. Relationships really do matter!

**M: Meaning**

Meaning comes from serving a cause bigger than ourselves. Whether this is a specific deity or religion, or a cause that helps humanity in some way, we all need meaning in our lives to have a sense of well-being.

**A: Accomplishment/Achievement**

Many of us strive to better ourselves in some way, whether we're seeking to master a skill, achieve a valuable goal, or win in some competitive event. As such, accomplishment is another important thing that contributes to our ability to flourish.

Quotes by Dr. Seligman:

- *We're not prisoners of the past.*
- *Just as the good life is something beyond the pleasant life, the meaningful life is beyond the good life.*
- *We deprive our children, our charges, of persistence. What I am trying to say is that we need to fail, children need to fail, we need to feel sad, anxious and anguished. If we impulsively protect ourselves and our children, as the feel-good movement suggests, we deprive them of learning-persistence skills*
- *Self-esteem cannot be directly injected. It needs to result from doing well, from being warranted.*
- *Habits of thinking need not be forever. One of the most significant findings in psychology in the last twenty years is that individuals can choose the way they think.*

**Positive self-talk you can try on to see if it fits:** *Life is meaningful and engaging and human, even when it's hard. I will get through this, just like I've been able to get through so many other difficult things.*

**We need:** Food, air, water. These components will help to keep our bodies running, but our mind is a necessary part of our bodies and our mind is programmed with needs of its own.

**We also need:** To feel we are valuable. We need to be around others and to feel like we belong. At the same time, we need our independence! Being on our own helps us feel strong, capable, creative and unique. We must try to keep a good balance between our need for autonomy and for belonging!

**Depression can happen when we don't believe we can change the course of our lives.**

It can also happen when we feel we are incapable of doing things for ourselves.

Sometimes the source of suffering can come from our relationships to others. We may feel we don't fit in, or we are being used, or we feel like we are not valuable to others.

Sometimes we feel like all we need is a partner/lover/other intimate relationship to feel better about ourselves, but others cannot fill our inner void. Relationships can be supportive and beneficial; and they can also deplete our power and resources and challenge our self-worth. We must consider: *what must I give* and *what do I gain* by maintaining this relationship? Is it worth the cost? Am I valued, honored and respected? Can I offer the same? Remember:

- All relationships involve choices, compromises, and commitments (investments).
- We must weigh the degree to which we are willing to give up our authenticity and individuality to belong to a group or commit to an intimate relationship:
  - Do we raise the bar so high that no one is 'good enough' to be around us?
  - Do we drop the bar so low that we find we are involved with people who don't share our values, don't value us, or even abuse us or take us for granted?



### **Manufactured Desires**

An especially tricky part to all of this is recognizing when marketers, TV personalities and even close family and friends try to influence our values, needs and desires to fit their motives or goals.

If we look deeper into our suffering we can find that some of the things we suffer from do not originate from our values, our needs or our desires, but are manufactured 'needs' as a result of the media's attempt to homogenize our fears and desires through news, TV shows, slick advertising and emotionally appealing marketing.

We are told we are inadequate, unsafe, unhealthy, and unattractive unless we purchase certain products, desire to look and think a certain way, or buy into fear. TV 'experts' are often just sales people wearing lab coats.

We take command of our lives when we raise our awareness and think critically about their intent. Do they really know what's best for us? When we know our core values, we can refer to them and hold them up to their attempts to influence our decisions. When we maintain control of our lives we feel strong, and when we feel strong, it is much harder to feel depressed and powerless. We are too busy driving our ship!

**When we examine our core values, we realize that we know what's best for us.** Our core values are necessary for healthy living; they help us make good decisions, gain confidence and fully engage our abilities.

Getting through...moment by moment...can be the hardest part. But we can do it!

### **Tips to encourage you during depression:**

- Try to remember that how you are feeling is temporary and just your momentary perception, like a cloudy day seems to have no sun. The sun is there; we can have faith it will again brighten our day.
- Read uplifting and motivating books, articles, and Daily Motivators ([www.greatday.com](http://www.greatday.com))
- Drink lots of water
- Start with small achievable goals and stay focused
- Talk with someone about your experience. Remember: you are not alone.
- Eat fruit, vegetables, and drink more water ~
- Exercise outdoors! Get fresh air, sunlight and breathe deeply!
- Get involved in a meaningful, social activity such as volunteering to support your community.
- Have FAITH in yourself! You can conquer your depression and engage in life in a positive way!

### **Recommended reading:**

Man's Search for Meaning.....Viktor Frankl  
"Learned Optimism" and "Flourish".....Martin Seligman  
The Depression Cure.....Stephen Ilardi  
Plato, not Prozac!.....Lou Marinoff  
Books on Buddhism.....Thích Nhất Hạnh, Pema Chodron,  
Alan Watts and many more

# Swellness

(Yes, it is spelled correctly)

**Health. Strength. Tenacity. Flexibility. Durability. Resilience. Power. Discipline. Vigor.**

These words can be used to describe both mental and physical characteristics. Swellness is the idea that our physical and mental well-being cannot be separated; they are dependent upon each other. It is the belief that we must take care of our mind to take care of our body, and we need to take care of our body to take care of our mind; that health is psychosomatic / somapsychotic and that those words can be applied to wellness as well as to illness. Swellness exists in those who have overcome illnesses and physical setbacks with powerful positive beliefs about their ability to survive and thrive. Swellness is not a goal, it is a continuous process.

## From the dictionary:

**Swell** – noun: a full shape or form   adverb: excellently; very well

**Swellness** - is a state of excellently full form.



## A few considerations for healthy minds and healthy bodies:

- When our minds are in turmoil, often our guts and/or our muscles are, too.
- When our neck and shoulders ache from stress, we may struggle to feel happy or optimistic.

**We need:** Strength in our heart, character, muscles, mind

Fresh: air; water, foods, ideas

Connections to others, to nature, to our authentic selves

## Important Considerations for PHYSICAL HEALTH

### Air. Water. Food. Movement. Attitude.

**Air:** Oxygen allows our cells to produce energy from the food we eat. It is needed to keep cells alive. Being able to move and think require oxygen. And breathing deeply is a great stress reliever by decreasing heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension.

**Water:** About 60% of the human body is water! According to the US Geological Survey, water serves a number of functions including:

- Water is a vital nutrient to the life of every cell.
- The carbohydrates and proteins that our bodies use as food are metabolized and transported by water in the bloodstream.
- Water assists in flushing waste and toxins, mainly through urination.
- Water acts as a shock absorber for the brain and spinal cord.
- Water forms saliva, keeps our eyes moist and lubricates our joints
- Water regulates our internal body temperature by sweating and respiration.

**Food:** Growing food is not easy. When we harvest our lettuce, rhubarb, pears, etc., we find it not only provides nourishment, but also connects us in gratitude to the farmers and farm-workers who keep us alive. Eating healthy food makes us more productive, reduces stress, boosts happiness, controls weight gain, saves money (including medical expenses), helps to prevent disease, and increases energy. Cooking meals from scratch increases our connection to the earth, to the people who grow our food, and to each other...all important psychological aspects for belonging. Food for thought!

**Movement:** Our body is built to move: our muscles, our lungs, our organs (including our brain!), our heart, our bones and more conspire to provide the air, water and nutrients to keep our complex system working. Movement supports increased strength, better sleep, and improved mental and physical health.

**Attitude:** Add a healthy attitude to good nutrition and you have a recipe for better health and a longer life. A University of Illinois (UI) study found that "anxiety, depression, a lack of enjoyment of daily activities and pessimism all are associated with higher rates of disease and a shorter lifespan." UI professor emeritus of psychology Ed Diener added, "Current health recommendations focus on four things: avoid obesity, eat right, exercise and don't smoke, but it may be time to add 'be happy and avoid chronic anger and depression' to the list."

# Important Considerations for MENTAL HEALTH

## Security. Belonging. Autonomy. Purpose. Meaning.

**Security:** safety / having our needs met / enough money / warm and out of the elements. We are barraged with stories of terrible and depressing events in the news. When we have the choice to seek out information, we still choose to focus on bad, scary and negative stories. We worry about the security of our job, our health, our home, our children, our plans for the future. Security issues may also include staying in an unhealthy relationship/situation because it is known and 'normal', even though it may be disrespectful and painful. The unknown may be scarier. Fear of failing and rejection can be paralyzing. The physical and mental stress from elevated levels of fear and worry can cause us to feel weak, sick, overwhelmed, untrusting, depressed, disconnected. We may seek medication to reduce worry and anxiety (which may then cause us to feel more vulnerable and dependent).

**Belonging:** acceptance / relationships / respect / understanding. A basic human need is to belong to a group, a family, a community. We have a deep desire to feel we are valuable to society and can be acknowledged and accepted for who we are. We can 'charge our batteries' when we are engaging with others; by playing games, volunteering, talking, preparing a meal, working on a project or simply sharing time together. In person. (The internet creates and maintains connections, but they cannot replace live interaction. Healthy relationships require respect: so give it and get it. Or go.

**Autonomy:** agency / power / freedom. It is important to feel we are in control of our destiny and capable to do things for ourselves. (We are generally far more capable than we tend to believe we are. We need to feel we are valuable and offer something unique. A belief in agency or self-efficacy plays a crucial role in physical health and well-being. We have the power to say 'no' and create clear boundaries. We have the power to say 'yes' and make lasting commitments. We can learn new things. We can get physically invigorated by exercising our power. Acknowledging and exercising our power enhances healing and supports physical and mental health.

**Purpose:** The 'meaning of life', the 'reason for living', one's 'driving force'. What you set out to accomplish or attain. Determined intention. Aim. What do you enjoy the most about being alive? Feeling alive (often not consciously...simply 'in the flow', and spending time making the most of our short life, is important to our health!

**Meaning:** sense of purpose / hope / belief / spirituality / morality. Regardless of how we were raised, we each possess a truth that is unique to us. We have our own set of beliefs, our own way of making sense of the world, and an individualized system for how to respond to challenges. We feel hope if we wish to and can plan for a future that we believe we can create. We are the captains of our ships and we decide where we are going and why. Meaning is how we make sense of our existence, which contributes to our health and well-being. To live without meaning incites suffering. Viktor Frankl believed that a firm sense of meaning is essential for optimal human development.

## Some ways we can become weak or ill:

Consider things that deplete your mental and physical strength.

Eating unhealthy food / unhealthy amounts of food	Letting negativity dominate our thoughts
Not drinking enough water	Cheating, lying, trying to manipulate others
Giving up, despair, feeling defeated	Lack of exercise and fresh air
Mental and physical exhaustion	Addictions: drugs, alcohol, gambling, food,
Saying 'yes' when we want to say 'no'	unhealthy relationships, TV/internet
Blaming	Feeling disconnected from nature and the world

## Personal Litmus Test:

When you feel pressed to make a decision, consider asking yourself:

- Does this strengthen me? Or is it a counterfeit to strength?
- Is it aligned with my goals? My values? My wellness?
- Does this strengthen my community as a whole or just a faction / fraction?
- Does this respect all things? And elements shared by all things (such as water, earth, air)?
- Does this impede anyone's travel on their own path to self-actualization or wellness?
- Then second-guess yourself and play 'Devil's Advocate'!

**Very small note on *Embodied Cognition*:** It is the theory that many features of cognition, whether human or otherwise, are shaped by aspects of the entire body of the organism; the body informs the brain!

## Some Things That Help Us Feel Strong:

Increase our awareness of, and our dedication to, satisfying our needs...which are the same needs that every person has:

- o **Acknowledgement:** for our unique experiences, ideas and perspective in the world
- o **Agency:** feeling like you are in charge of your life and that you make decisions about your life.
- o **Autonomy:** the ability to decide for yourself, to do things on your own
- o **Belonging:** acceptance, in a group or relationship (all kinds), engagement with others
- o **Character:** your unique qualities, idiosyncrasies, values, strengths and ways of seeing the world
- o **Communicating:** sharing your thoughts; listening - with care - to others
- o **Compassion:** care, understanding, patience – for others and for ourselves
- o **Confidence:** believing you are capable and you can commit.
- o **Cooking** your meals from scratch; with others if you can
- o **Cooperation:** working with others on a shared project. "Many hands make light work."
- o **Drinking** plenty of water!
- o **Eating** healthy, fresh and home-cooked food including plenty of fruits and vegetables
- o **Elevate your heart-rate:** by walking, running, riding, rowing, etc. for at least 30 minutes every day
- o **Exercise and fresh air:** are both great for physical and mental health
- o **Faith:** in your abilities, that you are valuable, that things can get better, spiritual faith
- o **Gratitude:** for what we have, for what others do, for a new day to start fresh
- o **Goals:** setting and reaching achievable goals
- o **Flexibility:** be ready to flow with change...bend, don't break! ...for mental and physical health
- o **Healthy mental engagement:** conversations, problem solving, imagining possibilities, listening
- o **Healthy physical engagement:** caring for plants, walking a dog, mowing our neighbor's lawn
- o **Humanness:** listening, empathizing, caring, feeling excitement and encouragement
- o **Humor:** helpful to lighten our burden for a minute; add a new perspective
- o **Identity:** understanding and accepting our unique skills, values, attributes, character traits, and relationships with others. Our identity changes as we change; it is fluid.
- o **Meaning:** why we do what we do, purpose, value, beliefs, big picture, self-transcendence
- o **Music:** is evocative. It can be cathartic, mood-changing, reflective, powerful and much more.
- o **Opportunity:** finding and/or creating possibilities; feeling like we're not stuck
- o **Outdoors:** taking walks in the sun, stargazing at night, planting a garden, connecting with nature
- o **Reading + Learning:** theories, stories, newspapers; discovering many types of diversity and creativity
- o **Power:** self-efficacy and capability: to maintain our health, our success, our relationships
- o **Reducing** processed sugars, saturated fats, habits we don't like, self-defeating thinking
- o **Reflecting** on your values, your path, your reasons to be grateful, your vision for yourself, your next moves; long-term goals, people in your life, what you can offer the next generation
- o **Resilience:** our ability to adapt to stress and adversity, and even grow stronger because of it!
- o **Respect:** giving it, expecting it, receiving it, helping others understand it and offer it.
- o **Satisfaction:** setting achievable goals and reaching them, being grateful for what we have
- o **Success:** measured by relationships and reaching goals; not by an accumulation of money or stuff
- o **Trust:** believing in yourself and developing trust with others; crucial for good health
- o **Ubuntu:** realizing everything is connected; you support others and others support you
- o **Value:** what is important? what unique gifts do we bring? how do we 'add value'?
- o **Volunteering:** offering our gifts to others, receiving gifts in return!
- o **Yoga / meditation / stretching / rest:** Taking mental and physical time out of our fast-paced world.

## Some Things That Help our Neighborhoods Feel Strong:

- o **Capabilities:** our abilities grow with knowledge and confidence; this happens alone and in groups!
- o **Care:** about our health and our contributions; also, about the concerns and perspectives of others, care about our air, water, soil and living things that give us life, and care about the future
- o **Constructive Learning:** we can learn, and we can learn to solve problems, together!
- o **Imagination:** we'll have to be creative to envision and create a satisfying future together.
- o **Listening:** everyone is important! We need to be heard, yes; and we also need to listen carefully.



# Desmond Tutu: On Why We Forgive

By letting go of past hurts, we can heal not only ourselves, but our families, our communities, and our world.  
Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu: from spiritualityhealth.com and theguardian.com 2014 (edits by sk)

There were so many nights when I, as a young boy, had to watch helplessly as my father verbally and physically abused my mother. I can still recall the smell of alcohol, see the fear in my mother's eyes, and feel the hopeless despair that comes when we see people we love hurting each other in incomprehensible ways. If I dwell in those memories, I can feel myself wanting to hurt my father back, in the same ways he hurt my mother, and in ways of which I was incapable as a small boy. I see my mother's face and I see this gentle human being whom I loved so very much and who did nothing to deserve the pain inflicted upon her.

When I recall this story, I realize how difficult the process of forgiving truly is. Intellectually, I know my father caused pain because he was in pain. Spiritually, I know my faith tells me my father deserves to be forgiven as God forgives us all. But it is still difficult. The traumas we have witnessed or experienced live on in our memories. Even years later they can cause us fresh pain each time we recall them.

Are you hurt and suffering? Is the injury new, or is it an old unhealed wound? Know that what was done to you was wrong, unfair, and undeserved. You are right to be outraged. And it is perfectly normal to want to hurt back when you have been hurt. But hurting back rarely satisfies. We think it will, but it doesn't. If I slap you after you slap me, it does not lessen the sting I feel on my own face, nor does it diminish my sadness as to the fact you have struck me. Retaliation gives, at best, only momentary respite from our pain. The only way to experience healing and peace is to forgive. Until we can forgive, we remain locked in our pain and locked out of the possibility of experiencing healing and freedom, locked out of the possibility of being at peace.

Without forgiveness, we remain tethered to the person who harmed us. We are bound with chains of

bitterness, tied together, trapped. Until we can forgive the person who harmed us, that person will hold the keys to our happiness; that person will be our jailor. When we forgive, we take back control of our own fate and our feelings. We become our own liberators. We don't forgive to help the other person. We don't forgive for others. We forgive for ourselves.

## The Science of Forgiveness

The discussion of forgiveness was once left to the religious. It is now studied by philosophers, psychologists and physicians. The findings show that forgiving transforms people mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Psychologist Fred Luskin writes, "In careful scientific studies, forgiveness training has been shown to reduce depression, increase hopefulness, decrease anger, improve spiritual connection, [and] increase emotional self confidence."

As more and more scientists document the healing power of forgiveness, they also look at the mentally and physically corrosive effects of not forgiving. Hanging on to anger and resentment, living in a constant state of stress, can damage the heart as well as the soul. In fact, research has shown that failure to forgive may be a risk factor for heart disease, high blood pressure, and chronic stress-related illnesses. Medical and psychological studies have shown that a person holding on to anger and resentment is at an increased risk for anxiety, depression, and insomnia, and is more likely to suffer from high blood pressure, ulcers, migraines, backaches, heart attack, and even cancer.

In the end, science will prove what people have known for millennia: forgiving is good for you. Health benefits are only the beginning. To forgive is also to release yourself from whatever trauma and hardship you have experienced and reclaim your life as your own.

## Healing the Whole

When we are uncaring, when we lack compassion, when we are unforgiving, we will always pay the price for it. It is not, however, we alone who suffer. Our whole community suffers, and ultimately our whole world suffers. We are made to exist in a delicate network of interdependence. We are sisters and brothers, whether we like it or not. To treat anyone as if they were less than human, less than a brother or a sister, no matter what they have done, is to contravene the very laws of our humanity.

In my own family, sibling squabbles have spilled into intergenerational alienations. When adult siblings refuse to speak to each other because of some offense, recent or long past, their children and grandchildren can lose out on the joy of strong family relationships. The children and grandchildren may never know what occasioned the freeze. They know only that "We don't visit this aunt" or "We don't know those cousins." Forgiveness among the members of older generations could open the door to healthy and supportive relationships among younger generations.

## Freeing Ourselves

Unconditional forgiveness is a grace; a free gift freely given. In this model, forgiveness frees the person who inflicted the harm and it also frees the one who forgives. The one who offers forgiveness as a grace is immediately untethered from the yoke that bound him or her to the person who caused the harm. When you forgive, you are free to move on in life, to grow, to no longer be a victim. When you forgive, you slip the yoke, and your future is unshackled from your past.

## Our Shared Humanity

Forgiveness is a choice we make, and the ability to forgive others comes from the recognition that we are all flawed and all human. We all have made mistakes and harmed others. We will again. We find it easier to

practice forgiveness when we can recognize that the roles could have been reversed. Each of us could have been the perpetrator or the victim.

In some situations, we have been harmed, and in others we have harmed. And sometimes we straddle both camps, as when we trade hurts with our partners. Not all harms are equivalent, but this is really not the issue. Those who wish to compare how much they have wronged to how much they have been wronged will find themselves drowning in a whirlpool of victimization and denial.

People are not born hating each other and wishing to cause harm. It is a learned condition. I do not say this because I am a saint. I say this because I have sat with condemned men on death row, I have spoken with former police officers who have inflicted torture, I have visited child soldiers who have committed acts of nauseating depravity, and I have recognized in each of them a depth of humanity that was a mirror of my own.

#### **The Invitation to Forgive**

The invitation to forgive is not an invitation to forget. Nor is it an invitation to claim that an injury is less

hurtful than it is. It's not okay to be injured. It's not okay to be abused. It's not okay to be violated. It's not okay to be betrayed.

The invitation to forgive is an invitation to find healing and peace. In my native language, Xhosa, one asks forgiveness by saying, Ndicel' uxolo—"I ask for peace." Forgiveness opens the door to peace between people and opens the space for peace within each person.

If I traded lives with my father, if I had experienced the stresses my father faced, if I had to bear the burdens he bore, would I have behaved as he did? I do not know.

My father has long since died, but if I could speak to him today, I would want to tell him that I had forgiven him. What would I say to him? I would begin by thanking him for all the wonderful things he did for me as my father, but then I would tell him that there was this one thing that hurt me very much. I would tell him how what he did to my mother affected me.

Since I cannot speak to him, I have had to forgive him in my heart. If my father were here today, whether he

asked for forgiveness or not, and even if he refused to admit that what he had done was wrong or could not explain why he had done what he did, I would still forgive him. Why? Because I know it is the only way to heal the pain in my boyhood heart.

Forgiving my father frees me. When I no longer hold his offenses against him, my memory of him no longer exerts any control over my moods or my disposition. His violence and my inability to protect my mother no longer define me. I am not the small boy cowering in fear of his drunken rage. I have a new and different story. Forgiveness has liberated both of us. We are free.

A human life is a great mixture of goodness, beauty, heartbreak, love, cruelty, indifference and so much more. The simple truth is, we all make mistakes, and we all need forgiveness. There are times when all of us have been thoughtless, selfish or cruel. No act is unforgivable; no person is beyond redemption. Yet, it is not easy to admit one's wrongdoing and ask for forgiveness. "I am sorry" are perhaps the three hardest words to say.

## Meditation: Opening to the Light

1. Close your eyes and follow your breath.
2. When you feel centered, imagine yourself in a safe place.
3. In the center of your safe space is a box with many drawers.
4. The drawers are labeled. The inscriptions show hurts you have yet to forgive.
5. Choose a drawer and open it. Rolled or folded or crumpled up inside it are all the thoughts and feelings the incident evokes.
6. You can choose to empty out this drawer.
7. Bring your hurt into the light and examine it.
8. Unfold the resentment you have felt and set it aside.
9. Smooth out the ache and let it drift up into the sunlight and disappear.
10. If any feeling seems too big or too unbearable, set it aside to look at later.
11. When the drawer is empty, sit for a moment with it on your lap.
12. Then remove the label from this drawer.
13. As the label comes off, you will see the drawer turn to sand. The wind will sweep it away. You don't need it anymore.
14. There will be no space left for that hurt in the box. That space is not needed anymore.
15. If there are more drawers still to be emptied, you can repeat this meditation now or later.



*The media is the most powerful entity on earth.*

*Because they control the minds of the masses.* ~ Malcolm X

Americans watch a lot of TV. Even though we are also obsessed with our phones (texts, tweets, Facebook, email and much more, the average American still finds time to watch more than 5 hours of TV per day. Only a very tiny fraction of us watch 0 hours of TV each day. I am one of those people. "No TV" includes no cable, no 'smart' TV, no Netflix or other movies (except when I'm on my bicycle wind trainer in the basement during inclement weather and no flat-screen-monitor hanging on the wall in the living room. Or the kitchen. Or the bathroom, bedroom, office, car, etc.

I have gone as far as to get a device that turns TVs off. When I feel attacked or trapped by loud, offensive commercials, news stories or shows being broadcast in public places, I just turn them off. Most people don't notice. Those that do usually just shrug their shoulders and do something else.

I have lived without TV for over 25 years (about half of my life. Most people are appalled when I say I don't have TV. They often ask "If you don't watch TV, how do you know what's going on?" (Answer: I read local, state and national newspapers.

So who am I to talk about how to watch television?

I am a concerned citizen, worried about the effect's television has on society. I'm worried not about what people are watching, but how they receive it (unquestioningly, passively and believe it. I see Americans getting weaker physically and mentally (more diabetes, social anxiety, obesity and depression and I am aware that our schools do not prepare us to defend ourselves against crafty ads, emotionally-charged news stories, and shallow role models. I believe we want to be smarter and healthier.

Research conducted in 2013 by Thinkbox, a commercial television marketing association, discovered there are six main reasons that people watch television: "to unwind, for comfort, to connect, for an experience, to escape, or to indulge". Many of us believe that TV is neutral, that it simply informs and entertains us.

However, most of us don't watch one show then turn off the TV to make some homemade cards, change the oil in the car, or contemplate if we are successfully meeting our needs for both belonging and autonomy. Most of us turn on the TV and don't turn it off until we go to bed. Some of us even keep the TV on when we sleep or when we are alone, as if we are somehow safe or connected.

TV is a thief. It's not the TV's fault - we willingly surrender our power - but it robs us of our time. It robs us of opportunities for reflection, creativity, critical thinking, interesting conversations and paying attention to other important things in our lives. It homogenizes our desires, fears, identity and what we believe we know with those of other viewers. We allow TV to make us weak.

While we are passive and non-critical, advertisers and producers are hard at work, trying to persuade us through video and audio impressions that evoke deep feelings that we are lacking in many ways; but that our needs, fears and desires can be fulfilled by buying products, services or ideologies.

There is good news: it is possible to stay smart and strong and still watch TV!

We can watch TV with others and converse about shows. We can plan our viewing and discipline ourselves to watch only 1 hour or 2 hours per day. We can ask questions. We can free ourselves from 'programming'!

## Neil Postman and Steve Powers encourage us to consider these principles when watching TV news:

### 1. **Whatever someone says something is, it isn't.**

What this means is the brief description used to describe an event does not fully describe the event. Try this with two other people: choose an event you experienced together. Have each person describe the event in two paragraphs. Compare your descriptions. Now consider how that relates to what you 'learn' on the news.

**Lesson:** Viewers should know that with all news, they learn just a fraction of any story.

**2. Language operates at various levels of abstraction.** Some language describes an event: In Westby, 6% more votes were cast today than during the previous election. Some language evaluates an event: A record number of voters flooded the polls today. Some language infers an event: Voters showed up in droves today, demanding to be counted.

**Lesson:** Be careful and critical watching the news to hear how the stories are told and punctuated.

### 3. **Almost all words have connotative meanings.**

(Connotation: an idea or feeling that a word invokes in addition to its literal or primary meaning.) Example: when we use the word 'judge' we often imply that a person has formed a negative conclusion about something since we rarely use it to describe positive attributes or activities. Ex: "Don't judge me." But when we say "He's really nice", we are still judging him. Lesson: Critique the words the anchors and actors use, especially words like important,

love, reality, judge, relationship, faith, manly/womanly, motherly/fatherly and many others. (Start a list!) Consider if the word is used to evoke a particular feeling, and also if the word has further implications about roles and social expectations.

Fragmented pictures and accompanying music and sound effects: are used grip your attention and evoke feelings. Pay attention to the music and sounds which provide added tension (like it does in movies).

We want to believe that the news is a public service; provided to keep us informed, intelligent and abreast of the events that we need to know about to live in society together. (Aw, wouldn't that be peachy?) But the 'news' is not that at all. The news offers a controlled view of the world; in addition to telling us about events, it entertains us, incites fear, generates money, and is filtered by political perspectives and advertisers.

**According to Postman and Powers: "The "news" is only a commodity, which is used to gather an audience that will be sold to advertisers."**

**Activity:** Consider where the money (or other influence) is coming from to produce the news, to entertain you, to inform you about history or science or health. (Interesting note: the words inform and information are not related in any way to truth or validation) Are they produced by companies with specific messages, ethics or goals? Are they supported exclusively by commercials?

### **Postman and Powers say there are two dimensions of commercials: money and social values:**

**Money:** Advertisers pay for your attention. The shows with the most viewers are news shows.

The average American watches over 39,000 commercials in a year.

**Social Values:** Advertisers want to sell us stuff (or services or ideologies), but to motivate us to buy stuff we don't need, they must make us feel things about ourselves. (If they used logic, we would not be duped in to feeling inadequate, we could see that we could share stuff, and that we could live with less stuff.)

Commercials are "all about serious money", and they "are also about the serious manipulation of our social and psychic lives" say Postman and Powers. Most commercials have this basic premise: "whatever problem you face (lack of self-esteem, lack of attractiveness, lack of social acceptance) it can be solved, solved fast, and solve through a drug, a detergent, a machine or a saleable technique. One of the reasons commercials are so effective", they add, is that "people do not usually analyze them." Life's problems, including moral dilemmas, "are to be solved through chemistry and technology."

From

### **How to Watch TV News:**

*"For a market economy to work, the population must be made to believe that it is need of continuous improvement. If you are quite satisfied with your teeth, your hair, and your 2003 Honda, you will not be an avid consumer. The thematic thrust of advertising is to get you to think about your inadequate self and how you can get better."*

**Activity:** Write down the commercials that go along with shows for at least 48 hours. Note the time, the show being watched and the commercials that are either just before, during or immediately after the show. When you're done, see if you can find a pattern of the types of commercials with the types of shows. What does that tell you about who they think is watching and what they believe they can convince the viewer to purchase or do?

While we sit passively, the marketers, politicians and media organizations plot to persuade us. They hook us through our emotions while trying to convince us we are smart, rational thinkers. (Check out Dr. Zimbardo's Resisting Influence piece in this packet) We believe we have a great deal of choice; that we can't be that easily controlled; after all there are hundreds of channels! But according to Corporate Research Project, just "five major corporations are the gatekeepers and decision makers for the programming choices of the vast majority of the American people".

Consider the authenticity of 'reality' prison shows. People tell me they gain a greater understanding of prison life by watching these shows. What do you think? Is prison life as they portray it on TV? Does everyone have quick, smart and witty remarks? Do the people where you are - including you - look like the people in the shows? Your answers to these questions are the same answers that apply to all shows: dramas, comedies, reality shows and yes, even the history channel are not like real life.

**Some Postman / Powers' recommendations for what to do when watching TV:**

1. When encountering a news show, you must come with a firm idea of what is important.
2. In preparing to watch a TV news show, keep in mind that it is a 'show'.
3. Never underestimate the power of commercials.
4. Pay special attention to the language of newscasts.
5. Reduce by at least one-third the amount of TV news you watch. (Read the news, too!)
6. Reduce by one third the number of opinions you feel obligated to have.

***How To Watch TV News*** by Neil Postman and Steve Powers 2008. Penguin Books

**Five things we need to know about technological change** by Neil Postman (1998)

**#1.** All technological change is a trade-off. This means for every advantage a new technology offers, there is always a corresponding disadvantage. We always pay a price for technology; the greater the technology the greater the price.

Examples: think of the automobile, which for all its obvious advantages, has poisoned our air, choked our cities, and degraded the beauty of our natural landscape. Or you might reflect on the paradox of medical technology which brings wondrous cures but is, at the same time, a demonstrable cause of certain diseases and disabilities, and has played a significant role in reducing the diagnostic skills of physicians. Culture always pays a price for technology.

**#2.** The advantages and disadvantages of new technologies are never distributed evenly among the population. This means that every new technology benefits some

and harms others. Who specifically benefits from the development of a new technology? Which groups, what type of person, what kind of industry will be favored? And, of course, which groups of people will thereby be harmed?

Technology favors some people and harms others; these are questions that must always be asked. There are always winners and losers in technological change and the winners always try to persuade the losers that they are really winners.

**#3.** Embedded in every technology is a powerful idea, an epistemological, political or social prejudice with practical consequences.

Every technology has a philosophy which is given expression in how the technology makes people use their minds, and what it makes us do with our bodies, and how it codifies the world, in which of our senses it amplifies, in which of our emotional

and intellectual tendencies it disregards. The sum and substance of what Marshall McLuhan meant when he coined the famous sentence, "The medium is the message."

**#4.** Technological change is not additive; it is ecological, which means, it changes everything and is, therefore, too important to be left entirely in the hands of Bill Gates.

Example: what happens if we place a drop of red dye into a beaker of clear water? Do we have clear water plus a spot of red dye? Obviously not we have a new coloration to every molecule of water. That is what I mean by ecological change. A new medium does not change something; it changes everything.

**#5.** Technology tends to become mythic; that is, perceived as part of the natural order of things, and therefore tends to control more of our lives than is good for us

## *Question and Reflection*

*"You'll never ever be able to convince a person thru logical argument or even brilliant rhetoric that a free and just society is possible. You can show them. You can start doing it." - David Graeber*

*"There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."  
- Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

*"Every city has thousands of institutions, programs, and agencies all committed to serving the public good. Why have we seen too little fundamental change?" - Peter Block*

*We need diverse cultural representation... "so that we begin to become the society which we're capable of becoming; of which we aspire to; so that everyone participates in the making of culture in America, so that you will have something that you can call an American culture."  
- August Wilson*

*"Think occasionally of the suffering of which you spare yourself the sight." - Albert Schweitzer*

*"We must believe in free will, we have no choice."  
- Isaac Bashevis Singer*

*"We currently have all the capacity, expertise, programs, leaders, regulations, and wealth required to end unnecessary suffering and create an alternative future. We are a community of possibilities, not a community of problems."  
- Peter Block*

*"How can anyone read history and still trust politicians?" - Thomas Sowell*

*"... ask questions with a measure of skepticism."  
- Neil Postman*

*"The essential challenge is to transform the isolation and self-interest within our communities into connectedness and caring for the whole."  
- Peter Block*

*"The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark."  
- Michelangelo*

*Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding."  
- Thich Nhat Hanh*

### **NOTES**

# Learn to Discern



## B.S.-DETECTION TIPS!

from Neil Postman and Carl Sagan

Quotes from  
**Bullshit and the Art of Crap-Detection**  
by Neil Postman 1969 *(sk comments in italics)*

*How can you defend yourself from media, bias, persuasion and manipulation?*

"As I see it, the best things schools can do for kids is to help them learn how to distinguish useful talk from bullshit. Every day in almost every way people are exposed to more bullshit than it is healthy for them to endure; helping kids to activate their crap-detectors should take precedence over any other legitimate educational aim."

"Varieties of bullshit with transcendent significance: (this is a perfectly good example of bullshit, since I have no idea what the words "transcendent significance" might mean and neither do you.) Thus, we have our first variety of bullshit: pomposity or style over substance. People are daily victimized by pomposity in that they may feel less worthy by people who use fancy words to hide their own insufficiencies. Education has made respectable this form of bullshit."

"When I hear such talk my own crap-detector achieves unparalleled spasms of activity."

"Superstition is ignorance presented in the cloak of authority. A superstition is a belief, usually expressed in authoritative terms for which there is no factual or scientific basis. Among the more intriguing of these are the beliefs that people learn more efficiently when they are taught in an orderly, sequential and systematic manner; that one's knowledge of anything can be "objectively" measured; and even that the act of "teaching" facilitates what is known as "learning."

*We learn because we want to, and we learn what we want to learn. Adults learn best when can relate new information to their lives, and to their existing knowledge.*

"The most amusing of all our superstitions is the belief that education will result in one's becoming a more decent, liberal, tolerant, and civilized human being. I have not noticed that teachers are any more humane than mechanics or certified public accountants."

"There are dozens of other forms of bullshit, including earthiness, which is based on the assumption that if one uses direct, off-color, four letter words like crap and shit, one somehow is making more sense than people engaged in pomposity."

"What can be done? We will not find 'answers' in schools. As Carl Rogers has said, teaching is an overrated activity; and any impression to the contrary is, in my opinion, mostly superstition."

*Unfortunately, teachers today may lose their zeal because of the endless testing and the disrespectful working conditions including low wages, lack of supplies, little freedom, and large class sizes. We can support them by creating learning opportunities - for all ages - wherever we can find them!*

"Crap-detecting is an art. Each person's crap-detector is embedded in their value system; if you want to teach the art of crap-detecting, you must help students become aware of their values. This is precisely why you will not find it in school."

"Postman's 3<sup>rd</sup> Law: At any given time, the chief source of bullshit with which you have to contend is yourself."

"Postman's 4<sup>th</sup> Law: Almost nothing is about what you think it is about. All human communications have deeply imbedded and profound hidden agendas. Most of the conversation can be assumed to be bullshit of one variety or another."

"Postman's 5<sup>th</sup> and final law: There is no more precious environment than our language environment."

"An idealist usually cannot acknowledge his own bullshit, because it is in the nature of his "ism" that he must pretend it does not exist. In fact, I should say that anyone who is devoted to an "ism" - Fascism, Communism, Capitalism - probably has a seriously defective crap-detector."

***"Just as societal norms are created through language and action, they can be dismantled through language and action." - Brett Lunceford***

## Carl Sagan's Baloney Detection Kit from *The Demon-Haunted World* (1995) (edited by sk)

Sagan proposes a rigorous but comprehensible "baloney detection kit" to separate sense from nonsense. Intellectual tools that can help us separate wishful thinking from genuine probability and to recognize a fallacious or fraudulent argument.

- Wherever possible there must be independent confirmation of the "facts."
- Encourage debate on the evidence exploring of all points of view. (*How many different points can you find?*)
- Arguments from authority carry little weight - "authorities" have made mistakes in the past. They will do so again in the future. In science there are no authorities; at most, there are experts.
- Consider more than one hypothesis. If there's something to be explained, think of all the different ways in which it could be explained. Then think of tests by which you might systematically disprove each of the considerations.
- Try not to get overly attached to a hypothesis just because it's yours. It's only a way-station in the pursuit of knowledge. Ask yourself why you like the idea. Compare it fairly with the alternatives. See if you can find reasons for rejecting it. If you don't, others will.
- Can you count or measure your point? What is vague and qualitative is open to many explanations. (*Complex, qualitative assessments are crucial to humanness, however.*)
- If there's a chain of argument, every link in the chain must work (including the premise) - not just most of them. (author's emphasis)
- Occam's Razor. This convenient rule-of-thumb urges us, when faced with two hypotheses that explain the data *equally well*, to choose the simpler. Always ask whether the hypothesis can be, at least in principle, falsified.... You must be able to check assertions out. Skeptics must be given the chance to follow your reasoning, to duplicate your experiments and see if they get the same result.

Elsewhere in *The Demon-Haunted World*, Sagan states that the loss of control over media and education has rendered people "unable to distinguish between what feels good and what's true." He goes on to say that well-supported scientific theories carry the same weight - or less - than explanations made up on the spot by authorities. He is afraid that people have lost the ability to "knowledgeably question." With a little effort at the start - that will quickly become habit - we can learn to discern, ask powerful questions, and improve our media environments!

**Calling Bullshit:** Here's a quandary: how are we going to help people get unstuck by recognizing and addressing all the bullshit in the world?

### HELPFUL WEBSITES:

**CALLING BULLSHIT FREE COURSE!!** "Bullshit is everywhere, and we've had enough. We want to teach people to detect and defuse bullshit where ever it may arise." [www.callingbullshit.org/videos](http://www.callingbullshit.org/videos)

**WHICH FACE IS REAL?** Can you tell which image is a real person and which one was made by a computer? Learn to defend yourself against 'deep fake'! [www.whichfaceisreal.com](http://www.whichfaceisreal.com)

**DEBUNKING HANDBOOK** – Free to download and print! (Available in 12 languages!)  
<https://www.climatechangecommunication.org/debunking-handbook-2020/>

**TRUTH-O-METER** [www.politifact.com](http://www.politifact.com)

"A fact-checking website that rates the accuracy of claims by elected officials and others who speak up in American politics". They do this to "to give citizens the information they need to govern themselves in a democracy."



## Fair Shake's

# MYTH-BUSTERS



**Myth: FALSE DICHOTOMIES** – The idea that you must choose between two options: Yes or No. Good or Bad. Right or Wrong. Candidate A or B. Rise or Fall. With Us or Against Us. Science vs Religion. Rational vs. Emotional. Individual vs. Group. and one that I've heard a lot in my life: "That's a man's (sport, job, perspective); it's not for women". (a form of yes or no) Whenever you need to make a choice, see if you can find 4, 5, or even 10 options!



**Myth: WE STOP LEARNING** – If I had never touched a flame before I turned 58 years old, I would learn to never touch one in the future if I touched one today. We acquire information constantly and we organize it into meaning. We may even care enough to find out how what we learned relates to what we already know and believe. One thing school failed to teach us is how to learn, and how to discern what we learn. The 'information sources' today are louder, strangely influential, and grossly incomplete. To get the full picture, we have to dig for information and ask good questions, while also trying to avoid getting overwhelmed or trapped. We must keep learning, and as we learn, we can learn to live together better! We do not have to accept limitations or acceptable levels of suffering. We are NOT STUCK. We can learn...and then change...whatever we want. "There is no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening." - Marshall McLuhan (author of *The Medium is the Message*)



**Myth: MERITOCRACY** - The more you learn the more you earn', 'you can make it if you try', 'pull yourself up', etc. Many ways to reinforce the idea that the people who have the money and the stuff are successful because they earned what they have, they got all their money through hard work and a shrewd (including a 100% respectful, environmentally-sound and firearms-free!) investment strategy. If only. Investing is almost never in line with our humanity values...yet it is always in our best interest to invest in humanity. Meritocracy is justified stratification; people above others for their achievements. Michael Sandel said: "We've slid into the assumption that the money people make is the measure of their contribution to the common good." I wonder how the merit idea would work if we increase accolades and 'status' based on care about others?



**Myth: INCARCERATION PAYS A 'DEBT TO SOCIETY'** - Why do we keep repeating this? Members of society believe that incarceration and the judicial system costs them money; they do not feel that they have been paid in any way. How could they? The only debt that has been paid is the one requested and required by a heartless and hungry punitive system. Society has little faith that 'the system' is providing the information necessary to reengage successfully. Together, we can change this. The 'justice system' is the only group getting paid.



**Myth: WE ARE FRAGILE** - The "Helping" Industry relies on us being weak. ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) scores may describe some aspects of people, but they in no way represent who we are. Many of us with high ACE scores have also become even more than resilient, we are now anti-fragile because of our challenges. This means that the adverse conditions made us stronger than we would have been without them.



**Myth: TV NEWS INFORMS YOU OF WHAT IS GOING ON** All you get from any single news source is what they want you to see and believe. What they show us is what their sponsors want them to show us. Sponsors demand support, so the advertisements determine the 'news' you'll see on TV. Social Media cannot be counted on to inform us of anything but an opinion. To get more pieces of the whole story, we must consider information offered by many news sources.



**Myth: WE NEED AUTHORITY AND MONEY TO 'FIX' OUR CHALLENGES** - Why would we ask the institutions, and the people who are complicit in maintaining them, to fix the problems they created? Winona LaDuke says: "You shouldn't let your dealer tell you what you need." Are we frustrated enough yet to work on the solutions together? We've been trained to believe these myths:

- Experts and 'science' have the solutions to our challenges; they will provide the relief for our suffering. Q: *What if they are the cause of our suffering?*
- Money will fix our problems. *Does money build trust, cooperation and feelings of confidence? We have gifts to share with each other. Our focus on money continues to take away our power. Money does not give us power. Feelings of agency, support and capability give us power!*



**Myth: INDIVIDUALISM** – Individualism is said to be a “fundamental American principle” so is authoritarianism, lying, stealing, false superiority and also the myth of the 'self-made' person and "united we stand".

INTERDEPENDENCE, on the other hand, is a fundamental planetary principle. We can easily see our impact on the environment and on each other because of our insatiable pursuit of more stuff; a belief created to fill the hole created by 'individualism'. The Rev. Desmond Tutu reminded us that "the solitary individual' is a contradiction in terms.



**Myth: "FREE-MARKET CAPITALISM"** - You'll find that file between Easter Bunny and Santa Clause. The game is rigged. Capitalism offers some opportunity, but 'the market' does not **respond to our needs**. Instead, it manufactures our desires and externalizes unhealthy costs.



**Myth: NOTHING WORKS:** Roger Martinson wrote, "the represent array of correctional treatments has no appreciable effect - positive or negative - on rates of recidivism of convicted offenders." In the magazine *Public Interest* (1974), he stated, "rehabilitative efforts that have been reported so far have no appreciable effect on recidivism." The way that I read this is: the ineffective 'programs' supplied by the prisons (or whomever else) did not impact the already low (compared to today) recidivism rate. He said that no single *thing* works because we are unique. We are not robots. One thing that always works is 100% pro-social: it's us working together!



**EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION REDUCE RECIDIVISM** Only YOU "reduce recidivism". You and nothing else. It is up to you to utilize education or employment opportunities to support your reentry success; YOU get full credit for how you apply your gifts. After all, employment and higher education did not keep Jeff Skilling, Bernie Madoff, Martha Stewart, Bill Cosby, Charles Kushner, or several elected representatives, out of prison.



**CRIMINOGENIC NEEDS** Incarcerated people have basic human needs; the same needs we all have. You are not different. This is yet another attempt to scientize othering.



**Myth: EXPERTS KNOW WHAT'S BEST**

Experts have agendas. Always consider who is paying the 'expert'. Non-profit status does not automatically indicate integrity. Professional 'fixers' are often poor listeners. Prisons, schools and hospitals tell us what we need, they rarely ask what we think or feel. How can they 'help' if they don't hear? We can learn to listen to ourselves and each other by asking questions. We can work, care, and grow together to build our capacity for complexity, cooperation, constructive learning, critical thinking, and agency! We are the 'experts' we've been waiting for.

# Attention Budget Worksheet

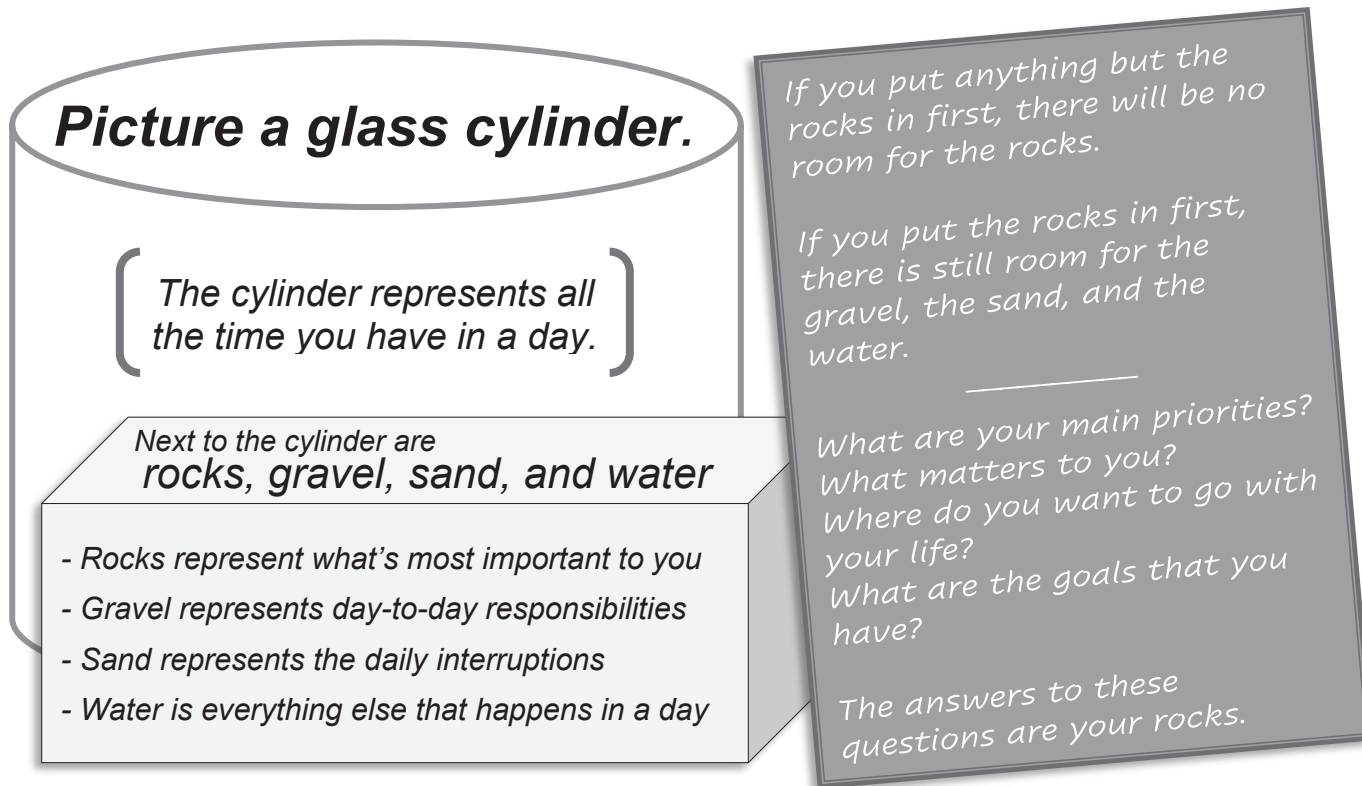
<i>Time Invested in</i>		Planned	Actual Time Spent
<b>Daily</b> <i>Work</i>	Work		
	Travel time to and from everything		
	Other Travel...for errands, etc		
<i>Food</i>	Shopping (perhaps certain days per week?)		
	Meals – cooking		
	Meals – cleaning up		
	Meals – away from home		
<i>Exercise</i>	Walk, stretch		
	Aerobic – elevate your heartbeat!		
	Meditation / Yoga		
<i>Thinking</i>	Planning and Prioritizing		
	Evaluating (how effective was your plan?)		
	Reflecting		
	Meditation / Mindfulness		
	Reading		
<i>Frequent Other Possibilities</i>	Family (at home / visiting)		
	Friends		
	Hobbies		
	Classes and Homework (if in school)		
	Personal care: bathing, dressing, hair, teeth, etc.		
<i>Media</i>	Television, movies, YouTube®, electronic games		
	Social Media, Text		
<b>Weekly</b>	Weekly cleaning		
	Events with Family and Friends		
	Intentionally building your gift, yourself, your world		
	Travel time		
	Paying bills, balancing money		
	Services		
<b>Monthly</b>	Auto care		
	Volunteering		
<b>Surprise Events</b>			
	<b>Totals:</b>	Planned	Actual Time Spent
	Time alone: doing stuff		
	Time alone: thinking, reflecting, reading (books)		
	Quiet time with others		
	Active time with others		
	Time with Gizmos, Electronics and Screens		
	Time dedicated to living your life in the fullest sense.		
	Time connecting to your own life and all life.		

# MANAGE YOUR PRECIOUS TIME!

ATTENTION BUDGET Deeply connected to your financial budget!

THIS IS THE FIRST DRAFT! I've included what this one mind of mine could think of; I'd love to hear from you to provide a more accurate range of options!

Steven Covey's great metaphor for managing our time; from his book *First Things First*:



The world demands your attention! Everyone tries constantly to get your attention. Set boundaries! Make your goals your priority! Slight changes to your path are like a compound-interest investment in your life!

Commit to goals as if they are appointments with your future self. YOU are important. Your goals are important. Goals are proactive, not reactive. Goals help us determine our "no" and our "yes" for investing our time.

All security experts agree: Trust no-one.

- Stay skeptical.
- Turn off cookies.
- Limit tracking as much as possible.
- Don't say anything stupid; don't use hate speech
- Thou shalt not overshare, or share data about friends.
- If the product is free, it means that you are the product.
- Limit your time on each platform (fb, twitter, instagram, et al.)
- Privacy is a myth. Assume if it's on the phone it'll be published.
- Don't live your life online. Take a walk, play a musical instrument, build furniture, live in the real world.

*You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage – pleasantly, smilingly, non-apologetically – to say 'no' to other things. And the way to do that is by having a bigger 'yes' burning inside.*

*- Steven Covey*

"Trying to be "safe" while using a "smart" phone is like trying to keep water out of a submarine with a screen door."

"If you join Facebook, you relinquish your privacy."

"When you receive an email from someone that wants to share their fortune with you, do not reply or click on the links!"

You can turn off media, social media, phone, text: YOU set the boundaries. No communication after 8 pm? Sundays? You choose your limit. With your time managed, you can invest time online...time digging for information, learning new things, listening to guided meditations, music and pontificators.

# Financial Budget Worksheet (Improve Your Credit Score is on page 42)

Category	Item	Amount	Due Date
<b>Home</b>	Rent or House Payments		
	Property Tax		
	Insurance		
<b>Other Home Expenses</b>	Electric		
	Gas or Oil		
	Water and Sewer		
	Repairs		
	Maintenance and Fees		
<b>Technology</b>	Land-Line		
	Cellular		
	Cable / Satellite / Internet		
<b>Transportation</b>	Car Payment		
	Gas		
	Auto Insurance		
	Repairs / Maintenance		
	Other Transportation		
<b>Health Insurance</b>	Insurance		
	Monthly Medical Expenses		
<b>Debt Payments: Loans, Credit Cards,</b>			
<b>Food</b>	Groceries		
	Dining Out		
<b>Family Expenses</b>			
<b>Other Expenses</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> car, loan or credit card?		
<b>Surprise Expenses</b>			
<b>MONTHLY SAVINGS:</b>	<b>Total</b>		
	<b>Average Monthly Expense</b>		
	<b>Grand Total</b>		

<b>Annual Expenses</b>	Subscriptions and Memberships		
	Vehicle Registration		
	Dental or Other Medical		
	Donations		
<b>Total Annual Expenses</b>			
<b>Divide total by 12</b>			
<b>Result: Average Monthly Expense</b>			

## BUDGET SUCCESS by INTENTION: Break the Paycheck-to-Paycheck Cycle!!

**Give Every Dollar A Job.** Not just the necessities like bills and groceries. You also assign your money to going out, beers, fun stuff, travel – anything you spend your money on, it goes in the budget.

**Embrace Your True Expenses.** What are often overlooked are the once every year or once every few months spends. Better to save for an emergency fund right now than pay down credit cards or loans.

**Roll With The Punches.** Everyone overspends. Oh yes they do. Any budget should be flexible enough to deal with overspend

**'Age Your Money':** pay your bills with money that's been sitting in your bank account for two weeks.

**Buy smarter. Cook: buy fresh and bulk foods and eat better! Work a second job. Make a budget. Be unwilling to accept credit card debt; pay cards in full each month or get rid of them. Be honest about your spending habits and adjust them honestly, too.**

## NATIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

America's Debt Help Organization: Debt.org  
5750 Major Boulevard Suite 350  
Orlando, FL 32819 <https://www.debt.org/>



Need Help Now? Call Us (877) 764-5798

Here's what they say about themselves: Debt.org is America's Debt Help Organization, serving the public with thorough, accurate and accessible information online about financial well-being. We strive to help people in all stages of life. The content on Debt.org is designed for anyone who desires a sound financial future, wants to get out of debt or wants to stay out of debt. Our goal is to be the only financial resource you need to deal with your debt.

### Financial Literacy



#### Money Smart for Adults

<https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/adult.html>  
14 Money Smart for Adults Training Modules

#### Money Smart para Adultos

<https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmartsp/adult.html>  
14 módulos de capacitación de Money Smart para Adultos

### Financial Education for Adults

Tools and Resources. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), is a government agency that makes sure banks, lenders, and other financial companies treat you fairly.

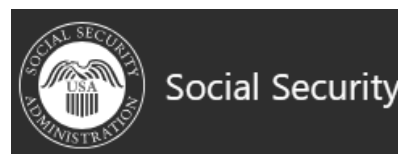
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/adult-financial-education/tools-and-resources/>



### Benefits after Incarceration: What You Need To Know

An individual released from incarceration may be eligible for Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability benefits Call to see if you qualify 1-800-772-1213

<https://www.ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm>

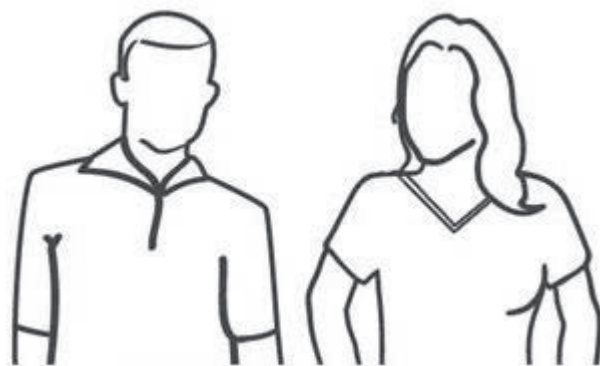


U.S. Government Services and Information <https://www.usa.gov/#tpcs>

Benefits, Grants, Loans; Consumer Issues, Disability Services, Education Health, Housing, Jobs, Military and Veterans, Taxes, Small Business, Voting and a LOT more.



# Employment and Entrepreneurship



## *Employment + Vocation*

*"When choosing a new job, it is crucial to ask ourselves, "What can I stick to even on my worst days?"*  
- James Clear

*"It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it."*  
- Upton Sinclair

*"What you do makes a difference; you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."*  
- Jane Goodall

*"Choose a job you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life".*  
- Unknown

*"We have become a civilization based on work - not even "productive work" but work as an end and meaning in itself."*  
- David Graeber

*"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."*  
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Nothing will work unless you do.* - Maya Angelou

*"Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle."*  
- Abraham Lincoln

*"Most people's sense of dignity and self-worth is caught up in working for a living. Most people hate their jobs. We might refer to this as "the paradox of modern work."*  
- David Graeber

*"The beginning is the most important part of the work."*  
- Plato

*"If I'm not constantly being met by challenges that I am overcoming, how do I know that I'm capable?"*  
- David Graeber

*"The more I want to get something done, the less I call it work."*  
- Richard Bach

*"Hope is not a feeling of certainty that everything ends well. Hope is just a feeling that life and work have a meaning."*  
- Václav Havel

*"The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary."*  
- Vince Lombardi

NOTES

## Find A Job

Finding employment is one of the top priorities of most people in society. Finding employment after incarceration is not only pivotal for reentry success, it can also be a requirement for parole or a halfway house.

It is important to find satisfaction in our jobs, but sometimes we must temper our wishes with our needs.

When we have to take a job that we are not excited about now, we can leverage the feelings of dissatisfaction to push us toward whatever it is that we need to do to find satisfaction. These things may include: submitting applications for jobs that we really want but may not be available now, or trying to work in an organization that has a similar philosophy to our own so we can move within the organization to a job that is more fulfilling, or perhaps we need to get the education required for certain positions, or maybe what we really want is to start our own business but need to work a 'day job' until our idea provides enough income for us to thrive.

Knowing there are many avenues to employment, Fair Shake offers several ways for you to engage within our website.

**Remember: most jobs get filled without ever being listed on a website!**

When searching for employment, remember to consider what it is you want to do. What type of business would you like to work in, and in which positions do you think you would do well? What kind of jobs might you enjoy doing? Keep your eyes on the prize! Even if you must work in a job you don't care for now, remember that you are building character, patience, tolerance and REFERENCES. The image to the right is what our "Get A Job" page looks like today. This page, like all pages on the Fair Shake website, is constantly evolving. Please let us know what you think!

### Find a Job (or Start Your Own Business)

There are many approaches to earning income! Everyone's approach to looking for a job is different, so we offer many search engines, employment options and opportunities, and even information to help you start a business, prepare for work and consider other career options.

If you're preparing to find a job, please visit our [PREPARE FOR WORK](#) page, where you'll find information on writing a resume, up-and-coming careers, bonding and tax credit information for employers and much more.

#### "Second Chance" Search Engines The Relaunch Pad **RELUNCHPAD**

<https://therelaunchpad.com/>

Check out our search tool featuring over 1,000 companies we've personally contacted about their hiring policies for people with criminal records. Our team of industry experts even rated your likelihood of getting hired at each.

#### **Honest Jobs** Honest Jobs

The website says that they connect employers and formerly incarcerated people. It also says they provide reentry resources. They provide no information at all without first getting your name, email and phone number. Because of their information barrier, I can't verify this service, but reentry organizations think it's great, so I'm providing the link.  
<https://app.honestjobs.com/account/registration/job-seeker>

#### Job Search Engines


 All search engines available online only

#### Huge and Frequently-Used Search Engines:

Indeed      LinkedIn  
Glassdoor      Simply Hired  
Get Work      Snag A Job  
Zip Recruiter      Monster

These links are just to get you started. I'm sure you will find many more!

#### Way Up

 <https://www.wayup.com/>


We feel strongly that opportunity belongs to all, and that an individual should never be limited by their economic status, race, sexual orientation, gender, who you know, where you went to school, or where you're from.


#### **job-applications.com** We feature information on 1,500 popular companies in major industries such as fast food, retail, grocery stores, hotels and restaurants. Each company listed has a page which includes company history, service offered and common job opportunities. **Complete an Online Job Application for over 1,000 Companies Now!**

<https://www.job-applications.com/>

#### GIGS: Single or multiple day opportunities

For an interesting temp option, you can check out the [Craig's list](#) in your area under "Gigs". You'll find opportunities that include moving furniture, doing yard work for a few hours, car dismantling, CDL temporary jobs, staff for weekend events, handyperson, cleaning, carpentry, welding, electrical, plumbing, painting, brand ambassadors (reps) and much more. Many of these gigs have opportunities that can turn into jobs.

 Keep the author's intent in mind when searching on Craig's list. Beware that some listings are quite sketchy...

 [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)




#### Do you have a College Degree?

#### Formerly Incarcerated College Graduate Network

<https://ficgn.org/jobs> Discover career-related jobs that welcome formerly incarcerated applicants and see the value in your lived experience.

#### Employer Support

Give employers tools and information to help them hire you.

 Share this document with your potential employers to help them hire you.

#### Bonding, WOTC, and EEOC fliers

 You are bondable  Federal Bonding Flier  
 Work Opportunity Tax Credit Flier  
 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:

#### Gary's Job Board: Truck Drivers wanted!

Gary can find you a better truck driving job, with or without a CDL.

 Website: <http://www.garysjobboard.com/>

Looking for more information about trucking? Visit Fair Shake's **TRUCKING PAGE**

 <https://www.fairshake.net/employment-trucking-driving-jobs/>

#### Non-profit Job Search Engines:

##### Idealist

[www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org) Jobs, Internships and Volunteer Opportunities (that can sometimes turn in to jobs...)



##### Workforce 50

[workforce50.com](http://workforce50.com)  
Jobs for people 50+ yrs of age

##### Philanthropy News Digest

 Philanthropy News Digest: all levels of non-profit jobs.  
<http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/jobs>

##### Jobs That Help

<https://www.jobsthathelp.com/>  
**WISCONSIN JOB SEEKERS!** Looking for a meaningful career that makes a positive difference in your community? Whether you are an experienced professional or an enthusiastic newcomer, you have come to the right place!

#### Start A Business

Visit Fair Shake's growing Entrepreneurship page!

 [www.fairshake.net/entrepreneurship](http://www.fairshake.net/entrepreneurship)

It's not easy, but for the creative, courageous and tenacious, it's often the right thing to do. Here are a few documents and links to help you get started.

 From the Small Business Administration

 Business Plan Template

 Start A Business!

 SBA Microloans

 From the Consumer Information Center:

 Planning and Goal Setting for A Small Business

 Minding Your Own Business

 How to Write a Business Plan

 From the Fair Shake Ownership Manual

 Self Employment

#### URBAN TECH JOBS PROGRAM

The National Urban League and Google are working together to provide tech training and jobs.... Proceed With Caution.

<https://nul.org/program/urban-tech-jobs-program>



#### Career Onestop

Put together a successful job search with resources on resumes, interviewing, networking and finding job openings.

Find locations in your state here.

 American Job Center location info. on the Fair Shake website


Everything below is available online only

Check out the American Job Center here:

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

 **America's Career InfoNet** occupation and industry information, salary data and career exploration assistance. [www.CareerInfoNet.org](http://www.CareerInfoNet.org)

 **mySkills myFuture** helps career changers find new occupations to explore. [www.mySkillsmyFuture.org](http://www.mySkillsmyFuture.org)

 **Veterans ReEmployment** is a one-stop website for employment, training, and financial help after military service. [www.CareerOneStop.org/ReEmployment/Veterans](http://www.CareerOneStop.org/ReEmployment/Veterans)

Jobline 1-800-414-5748

## Prepare For Work

There are many ways to approach employment. Some people 'know somebody', sometimes we get lucky and meet our new boss or coworkers where we volunteer or through a recreational activity...but most of us will write resumes, find available jobs online or through an employment agency, fill out applications and then endure one or many job interviews.

Thanks to the generosity of several resume' writing professionals and job readiness coaches, we've assembled what we've found to support you as you build your resume', your interview skills, and your confidence!

While the information here addresses several of the concerns of job seekers, we want to encourage you to also consider topics from the "Free School" section of this book, the website or the software, to support you through the inevitable challenges that will occur as you create desirable outcomes.

Please remember: many employers want to hear more about how you built yourself up while you were incarcerated than they do about your past. Keep the conversation positive!

They want to know that you care. That you will be a good listener and team member, if you can embrace the company culture, learn, follow through and get things done. They want to know that you are interested and motivated.

### Prepare for Work

Everyone prepares for work in a different way. Fair Shake offers many tools for you to use in the way that you choose to prepare for temporary jobs or long-term careers.



#### O\*Net

Occupation Search! <https://www.onetonline.org>

The O\*NET database includes information on skills, abilities, knowledges, work activities, and interests associated with occupations. This information can be used to facilitate career exploration, vocational counseling, and a variety of human resources functions, such as developing job orders and position descriptions and aligning training with current workplace needs. Information in O\*NET is available for over 900 occupations.



O\*NET is a unique, powerful source for continually updated occupational information and labor market research. By using a contemporary, interactive skills-based database and a common language to describe worker skills and attributes, O\*NET transforms mountains of data into precise, focused occupational intelligence that anyone can understand easily and efficiently.

#### Resume Writing

The Resume Examples document below has been generously shared by **Wendy Enelow**, MRW, CCM, CPRW, JCTC and **Louise Kursmark**, MRW, CCM, CPRW, JCTC

 Resume Examples





You can find more free resume-writing support on the Resume Writing Academy website:

-  Free Resources for Resume & Profile Writers and in their book:
  -  Best Resumes and Letters for Ex-Offenders
- A resume guide that addresses special employment issues facing ex-offenders.




#### Hloom

 <https://www.hloom.com/> Free Resume writing tools and templates.

-  Here I am – Resume Writing That Gets Noticed
-  The Complete Guide to a Winning Resume Cheat-Sheet
-  Discussing Your History in the Interview
-  Discussing Criminal History in the Interview

#### Other Employment Support

 Jails to Jobs

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



Jails to Jobs is an organization that gives ex-offenders the tools they need to find employment. On this website you'll find a step-by-step plan to follow as you carry out your job search.

#### Livecareer.com

Livecareer.com offers great tools and resources for exploring careers, whether you're searching for a new job or considering a career change.- See more at:


 <https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/career-exploration>

#### how2become.com







How2become.com offers a resource guide that provides detailed insight into how to answer certain questions, body language and more.

 <https://www.how2become.com/resources/interview-skills/>

#### Fair Shake Employment Documents

 Available Offline and Online

(Be sure to also check out the information we have on Employers page to help the interviewer hire you!)

-  Employment Tips
-  Resume Guide
-  Interview Tips
-  Interview Questions for You to Ask
-  Sample Interview Questions
-  Computer and Internet Tips

#### Start Your Own Business

It's not easy, but for the creative, courageous and tenacious, it's often the right thing to do. Here are a few documents to help you get started.

-  From the Small Business Administration
  -  Small Business Administration:
  -  Start A Business!
-  From the Consumer Information Center:
  -  Planning and Goal Setting for A Small Business
  -  Minding Your Own Business
  -  How to Write a Business Plan
-  From the Fair Shake Reentry Packet
  -  Self Employment



















































#### US Department of Labor Career Onestop

Formerly Incarcerated Reemployment

 <http://www.careeronestop.org/ExOffender/index.aspx>

1-877-348-0502 TTY: 1-877-348-0501

#### Career Onestop – Locations:


- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|  Alabama     |  Louisiana        |  Ohio           |
|  Alaska      |  Maine            |  Oklahoma       |
|  Arizona     |  Maryland         |  Oregon         |
|  Arkansas    |  Massachusetts    |  Pennsylvania   |
|  California  |  Michigan         |  Rhode Island   |
|  Colorado    |  Minnesota        |  South Carolina |
|  Connecticut |  Mississippi      |  South Dakota   |
|  Delaware    |  Missouri         |  Tennessee      |
|  Florida     |  Montana          |  Texas          |
|  Georgia     |  Nebraska         |  Utah           |
|  Hawaii      |  Nevada           |  Vermont        |
|  Idaho       |  New Hampshire    |  Virginia       |
|  Illinois    |  New Jersey       |  Washington     |
|  Indiana     |  New Mexico       |  West Virginia  |
|  Iowa       |  New York        |  Wisconsin     |
|  Kansas    |  North Carolina |  Wyoming      |
|  Kentucky  |  North Dakota   |  |



#### Career Onestop

Put together a successful job search with resources on resumes, interviewing, networking and finding job openings.

<https://www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/job-search.aspx>

 Everything in this section available Online Only

- **America's Service Locator** connects individuals to employment and training opportunities available at local American Job Centers. [www.ServiceLocator.org](http://www.ServiceLocator.org)
- **America's Career InfoNet** occupation and industry information, salary data and career exploration assistance. [www.CareerInfoNet.org](http://www.CareerInfoNet.org)
- **mySkills myFuture** helps career changers find new occupations to explore. [www.mySkillsmyFuture.org](http://www.mySkillsmyFuture.org)
- **Veteran and Military Transition Center** is a one-stop website for employment, training, and financial help after military service. <https://www.careeronestop.org/veterans/default.aspx>

#### About the Fair Shake Personal Web Page Example

##### Personal Web Page

- Members differentiate themselves from other applicants!
- Members share information easily. No need to carry documents; they are stored in their account.
- Shows dedication to reentry success and provides a place to demonstrate interest in taking a proactive approach by sharing skills, character traits, and intentions



## Self-Employment

CAUTION: Entrepreneurship is NOT for the weak!

The idea of owning a business is attractive to many types of people. Some are drawn to 'be their own boss', to work closer to where they live, or to provide a product or service to an area where it is needed. Some people feel they can take more pride in their work and also be recognized for their efforts, still others feel they can have greater job security and may even be able to sell their business or pass it on to their children. Our shared *American Dream* features a 'rags to riches' story that includes a plucky protagonist that pulls her- or himself up with their bootstraps to achieve financial and social success.

One of our basic human needs is to feel we have the power to determine our destiny. Owning your own business is certainly one way to take control. Unless the start-up is handled cautiously, intelligently and with a long-term commitment, however, a person can drive their dream right into the ground.

This brief document will only cover the very basics (mostly using bullet points!) of things to consider in starting a business. It is merely a check list to assess if this is the right path for you, and also to consider some of the many things you'll need to address to get started...and then to keep it running.

### Let's begin with some simple questions to ask yourself:

- What kind of business do I want to start? Will I provide a product or a service?
- Where will my business be located? What type of community supports my business? (examples: neighborhood, city, state, internet)
- Who are my customers? What makes them different from other consumers?
- How must I organize my company: What regulations must I follow? Does this business require special licensing or permits? How should I incorporate? (examples: LLC, S Corp, B Corp, non-profit)
- Where and how will I advertise or otherwise communicate to my customers?
- Does my business benefit all of the members of the community in which it is located?
- What is the name of my business and what is my 'tag line' or 'elevator speech' to describe it?
- How will I explain my business to my grandmother? (good practice; even if she is no longer with us)
- Can I tolerate book-keeping or am I able to pay someone who can?

### Are you willing and able to:

- Start organized and stay organized?
- Follow legal procedures (including lots of paperwork!)?
- Ask for help?
- Pay taxes willingly?
- Be flexible, creative and responsive when things don't go as planned?

**Now let's look at some difficult things to consider in starting a business:**

- Can I handle a lot of rejection and nay-sayers?
- Will I feel jilted or jaded when my friends are not willing to be my customers or backers?
- Can I live with little to no income for at least 1 year and up to 3 years?
- Am I willing to sacrifice much of my leisure time or social life for up to 3 years as well?
- Do I have a super-strong moral base? (The temptation to cheat can be powerful for many.)
- Can I provide clear proof I will be able to succeed - and that I am a worthwhile risk - to small business loan officers?
- Do I have solid back-up plan for repayment?
- Am I comfortable with risk or will I worry?
- Am I physically strong enough to endure hard work, stress and exhaustion?
- What aspects about running a business matter most to me?
- Am I a 'people person' and if not, can I hire this person, or how will I communicate with customers?
- What are my 'competitors' doing? What do I do similarly or differently to what they are doing?
- How long will it take to start my business before any money begins to come in? Can I start it while I work at another job?
- Am I willing and able to trademark, copyright or patent my name, logo, written or recorded material or invention?

**Some possible snags or ways to fail at starting a business:**

- Need others to do work or research for you to get started.
- Blame others or 'the system' when things get difficult
- Require more resources from outside investors than you are willing to contribute yourself.

**A couple of resources for entrepreneurial hopefuls:**

**SCORE:** <https://www.score.org/>

**Small Business Administration:** <https://www.sba.gov/>

**US Patent and Trademark Office:** <http://www.uspto.gov/>

**How to Write a Business Plan:** <http://articles.bplans.com/how-to-write-a-business-plan/>

**Free Government Publications:** The Consumer Information Catalog lists approximately 200 free and low-cost publications available to you from various federal agencies. The publications cover topics such as money, health, employment, housing, federal programs, travel, small business, and education.

To write for your free catalog, send your request and address to: **Federal Citizen Information Center**

**Also ask for "How to Write a Business Plan Pub #173**

Attn: Catalog  
Pueblo, CO 81009

Please share your thoughts, ideas, questions and concerns. Your questions, suggestions and ideas will help me improve this page to better serve our future business owners!

# Write Your Business Plan!

*This text is from the Small Business Administration website:*

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan>

**Traditional business plan format:** When you write your business plan, you don't have to stick to the exact business plan outline, but it would be wise to use the sections that make the most sense for your business and your needs. Traditional business plans use some combination of these nine sections.

**Executive summary:** Briefly tell the reader what your company does and why it will be successful. Include your mission statement, your product or service, and basic information about your leadership team, employees, market and location. Include a brief financial summary and plans for growth, especially if you plan to ask for financing.

**Company description:** This is where you will share detailed information about your company. Be specific. Describe the problems your business solves. Describe the consumers, organizations, and businesses your company plans to serve. Explain your competitive advantages. Are there experts on your team? Have you found the perfect location for your store? Why are you so passionate about the product or service to see the project through to become a solvent business? This is the place to extol your strengths.

**Market analysis** You'll need a good understanding of your industry, what is in store for the future, and your target market. Competitive research will show you what other businesses are doing and what their strengths are. In your market research, look for trends and themes. What do your competitors do? Why does, or doesn't it work? Can you do it better?

**Organization and management:** Describe how your company will be structured, who will run it and how it will be managed. What is the legal structure of your business? A C corporation, S corporation, B corporation, a non-profit corporation? Will you have a partnership? If not, will you simply be a sole proprietor or possibly a limited liability company (LLC)? Consider all options before you file with the IRS or state regulators.

Use an organizational chart to lay out who's in charge of what. Describe the qualities each team member will bring to contribute to the success of your venture. Consider including resumes of key team members.

**Service or product line:** Describe what you sell or what service you offer. Explain how the product or

service benefits your customers and what the product lifecycle looks like. Share your plans for owning your intellectual property, like trademark, copyright or patent filings. If you're doing research and development for your service or product, explain it in detail.

**Marketing and sales:** There's no single way to approach a marketing strategy. Your strategy should include the reception for your audience and your advertising outlets. It should also include flexibility should your product, service or messaging need to change slightly. How will you attract and retain customers? Where and how will you sell your products or services? Be clear! You'll need to refer to this section later when you share your financial projections.

You'll refer to this section later when you make financial projections, so make sure to thoroughly describe your complete marketing and sales strategies.

**Funding request:** Your goal here is to clearly explain your funding needs for the next 5 years. How much will you need? What will you use it for? Demonstrate how your profits will keep your business fluid while you're able to pay off a loan. Or would you prefer to take on investors? Give a detailed description of how you'll use your funds. Specify if you need funds to buy equipment, materials, cover payroll or other specific bills. Include your strategy for paying off debt or selling the business.

**Financial projections:** Here you want to convince the reader that your business plan is stable, will remain solvent and will be a financial success. List the collateral you will put up against a loan. Provide a prospective financial outlook for the next five years. Include forecasted income statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements, and capital expenditure budgets. For the first year, be very specific. Use monthly projections if possible. Make sure to clearly explain your projections, and match them to your funding requests. This is a great place to use graphs and charts to tell the financial story of your business.

**Appendix:** Use your appendix to provide supporting documents or other materials were specially requested. Common items to include are credit histories, resumes, product pictures, letters of reference, licenses, permits, patents, legal documents, advertisements from competitors, trade news about your product, materials, or services, any contracts you may have now or which are on the table.

# Tips for Writing a Business Plan



## What is a business plan and why do I need one?

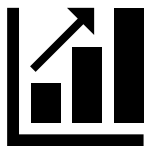
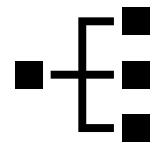
A business plan describes the strategy that the creators of an organization plan to follow as they build a new business...for instance, what steps will you take to start the business, and then what steps will you take to grow the business? The plan includes a description of the products or services that will be offered by the business, the customers, location, competitors, anticipated expenses, profit margin, plan to bring in employees, licensing or other special requirements and details specific to each industry, such as product shelf life and or cost of training staff. It should be written as a 3-to-5-year plan that includes short term and long-term goals. A business plan includes the mission statement and the vision for the organization. Use them to guide your structure and strategy. Business owners who need funding from another source to start the business – whether loans, grants or investors – will need a business plan to convince the grantors, lenders or investors that the business is a good investment.

**A BUSINESS PLAN IS USUALLY REQUIRED TO OBTAIN FUNDING OR ATTRACT BUSINESS PARTNERS.**

## Is a business plan good for anything besides applying for funding?

Certainly. A business plan will guide you through the beginnings of your business. It will serve as a guide to get started, a measuring tool to keep you on track and a tool box to notice problems and address them when they arise.

A business plan helps you monitor your cash flow, time and production rate to help you capture all of the aspect of creating your goods or services. It can be helpful in securing employees so you can attract a team that clearly sees and embraces your vision. It also provides a vision for potential partners or complementary business relationships, which can grow your business, or improve the environment for your business category.



If you can, incorporate graphs, charts, and visual displays of research, statistics and projections. They help readers stay engaged and visual descriptions appeal to different learning styles. They can also provide quick references.

Be prepared to make changes as the business develops!

### Business Plan Basics:

1. Executive summary
2. Company description
3. Market analysis
4. Organization and management
5. Describe your services or products
6. Marketing and sales goals
7. Request funding
8. Financial projections
9. Appendix





# TRUCKING OPPORUTNITIES!

## American Trucking Associations

ATA Headquarters  
950 North Glebe Road, Suite 210  
Arlington, VA 22203-4181



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

From their website: American Trucking Associations is the largest and most comprehensive national trade association for the trucking industry. ATA is an 86-year old federation with state trucking association affiliates in all 50 states. We represent every sector of the industry, from LTL to truckload, agriculture and livestock to auto haulers, and from large motor carriers to small mom-and-pop operations.



## Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association

OOIDA HEADQUARTERS  
1 NW OOIDA Dr.  
Grain Valley, MO 64029  
816-229-5791 800-444-5791

<https://www.oida.com/>



The mission of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, Inc. is to serve owner-operators, small fleets and professional truckers; to work for a business climate where truckers are treated equally and fairly; to promote highway safety and responsibility among all highway users; and to promote a better business climate and efficiency for all truck operators. More than 150,000 members of OOIDA are men and women in all 50 states and Canada who collectively own and/or operate more than 240,000 individual heavy-duty trucks and small truck fleets. All OOIDA officers and directors are now, or have been, professional truckers, and are elected from the membership, by the membership. The 22-member board helps define OOIDA's position on all major trucking issues. They offer information and education in all areas of independent truck ownership and responsibility.



**Gary's Job Board:** [www.garysjobboard.com](http://www.garysjobboard.com)  
Truck Drivers wanted! Since 2004.

Gary can find you a better truck driving job, with or without a CDL.

Gary's Job Board was created to help Truck Drivers find Driving Jobs, and to help Dispatchers find Drivers. Gary's Job Board is 100% unaffiliated. We DO NOT recruit for any carriers. Our service will always be FREE to drivers because drivers rock. Here's how garysjobboard.com works: (this is NOT a run-of-the-mill trucker job board. No one will call you, you have all the power).

- Complete your Driver Profile, it takes 2 minutes.
- Companies will see your first name, type of CDL, and experience level.
- They will not see your email address.
- You will receive a company invite by email and the email will come from our system.
- Check out what they are offering. Answer the email or not. You'll receive another invite down the road.



MANY APPLICATIONS ARE ONLY AVAILABLE ONLINE OR ON A KIOSK

1/1

## Job Application Example

### Personal Information

Last	First	MI	SSN#	Email
Street Address	City	State	Zip	Home Phone
Are you authorized to work in the United States?			Are you 18 or older?	
Have you been convicted of a felony or been incarcerated in connection with a felony in the past seven years? <b>THIS QUESTION IS SLOWLY BEING REMOVED FROM MANY JOB APPLICATIONS. (but not all!)</b>		If yes, please explain: <b>BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS ANYTHING AN EMPLOYER MAY FIND IN A BACKGROUND CHECK.</b>		
Military Service?	Branch	Are you a veteran?	War	
What position are you applying for?		How did you hear about this position?		
Expected Hourly Rate		Expected Weekly Earnings		Date Available

### Previous Employment

Company	Phone	Ending Salary
Address	Supervisor	
Position	Reason for leaving	
Company	Phone	Ending Salary
Address	Supervisor	
Position	Reason for leaving	
Company	Phone	Ending Salary
Address	Supervisor	
Position	Reason for leaving	

### Education

	Name/Location	Last Year Completed	Degree
High School			
College / University			
Trade School			
Other			
Any other Special Skills or Training .			

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Employment Tips

We often have to work our way up to the job we want; either because it is not available when we go to find it or we need more experience, education, preparation or time to get ready. Although we will spend time working at jobs that are not our preference, we can enjoy the interim more when we stay focused on our goals.

### **Start by asking yourself:**

- What kind of job or career do I want?
- What am I willing to do, learn or sacrifice to get that job or career?

Before venturing out into the world of work you will have to obtain necessary documents.

The most frequently requested documents are:

- Birth Certificate
- Driver's License or Basic Identification
- Social Security Card

You can find links to the applications that you need in our Resource Directory!

### **Next, ask yourself the following questions**

- What occupations or industries in my area are in need of employees?
- What are my employment limitations due to my conviction (if any)?
- What do I need to earn each month to afford housing, food, energy, phone, child support, loans, fines, transportation, etc? (check out our Build a Budget Worksheet)
- Which strategies will be most effective for finding the job that is right for me?

### **To prepare to apply for a job you may want to create the following worksheets:**

- Inventory your work history in and out of prison
- List your training, skills, limitations, and health considerations
- Gather all the information you will need to fill out employment applications. Are you ready to fill them out online? (Several companies only accept online applications.)

### **Considerations and Preparation**

What are your job-finding resources?

- Classified ads (mainly on-line) and signs in windows!
- Applying for jobs with companies you want to work for
- Job Assistance and Job Training centers
- Job search websites

### **Skills Assessment and Personal Strengths Evaluation**

Consider taking a free online self-assessment test to see what types of work you'll be best suited for.

### **Do you need clothes for your interview or new job?**

Check out Dress for Success or Career Gear, programs that may have a location near you!  
([dressforsuccess.org](http://dressforsuccess.org) and [careergear.org](http://careergear.org))

### **Resume' and Interview tips:**

Two good places where you get the chance to show a company why they cannot afford NOT to hire you. Keep these tips in mind as you write your application or resume', and prepare for job interviews:

- Be cheerful in your in-person or telephone job interviews.
- Talk about the benefits of your experience and the relevant expertise you offer.
- Speak about the value you would bring to the company.
- Share stories in the job interview about success in prior assignments.
- Talk about your ability to work with a diverse group of people.

### **Typical Barriers to Employment:**

- Lack of updated resume
- Appropriate clothing for job search
- Transportation
- Stable housing
- Substance abuse
- Poor interview skills
- Poor job search skills
- No diploma or GED
- Lack of documentation (ID, etc.)

### **SMART: What is your strategy for overcoming barriers and creating success?**

You can create a clear strategy by following SMART guidelines:

*Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Timely (or Tangible)*

**Specific** – what is the specific goal you wish to achieve?

Can you answer these questions?

- Who do you need to be involved?
- What do you really want to accomplish?
- When do you want to accomplish it?
- Where do you need to be to accomplish it?
- Why do you want to achieve this goal?
- Which things do you need to get in order and which are the constraints to achieving your goal?

**Measurable** – How will you know when you've achieved your goal? What criteria have you set up to measure your progress and reach your target dates?

**Attainable** – Can you see yourself achieving this goal? Can you see the path to get there and then see yourself in that place of having reached the goal?

**Realistic** – Are you willing and able to achieve the goal?

**Timely** – How long do you need to achieve your goal? Work out your goal date and then the smaller goals that must be met to meet that goal date?

**Tangible** – Imagine: can you taste, touch, smell, see or hear the results of achieving your goal?

## Interview Tips

Before you head to your interview, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you really want this job?
- Are you qualified for the job?
- Do you believe you can get the job?
- What attitude and information must you deliver to the employer to get the job?
- Are you ready for your interview?

If you decide you really want to get this job, consider these tips:

1. Keep your answers short, yet full of information, unless you are asked to clarify. Try to put yourself in the interviewer's shoes; asking the same questions of many applicants! Fine tune your answers to the Sample Interview Questions and bring your authenticity and vitality to the interview.
2. Determine what your key strengths, gifts, talents and assets are. Be sure to state them confidently throughout the interview.
3. Prepare for a variety of interview questions. Consider the challenges you have overcome, the difficult interpersonal situations that you resolved with others, and several success stories.
4. Describe specific situations and accomplishments. Generalities fail to show the interviewer your strengths and assets and how they can benefit the company and the position that is available.
5. Describe yourself on their team. Show the interviewer how you fit in the existing work environment and company culture. During the interview, align your language with the language of the team.
6. Observe your non-verbal communication. Are you saying what you mean to say? Practice answering some of the Sample Interview Questions in front of a mirror to see if your eyes and your gestures agree with your words.
7. Ask questions to make sure this where you want to work! Find out what you need to know to accept the job. The interviewer will understand that you want to make sure you're a good fit, too. This is an important quality in a team player.
8. Be sure to talk WITH the interviewer and not AT the interviewer. Interviews are stressful enough for both parties. Keep it human.
9. Research the company. Is it a good fit for you? Can you get behind the mission of the company? How much can you know about the work and the work environment before the interview?
10. Apply for jobs that you are skilled for and that you can appreciate...even if only as a stepping stone to your next job. If you truly want the job, you must be able to qualify for the position. Authenticity shines through your words and your non-verbal communication.

## Sample Interview Questions

The interview is your chance to show an employer your unique qualities and it is also the time you can ask more about the employer, the company culture and the job you are applying for. Before you interview be sure to find out all you can about the company so you understand who they are, and also so the interviewer knows you care.

Interviews can be stressful; the best way to manage that stress is to be prepared. If you are ready to answer the questions below you will be prepared for most of the questions that might come up.

There are many variables that make finding a job even more complicated if you have a criminal record. How much should you disclose and when should you disclose it? How do you explain your criminal record and still land a job? How do you address it during an interview? We explore these questions and more at the end of this document.

### **Possible Interview Questions: About the Job and the Company**

- Why did you apply for this job?
- What experience, skills and characteristics do you possess to do the job?
- Why do you think you are the best person for this job?
- Why should we hire you?
- What have you learned about our company?
- How do you see your role in joining this or any company?
- Describe good customer service.
- Describe handling a challenge with a co-worker.
- Are you willing to travel?
- Do you have any limitations that would inhibit you from doing this job?
- How long do you think you would like to be employed by this company?

### **Possible Interview Questions: About You**

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are you passionate about?
- What is your greatest strength? What is your greatest weakness?
- What do you do when you're angry?
- If you know your supervisor is wrong about something, how would you handle it?
- Describe a difficult work situation and how you dealt with it.
- Describe your work style.
- How would you describe the pace at which you work?
- How do you handle stress and pressure?
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.
- What motivates you? Are you self-motivated?
- What are your salary expectations? (if it is not listed with the job posting)
- What types of decisions are difficult for you? What types are easy?
- If you could relive the last 10 years of your life, what would you do differently?
- If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?
- Do you prefer to work independently or with others?
- Tell me about your ideal work environment.
- How do you evaluate success?
- What are your career goals? How do you plan to achieve these goals?
- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Give an example of a goal you didn't meet and how you handled it.
- Give an example of how you set goals and achieve them.
- How do you handle a challenge?

**Possible Interview Questions: Your Work History**

- Tell me about \_\_\_ company listed on your resume.
- What were your duties, responsibilities, expectations...for the position and as an employee?
- What challenges did you face? How did you handle them?
- What did you like about this job? Were there things you didn't like about this job?
- What was your biggest accomplishment at this job? At any job?
- What were your favorite and least favorite aspects about the people you worked with, including supervisors?
- What attributes do you like to see in a supervisor?
- What do you expect from a supervisor?
- Tell me a little about your favorite and least favorite supervisor.
- Why did you leave this job? (Why did you quit or why were you fired?)
- Have you been in a position when you did not have enough work to do? What did you do with your time?
- Have you made a mistake? How did you handle it?
- Have you ever dealt with company policy you weren't in agreement with? How?
- Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?
- When you worked on multiple projects how did you prioritize?
- How did you handle meeting a tight deadline?
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Tell me about a difficult situation with a co-worker? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about your experience working with a team.
- Have you motivated employees or co-workers? Tell me about it.
- Give me an example of when you did and when you didn't listen.
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a supervisor? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with another department? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a client or vendor? How?

**Possible Interview Questions: Incarceration**

- What did you learn from jobs you've held while you were incarcerated?
- Do you have challenges or limitations, such as appointments, that could affect your work schedule?
- Have you been able to prepare to use computers at work?
- Were you employed or in school when you were incarcerated? If so, tell me about your work and / or your education.

**Questions They CANNOT ask (and which you can refuse to answer):**

- What is your age?
- How many children do you have? Are you pregnant?
- How much do you weigh? How tall are you?
- Do you live with anyone? Who?
- Are you married or in a relationship?

**Legal alternatives that they can ask:**

- Are you over 18 years old?
- Can you lift 60 pounds?
- Is there anything that might interfere with your work schedule?

### Related to Your Criminal Record

An employer may not ask questions about a previous arrest or conviction. They may ask if you have been convicted of specific crimes if they are relevant to the position being applied for. An employer may not refuse employment to someone just because they have a criminal record.

Lisa Pollan, site coordinator at LIFT-DC, says they encourage formerly incarcerated clients to collect "evidence of rehabilitation." This evidence should prove to employers that the client has changed since their conviction. Evidence of rehabilitation can include:

- Letters of recommendation from employers or advocates
- Proof of training program completion/certificates (including during incarceration)
- Participation in a mentoring or support group

For Job Applications, LIFT-DC counsels clients to do the following:

- **Only answer what is asked:** If a question asks if you have been convicted of a felony, you can say no if you only have misdemeanors. If you are asked if you have been convicted of a felony in the last seven years, and you were convicted 10 years ago, answer no.
- **Answer truthfully:** A company may hire people with a record, but have a policy of terminating anyone who lies on an application.
- **Demonstrate change:** If you answer a question about your record by writing, "Yes, and I got my GED while I was incarcerated," you show that you are educated, focused and want to make positive changes in your life. You can also attach a written explanation of your situation or your shift in perspective.

Check out LIFT-DC for more tips on interviewing! <http://www.liftcommunities.org/>

### From the National Reentry Resource Center:

<http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/faqs/employment-and-education#Q8>

### How should job-seekers respond to questions regarding past convictions?

- Acknowledge the previous mistakes in a concise and businesslike way
- Mention any relevant skills or interests developed while in prison or prior to entering prison
- Reinforce a commitment and an interest in the new job, by stating, for example, "I'm more mature now and my top priority is to work at [company] to use my abilities, focus on the work, and make a fresh start."

Applicants should be familiar with their criminal history to answer accurately specific questions on job applications and in interviews.

### Religion

An employer may not ask you about your religion but it may come up if they ask you what days/times you are available. An employer may not judge you for your religion but may decide not to hire you if you are unavailable for any crucial time for the position you are applying.



## Interview Questions for You to Ask

In an interview both you and the employer are finding out about each other. Asking these questions will show general interest in the business, and the team you are applying to work with. These questions show you care about the position and how you might fit. Asking questions will also help you understand if you think the environment is suitable for you.

Please tell me important information I should consider about working with this company:

- On average, how long do people keep the position for which I am applying?
- What strengths and skills do you think I should have to best fill this position?
- What employee qualities are encouraged here?
- Is this a friendly or casual environment or is it fairly strict?
- Would you tell me about the challenges I might find working here?
- Which companies, products or services are our competitors?
- Is there an opportunity for promotion from this position?
- How often will I be evaluated?
- What are the company's strengths?
- What will be expected of me in the first 3 months? 6 months? Year?
- Do employees participate in events outside of work like sports or volunteering?
- In what ways does the company recognize and honor workers?
- Will I have an employment agreement?
- Will I work alone or with a group?
- Who will I report to? What kind of person are they?
- Are you anticipating any major changes in the workplace?
- How many applicants do you have for this position?
- What training do you provide?
- Does the company provide or support higher education or advanced training for employees?
- Is there anything else I can provide you to help you make a decision?
- How soon can I expect to hear from you?

Not all of these questions would apply to any one position. These questions are just examples to either pick from or open your mind to asking questions that will help you make sure the job is acceptable for you!

# PRE-RELEASE INVENTORY

Additional items to add to your list!

## 1. List the gifts that you bring with you!

- Include your courage, determination and authenticity.
- Your ability to listen well and offer the greatest gift a person can give: your attention.
- The special tools and skills you've developed to share with employers, coworkers, customers and clients.
- Expanded knowledge, compassion and commitment to those who are close to you.
- The unique perspective, and pro-social community-building skills that you have to construct the future with others!



2. Prepare for tough times. Write down book titles, articles, names of friends and family, and community resources you can turn to when things are tough; or when you feel down or vulnerable. When it's difficult to reach out to people; books may be a good place to start.

3. Check for "Over-Confidence". It's crucial to be confident...but foolish to be over-confident! Here are a couple of ideas to locate and address possible points of overconfidence:

- + Play "Devil's Advocate". Be critical and pessimistic. If possible, solicit the help of a friend or a young person. (In general, the young are better at this than adults.)
- + Resist comparing yourself to others. Everyone does things differently!
- + Listen to, and address, concerns or criticisms from others. This doesn't mean you need to argue with them or change course. Just check to see if you are fully considering their perspective.
- + Mix modesty and humility with enthusiasm.

4. Remember: you've got a lot of choices ahead! There's always more than one option, and almost always more than two. Try to find at least 4 options from which you can build or blend options to create your best opportunities!

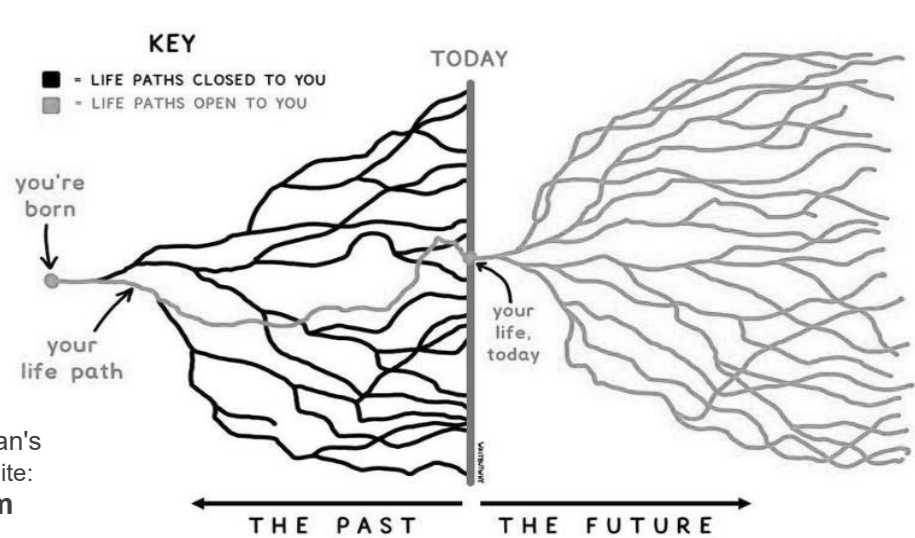


Image from Tim Urban's **Wait But Why** website:  
[waitbutwhy.com](http://waitbutwhy.com)



www.fairshake.net

PO Box 63 Westby, WI 54667 608-634-6363

## Fair Shake Employer Support

All of this information and much more can be found at <https://www.fairshake.net/employers>

Although tremendous responsibility is on the shoulders of those transitioning from prison to society, success is made possible only when the entire community is involved. Returning citizens need employment, a place to live and a community that is willing to give them a second chance. To create the opportunity for reentry success, we must offer returning citizens the chance to rejoin society fully.

Employers have the opportunity to help create one of the first and most stable bridges to reentry success. Fair Shake supports an employer's desire to understand formerly incarcerated applicants by offering tools and information to help you make informed, careful hiring decisions.

Fair Shake has also created tools for our members to more fully demonstrate their character than may be available on a standard job application through our free "office in the clouds", which includes a Personal Web Page.

### **The FAIR SHAKE PERSONAL WEB PAGE (PWP): What you learn about these applicants**

Building a Fair Shake personal web page is not an easy feat! Members who create this page demonstrate many things to you:

- **HONESTY:** They are letting you know they have been incarcerated. This takes a great deal of courage. We know that honesty and courage are imperative to building trust. Is honesty something you are looking for in your employees?
- **SELF-MOTIVATION:** Creating this page demonstrates the applicant's perseverance, tenacity, and desire to succeed. They had no coercion in building this page; there was no class for it, nor did anyone recommend they do this. They built the page of their own volition.
- **TECH-SKILLS:** A variety of computer skills were required to create the Personal Web Page including: scanning, storage, typing, and understanding 'cloud' technology; to name a few.
- **HUMANNESS:** In addition to the above, the applicant offers information here that describes more than skills and experiences; you learn who they are and what they bring to your organization. This information is very important in building company culture, but is not requested on standard job applications.

### **Why hire a formerly incarcerated person?**

- To find the best possible candidate!
- Many applicants have received extensive training
- Often these applicants are highly motivated to work
- Many have a job coach or advisor
- Support is available for training and reducing risk



### **Fidelity Bonding Program**

The **Fidelity Bonding Program** offers six months of free bonding support to businesses across the country to lower their risk when hiring applicants who have been incarcerated.

Federal Fidelity Bonding Program: <http://bonds4jobs.com>

Bonding can:

- Provide six months of FREE insurance against employee theft
- Be obtained quickly and easily by just a phone call to confirm your hire

To bond a formerly incarcerated new hire today **call toll-free: 877-US2-JOBS (877-872-5627)**

### **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)**

The WOTC is a special tax credit available for hiring returning citizens (and others) and must occur within one year of their release date. The WOTC is available to any size business from small organizations to national corporations. The credit is also available for any type of job. The work can be full-time, part-time, temporary, or seasonal.

Facts about the WOTC tax credit:

- Employers can save as much as \$2,400 in taxes
- Applies to the first year of employment
- The new employee must work 120 hours for the employer to begin to receive credit

Exceptions:

- Not available for independent contractor work
- Not available for a business owned by a close relative

To find out more: <http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/wotcEmployers.cfm>

Or call: 1-800-829-4933

### **Employee Training Support**

Your business may be eligible for a state or federal training grant (or other funding). To find out what you may qualify for, check with your Workforce Investment Board, Small Business Development Center, or economic development agency.

- Workforce Investment Board: [servicelocator.org/contactspartners.asp](http://servicelocator.org/contactspartners.asp)
- Small Business Development Center: [sba.gov/tools/local-assistance](http://sba.gov/tools/local-assistance)
- Economic Development Administration: [eda.gov/](http://eda.gov/)

### **Ban the Box:**

Are you ready to remove the box that says 'Have you ever been convicted of a felony?' from your job application forms? If so, we can help! <https://www.fairshake.net/ban-the-box/>

On our page you will find:

- Best Practices and Model Policies
- Fair Chance Fact Sheet
- Community Hiring Model
- Which states, cities and counties *Ban the Box*
- Learn from dedicated states like Minnesota who have Banned the Box for both public- and private-sector jobs. They freely share information for you to do this, too.

## Resume Guide

A good resume will open the door for an interview. But do you need a resume? Some employers prefer a resume and others require an application form. That depends on the kind of job you're applying for.

### RESUME REQUIRED

- Professional, technical, administrative and managerial jobs.
- Sales positions.
- Secretarial, clerical, and other office jobs.

### RESUME SOMETIMES REQUIRED

Professional positions: Baker, Hotel Clerk, Electrician, Drafter, Welder

### RESUME NOT REQUIRED

Unskilled, quick turnover jobs: Fast Food Server, Laborers, Machine Loader, Cannery Worker

**The Rockport Institute** has generously donated the resume guide below. It is a shortened version of their full resume guide: *How to Write a Masterpiece of a Resume*, which can be found here:  
[www.rockportinstitute.com/resources/write-a-masterpiece-of-a-resume](http://www.rockportinstitute.com/resources/write-a-masterpiece-of-a-resume)

## WRITE A RESUME THAT GENERATES RESULTS

Before you begin, ask yourself: Why do you have a resume in the first place? What is it supposed to do for you? How can you differentiate yourself from hundreds of other applicants with qualified resumes? The prospective employer has the overwhelming task of looking over many resumes to find the special person that is right for the position and a great fit for the culture of the company. You are facing a great deal of competition.

The resume is a tool with one specific purpose: to win an interview. If it doesn't, it isn't an effective resume. A resume is an advertisement; nothing more, nothing less. A great resume doesn't just tell them what you have done but makes the same assertion that all good ads do: If you buy this product, you will get these specific, direct benefits. It presents you in the best light. It convinces the employer that you have what it takes to be successful in this new position or career.

Other reasons to have a resume:

- To pass the employer's screening process (requisite educational level, number of years of experience, etc.), to give basic facts which might favorably influence the employer
- To establish yourself as a professional person with high standards and excellent writing skills, based on the fact that your resume is so well done (clear, well-organized, well-written, well-designed, of the highest professional grades of printing and paper).
- To use as a covering piece or addendum to another form of job application
- To put in an employer's personnel files. (which they may check out later for other openings)
- To help you clarify your direction, qualifications, and strengths, boost your confidence, or to start the process of committing to a job or career change.

It is a mistake to think of your resume as your work history, a personal statement or some sort of self expression. Sure, most of the content of any resume is focused on your job history. But write from the intention to create interest, to persuade the employer to call you. If you write with that goal, your final product will be very different than if you write it just to catalog your job history.

Most resumes are quickly scanned, rather than read. Ten to twenty seconds is all the time you have to persuade a prospective employer to read further and the decision to interview a candidate is usually based on an overall first impression of the resume, a quick screening that so impresses the reader and convinces them of the candidate's qualifications that an interview results. The top half of the first page of your resume will either make you or break you. You hope it will have the same result as a well-written ad: to get the reader to respond. You are selling a product in which you have a large personal investment: you.

The person who is doing the hiring often cares deeply how well the job will be done. You need to write your resume to appeal directly to them. Ask yourself: What does the employer really want? What special abilities would this person have? What would set a truly exceptional candidate apart from a merely good one? How can I demonstrate that I am the perfect candidate? Put yourself in their shoes.

Loosen up your thinking enough so that you will be able to see some new connections between what you have done and what the employer is looking for. You need not confine yourself to work-related accomplishments! Use your entire life as evidence of your character, skills and talents. If Sunday school or your former gang are the only places you have had a chance to demonstrate your special gifts for leadership, fine. What are the talents you have to offer the prospective employer? A great resume has two sections. In the first, you make assertions about your abilities, qualities and achievements. You write powerful, but honest, advertising copy that makes the reader immediately perk up and realize that you are someone special.

The second section, the evidence section, is where you back up your assertions with evidence that you actually did what you said you did. This is where you list and describe the jobs you have held, your education, etc. This is all the stuff you are obliged to include.

Most resumes are just the evidence section, with no assertions. The 'juice' is in the assertions section. **When a prospective employer finishes reading your resume, you want them to reach for the phone to invite you in to interview.** The resumes you have written in the past have probably been a gallant effort to inform the reader. You don't want them informed. You want them interested and excited.

## THE OBJECTIVE SECTION

Ideally, your resume should be pointed toward conveying why you are the perfect candidate for one specific job or job title. Good advertising is directed toward a very specific target audience.

Targeting your resume requires that you be absolutely clear about your career direction—or at least that you appear to be clear. You would be wise to use this time of change to design your future career so you have a clear target that will meet your goals and be personally fulfilling. With a nonexistent, vague or overly broad objective, the first statement you make to a prospective employer says you are not sure this is the job for you.

Imagine the position of a software manufacturer looking at a sea of resumes. They all look so much alike until they come across a resume in the pile that starts with the following: "OBJECTIVE - a software sales position in an organization seeking an extraordinary record of generating new accounts, exceeding sales targets and enthusiastic customer relations". They are immediately interested! This first sentence conveys some very important and powerful messages: "I want exactly the job you are offering. I am a superior candidate because I recognize the qualities that are most important to you, and I have them. I want to make a contribution to your company." This works well because the employer is smart enough to know that

someone who wants to do exactly what they are offering will be much more likely to succeed than someone who doesn't. And that person will probably be a lot more pleasant to work with as well.

Secondly, this candidate has done a good job of establishing why they are the perfect candidate in their first sentence. They have thought about what qualities would make a candidate stand out. They have started communicating that they are that person immediately. What's more, they are communicating from the point of view of making a contribution to the employer.

Here's how to write your objective. First of all, decide on a specific job title for your objective. Go back to your list of answers to the question "How can I demonstrate that I am the perfect candidate?" What are the two or three qualities, abilities or achievements that would make a candidate stand out as truly exceptional for that specific job? Having an objective statement that really sizzles is highly effective. And it's simple to do. One format is:

**OBJECTIVE:** An xxx position in an organization where yyy and zzz would be needed (or, in an organization seeking yyy and zzz).

Xxx is the name of the position you are applying for. Yyy and zzz are the most compelling qualities, abilities or achievements that will really make you stand out above the crowd of applicants.

If you are applying for several different positions, you should adapt your resume to each one. Have an objective that is perfectly matched with the job you are applying for. Remember, you are writing advertising copy, not your life story.

If you have a limited work history, you want the employer to immediately focus on where you are going, rather than where you have been.

### **Examples of an Objective section:**

**OBJECTIVE:** An entry-level position in the hospitality industry where a background in advertising and public relations would be needed.

**OBJECTIVE:** A position teaching English as a second language where a special ability to motivate and communicate effectively with students would be needed.

### **THE SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

The "Summary of Qualifications" consists of several concise statements that focus the reader's attention on the most important qualities, achievements and abilities you have to offer. Those qualities should be the most compelling demonstrations of why they should hire you instead of the other candidates.

This may be the only section fully read by the employer, so it should be very strong and convincing. Include professional characteristics (extremely energetic, a gift for solving complex problems in a fast-paced environment, exceptional interpersonal skills, committed to excellence, etc.) helpful in winning the interview.

How should you write a Summary of Qualifications? Look for the qualities the employer will care about most. Then look at what you wrote about why you are the perfect person to fill their need. Pick your qualities that best demonstrate why they should hire you. Assemble it into your Summary section.

The most common ingredients of a well-written Summary are as follows. Do not use all these ingredients in one Summary - use the ones that highlight you best.

- A short phrase describing your profession
- Followed by a statement of broad or specialized expertise
- Followed by two or three additional statements related to any of the following:
  - o breadth or depth of skills
  - o unique mix of skills
  - o range of environments in which you have experience
  - o a special or well-documented accomplishment
  - o a history of awards, promotions, or superior performance commendations
- One or more professional or appropriate personal characteristics
- A sentence describing professional objective or interest.

Notice that the examples below show how to include your objective in the Summary section. If you are making a career change, your Summary section should show how what you have done in the past prepares you to do what you seek to do in the future.

**A few examples of Summary sections:**

- Highly motivated, creative and versatile real estate executive with seven years of experience in development and construction. Especially skilled at building effective, productive working relationships with clients and staff. Excellent management, negotiation and public relations skills. Seeking a challenging management position in the real estate field that offers extensive contact with the public.
- Health Care Professional experienced in management, program development and policy making in the United States as well as in several developing countries. A talent for analyzing problems, developing and simplifying procedures, and finding innovative solutions. Proven ability to motivate and work effectively with persons from other cultures and all walks of life. Skilled in working within a foreign environment with limited resources.
- Performing artist with a rich baritone voice and unusual range, specializing in classical, spiritual, gospel and rap music. Featured soloist for two nationally televised events. Accomplished pianist. Extensive performance experience includes television, concert tours and club acts. Available for commercial recording and live performances.

**SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In this final part of the assertions section of your resume, you do exactly what you did in the previous section, except that you go into more detail.

In the summary, you focused on your most special highlights. Now you tell the rest of the best of your story. Let them know what results you produced, what happened as a result of your efforts, what you are especially gifted or experienced at doing. Flesh out the most important highlights in your summary.

**Here are a few ways you could structure your “Skills and Accomplishments” section:**

SELECTED SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Raised \$1900 in 21 days in canvassing and advocacy on environmental, health and consumer issues.
- Conducted legal research for four Assistant U.S. Attorneys, for the U.S. Attorney’s office
- Coordinated Board of Directors and Community Advisory Board of community mental health center. Later commended as “the best thing that ever happened to that job.”

## FUNCTIONAL RESUME FORMAT

The functional resume highlights your major skills and accomplishments. It helps the reader see clearly what you can do for them. It helps target the resume into a new direction by lifting up from all past jobs the key skills and qualifications to help prove you will be successful. The functional resume is a must for career changers and for those returning to the job market.

## THE EVIDENCE SECTION - YOUR WORK HISTORY, EDUCATION, ETC.

Most resumes are not much more than a collection of "evidence," various facts about your past. By evidence, we mean all the mandatory information you must include on your resume: work history with descriptions, dates, education, affiliations, list of software mastered, etc. If you put this toward the top of your resume, anyone reading it will feel like they are reading an income tax form.

### EXPERIENCE

List jobs in reverse chronological order. Don't go into detail on the jobs early in your career; focus on the most recent and/or relevant jobs. (Summarize a number of the earliest jobs in one line or very short paragraph. Put dates in italics at the end of the job; don't include months, unless the job was held less than a year. Include military service, internships, and major volunteer roles if desired! Because the section is labeled "Experience," it does not need to mean that you were paid.

### EDUCATION

List education in reverse chronological order, degrees or licenses first, followed by certificates and advanced training. Set degrees apart so they are easily seen. Put in boldface whatever will be most impressive. Don't include any details about college except your major and distinctions or awards you have won.

- Do include advanced training, but be selective with the information.
- If you are working on an uncompleted degree, include the degree and afterwards, in parentheses, the expected date of completion.
- If you didn't finish college, start with a phrase describing the field studied, then the school, then the dates (the fact that there was no degree may be missed).

Other headings might be "Education and Training" or "Education and Licenses".

And then add your Awards, Civic and Community Recognition and Comments from Supervisors.

### PERSONAL INTERESTS

Only list these if your personal interests indicate a skill or knowledge that is related to the goal, such as photography for someone in public relations, or carpentry and wood-working for someone in construction management. This section can create common ground in an interview.

### REFERENCES

You may put "References available upon request" at the end of your resume, if you wish. This is a standard close (centered at bottom in italics), but is not necessary. You can bring a separate sheet of references to the interview, to be given to the employer upon request.

## A FEW GUIDELINES FOR A BETTER PRESENTATION

**The resume is visually enticing, a work of art.** Simple clean structure. Very easy to read. Symmetrical. Balanced. Uncrowded. As much white space between sections of writing as possible; sections of writing that are no longer than six lines, and shorter if possible.

**There are absolutely no errors.** No typographical errors. No spelling errors. No grammar, syntax, or punctuation errors. No errors of fact.

**All the basic, expected information is included.** A resume must have the following key information: your name, address, phone number, and your email address at the top of the first page, a listing of jobs held, in reverse chronological order, educational degrees, in reverse chronological order.

**Jobs listed include a title, the name of the firm, the city and state of the firm, and the years employed.** Jobs earlier in a career can be summarized and extra part-time jobs can be omitted. If no educational degrees have been completed, it is still expected to include some mention of education (professional study or training, partial study toward a degree, etc.) acquired after high school.

**It is targeted.** First you should get clear what your job goal is, what the ideal position would be. Then you should figure out what key skills, areas of expertise or body of experience the employer will be looking for in the candidate. Gear the resume structure and content around this target, proving these key qualifications.

**Strengths are highlighted / weaknesses de-emphasized.** Focus on whatever is strongest and most impressive. Make careful and strategic choices as to how to organize, order, and convey your skills and background.

**Use power words.** For every skill, accomplishment, or job described, use the most active impressive verb you can think of (which is also accurate). Begin the sentence with this verb, except when you must vary the sentence structure to avoid repetitious writing.

**Show you are results-oriented.** Wherever possible, prove that you have the desired qualifications through clear strong statement of accomplishments

**Writing is concise and to the point.** Keep sentences as short and direct as possible.

**Make it look great.** Use a laser printer or an ink jet printer that produces high-quality results. A laser is best because the ink won't run if it gets wet. It should look typeset. Use a standard conservative typeface (font) in 11 or 12 point. Use off-white, ivory or bright white 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper, in the highest quality affordable. Use absolutely clean paper without smudges, without staples and with a generous border.

**Shorter is usually better.** Your resume should be just long enough to keep the reader's interest, and create psychological excitement that leads prospective employers to pick up the phone and call you.

**Telephone number that will be answered.** Be sure the phone number on the resume will, without exception, be answered by a person or an answering machine Monday through Friday 8-5pm.

## WHAT NOT TO PUT ON A RESUME

- The word "Resume" at the top of the resume
- Fluffy rambling "objective" statements
- Salary information
- Full addresses of former employers or names of supervisors
- Reasons for leaving jobs
- References

## Favorite Verbs for Your Resume

Originally "Our Favorite Resume Verbs" by Wendy Enelow

Accelerate	Collaborate	Differentiate	Expand
Accentuate	Collect	Diminish	Expedite
Accomplish	Command	Direct	Experiment
Accommodate	Commercialize	Discern	Explode
Achieve	Communicate	Discover	Explore
Acquire	Compare	Dispense	Export
Adapt	Compel	Display	Facilitate
Address	Compile	Distinguish	Finalize
Advance	Complete	Distribute	Finance
Advise	Compute	Diversify	Forge
Advocate	Conceive	Divert	Form
Align	Conceptualize	Document	Formalize
Alter	Conclude	Dominate	Formulate
Analyze	Conduct	Double	Foster
Anchor	Conserve	Draft	Found
Apply	Consolidate	Drive	Gain
Appoint	Construct	Earn	Generate
Appreciate	Consult	Edit	Govern
Architect	Continue	Educate	Graduate
Arrange	Contract	Effect	Guide
Articulate	Control	Elect	Halt
Ascertain	Convert	Elevate	Handle
Assemble	Convey	Eliminate	Head
Assess	Coordinate	Emphasize	Hire
Assist	Correct	Empower	Honor
Augment	Counsel	Enact	Hypothesize
Author	Craft	Encourage	Identify
Authorize	Create	Endeavor	Illustrate
Balance	Critique	Endorse	Imagine
Believe	Crystallize	Endure	Implement
Brainstorm	Curtail	Energize	Import
Brief	Cut	Enforce	Improve
Budget	Decipher	Engineer	Improvise
Build	Decrease	Enhance	Increase
Calculate	Define	Enlist	Influence
Capitalize	Delegate	Enliven	Inform
Capture	Deliver	Ensure	Initiate
Catalog	Demonstrate	Equalize	Innovate
Centralize	Deploy	Eradicate	Inspect
Champion	Derive	Establish	Inspire
Change	Design	Estimate	Install
Chart	Detail	Evaluate	Instruct
Clarify	Detect	Examine	Integrate
Classify	Determine	Exceed	Intensify
Close	Develop	Execute	Interpret
Coach	Devise	Exhibit	Interview

## **Favorite Verbs for Your Resume**

Originally "Our Favorite Resume Verbs" by Wendy Enelow

Introduce	Organize	Recapture	Solve
Invent	Orient	Receive	Spark
Inventory	Originate	Recognize	Speak
Investigate	Outsource	Recommend	Spearhead
Judge	Overcome	Reconcile	Specify
Justify	Overhaul	Record	Standardize
Launch	Oversee	Recruit	Steer
Lead	Participate	Recycle	Stimulate
Lecture	Partner	Redesign	Strategize
Leverage	Perceive	Reduce	Streamline
License	Perfect	Regain	Strengthen
Listen	Perform	Regulate	Structure
Locate	Persuade	Rehabilitate	Study
Lower	Pilot	Reinforce	Substantiate
Maintain	Pinpoint	Rejuvenate	Succeed
Manage	Pioneer	Remedy	Suggest
Manipulate	Plan	Render	Summarize
Manufacture	Position	Renegotiate	Supervise
Map	Predict	Renew	Supplement
Market	Prepare	Renovate	Supply
Master	Prescribe	Reorganize	Support
Mastermind	Present	Report	Surpass
Maximize	Preside	Represent	Synthesize
Measure	Process	Research	Target
Mediate	Procure	Resolve	Teach
Mentor	Produce	Respond	Terminate
Merge	Program	Restore	Test
Minimize	Progress	Restructure	Thwart
Model	Project	Retain	Train
Moderate	Promote	Retrieve	Transcribe
Modify	Propel	Reuse	Transfer
Monitor	Propose	Review	Transform
Motivate	Prospect	Revise	Transition
Navigate	Prove	Revitalize	Translate
Negotiate	Provide	Satisfy	Trim
Network	Publicize	Schedule	Troubleshoot
Nominate	Purchase	Secure	Unify
Normalize	Purify	Select	Unite
Obfuscate	Qualify	Separate	Update
Obliterate	Quantify	Serve	Upgrade
Observe	Question	Service	Utilize
Obtain	Raise	Shepherd	Verbalize
Offer	Rate	Simplify	Verify
Operate	Ratify	Slash	Win
Optimize	Realign	Sold	Work
Orchestrate	Rebuild	Solidify	Write

## Accomplishments and Skills Worksheet

Use this worksheet as a spring board to organize your work history and personal interests for your resume. Include all successes in your life! You have valuable talent, skills and traits to share. Remember: there are no wrong answers.

### Examples

- Shipped an average of 40 packages per day for 4 years with fewer than 3% damage in shipping.
- Volunteered at the Humane Society every Tuesday evening for 2.5 years. Walked, bathed and groomed dogs.
- Organized a fund-raising event for Fair Shake, generating over \$8300. Organized silent auction donations, secured entertainment and food and assembled volunteers.
- Managed a household of four on \$2000 per month.
- Restored a 1961 Volkswagen Beetle to original condition.
- Successfully planted, nurtured and harvested an annual garden (8 years running!) and canned, froze or dried the harvest to provide year-round food for my family.

### Occupational Titles

Job titles to start your brainstorming when considering job goals.

Accountant	Graphic Designer	Manufacturer
Assembler	Grounds Keeper	Operations Manager
Carpenter	Inspector	Painter
Cashier	Lab Technician	Programmer
Chef / Cook	Librarian	Salesperson
Clerk	Machine Operator	Secretary
Data Entry	Mail Carrier	Snow-maker
Director	Maintenance	Teacher
Editor	Massage Therapist	Tree Trimmer
Engineer	Manager	Veterinarian
Firefighter	Mason	Welder

### Job Skills

The following is a short list of job skills. (There are literally thousands of job-specific skills.) You will have to research the job skills specific to your occupation

Accounting	Drill Press Operation	Payroll / Accounting
Advertising	Driving	Planning
Auditing	Editing	Public Speaking
Brake Alignments	Electronic Repair	Researching
Building Maintenance	Filing	Sign Language
Carpet Laying	Hammering	Scheduling
Cleaning	Interviewing	Soldering
Cooking	Keyboarding	Technical Writing
Correspondence	Management	Telemarketing
Counseling	Marketing	Typing
Customer Service	Mechanical Drafting	Welding
Detailing	Metal Fabrication	Writing

**Self-Management Skills**

Follow instructions  
Get along well

Get things done  
Honest

Punctual  
Responsible

**Personality traits**

Articulate  
Assertive  
Assume responsibility  
Communicative  
Competitive  
Creative  
Decisive  
Dependable  
Detail-oriented  
Diplomatic

Enthusiastic  
Emotionally strong  
Flexible  
Friendly  
Highly-motivated  
Integrity  
Quick-thinker  
Self-motivated  
Sense of direction  
Sense of humor

Sensitive  
Sincere  
Sociable  
Tactful  
Tolerant  
Tough  
Trusting  
Understanding  
Willing to learn

**Physical skills**

Agile  
Assembling  
Balancing, Juggling  
Crafts  
Counting  
Drawing, painting  
Driving (CDL?)  
Endurance  
Finishing, refinishing

Flexible  
Grinding  
Hammering  
Keyboarding, Typing  
Manual dexterity  
Mechanical  
Modeling, remodeling  
Observing, inspecting  
Operating machines

Precise  
Set standards  
Strong  
Thorough  
Restoring  
Sandblasting  
Sewing  
Sorting  
Weaving

**People Skills**

Caring  
Comforting  
Communicating  
Conflict management  
Conflict resolution  
Counseling  
Consulting  
Developing rapport  
Diplomacy  
Diversity

Empathy  
Encouraging  
Group facilitating  
Helping others  
Inspiring trust  
Inquiry  
Instructing  
Interviewing  
Listening  
Mediating

Mentoring  
Motivating  
Negotiating  
Outgoing  
Problem-solving  
Respect  
Responsive  
Sensitive  
Sympathy  
Tolerance

**Data Sorting Skills**

Analyzing  
Auditing  
Averaging  
Budgeting  
Calculating, Computing  
Checking for accuracy  
Classifying  
Comparing  
Compiling

Cost analysis  
Counting  
Detail-oriented  
Evaluating  
Examining  
Financial or fiscal  
Analysis  
Financial management  
Financial records

Following instructions  
Investigating  
Inventory  
Interrelate  
Logical  
Organizing  
Recording facts  
Research  
Surveying

**Leadership Skills**

Brainstorm  
Competitive  
Coordinating  
Decisive  
Delegate  
Direct others  
Evaluate  
Goal setter  
Influential  
Initiate new tasks

Integrity  
Judgment  
Manage, Direct others  
Mediate problems  
Motivate people  
Multitasking Negotiate agreements  
Organization  
Planning  
Results-oriented

Risk taker  
Run meetings  
Self-confident  
Self-directed  
Self-motivated  
Sets an example  
Solve problems  
Strategic planning  
Supervision  
Work schedules

**Artistic Skills**

Artistic ideas  
Dance, Aerobic  
Designing  
Drawing, Painting  
Handicrafts  
Illustrating, Sketching

Imaginative  
Inventive  
Mechanical drawing  
Model-making  
Perform  
Photography

Play an instrument  
Rendering  
Singing  
Visualize shapes  
Visualizing  
Writer / Editor

**Descriptive Words to Use in Your Resume**

Able  
Accurate  
Active  
Adaptable  
Adept  
Administrative  
Advantageous  
Aggressive  
Alert  
Ambitious  
Analytical  
Articulate  
Assertive  
Astute  
Attentive  
Authoritative  
Bilingual  
Broad-minded  
Calm  
Candid  
Capable  
Cheerful  
Committed  
Competent  
Comprehensive  
Confident  
Conscientious

Considerate  
Consistent  
Constructive  
Continuous  
Contributions  
Cooperative  
Creative  
Curious  
Decisive  
Dedicated  
Deliberate  
Dependable  
Detailed  
Detail-oriented  
Determined  
Diligent  
Diplomatic  
Disciplined  
Discreet  
Diversified  
Driven  
Dynamic  
Eager  
Easily  
Easygoing  
Economical  
Effective

Efficient  
Effortlessly  
Empathetic  
Energetic  
Enterprising  
Enthusiastic  
Excellent  
Exceptional  
Experienced  
Expert  
Expertly  
Extensive  
Fair  
Farsighted  
Fast-learner  
Flexible  
Forceful  
Friendly  
Generalist  
Hard-working  
Honest  
Imaginative  
Increasingly  
Independent  
In-depth  
Initiative  
Innovative

### Descriptive Words (Continued)

Insightful	Precise	Significantly
Instrumental	Problem-solver	Sincere
Inventive	Productive	Skilled
Knowledgeable	Professional	Skillful
Leadership	Proficient	Solid
Logical	Profitable	Sound
Loyal	Progressive	Specialized
Major	Proven	Specialist
Mature	Punctual	Stable
Meaningful	Qualified	Strategically
Methodical	Quality-conscious	Strong
Meticulous	Quick-learner	Substantial
Motivated	Realistic Recent	Successful
Multilingual	Reliable	Superior
Objective	Repeatedly	Systematic
Open-minded	Resilient	Tactful
Optimistic	Resourceful	Talented
Orderly	Respectful	Team player
Organized	Responsible	Technical
Outstanding	Responsive Risk-taker	Thorough
Patient	Routinely	Timely
Perceptive	Satisfactorily	Uniform
Persistent	Scope	Universal
Personable	Self-confident	Up-to-date
Personally	Self-controlled	Valuable
Persuasive	Self-reliant	Varied
Pertinent	Self-starter	Versatile
Pleasant	Sharp	Vigorous
Positive		Well-educated
Practical		Well-rounded

## Cover Letter

Many employers today want to read a letter of introduction, or cover letter, when they review a resume. A cover letter should tell the employer which position you are interested in, why you think you are qualified for the position. Some information in your cover letter may also be on your resume; overlapping information emphasizes skills and characteristics. Read your cover letter carefully, check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors, then have another person proofread it one more time before you print it or press 'send'.

January 5, 2021

Alex Wikstrom  
Sun Dog Manufacturing  
123 Swiggum St.  
Westby, WI 54667

Dear Mr. Wikstrom:

I am interested in the Shipping Manager position advertised on your website this week. I believe I would be a great fit for this position and welcome the opportunity to talk with you to find out more about the job and your company.

Your Requirements:

- Computer literate, able to learn software programs
- Compare multiple shipping criteria
- Self-motivated
- Friendly, work well with others

My Qualifications:

- I am experienced in shipping with USPS, Fed Ex and UPS and their software programs.
- I understand that each shipper offers different services. I can learn what I need to know for the safe delivery of products to the customer and the most cost-efficient route for the company.
- I enjoy my work and take pride in a job well done. I find this very motivating.
- I encourage you to follow up on my references as I am sure you will see that I am a 'team player' and understand how to recognize company culture and enhance the work environment.

I enjoy playing an important role in enhancing customers' experiences. I also enjoy balancing the technical skills, physical skills and social skills that are required to do a great job in this position. I take pride and ownership in my work and consider the perspective of the customer when packing an order.

My resume is attached for your review. I'm interested in talking with you and learning more about the position and Sun Dog. I read the mission statement and feel I really can get behind it.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

**Signature Here**

Sue Kastensen

For more examples, check out Best Resumes & Letters for Ex-Offenders by Wendy Enelow and Ronald Krannich, or simply search for 'cover letter examples' in your favorite search engine.

# Maurice Sprewer

414.874.0000 (list the BEST contact number you have) Maurice.sprewer@dwd.wisconsin.gov

(be sure that your email address is professional)

EXAMPLE of a  
**FUNCTIONAL Resume'**

## Production Worker and General Laborer Committed to Safety and Quality

(personal branding statement - describes position and a quality that makes you great at it)

### Summary of Skills: (make sure the skills are relevant to the job you are applying for - usually found in the job description)

- Sorting, grading, weighing, and inspecting products, verifying and adjusting product weight or measurement to meet specifications.
- Observing machine operations to ensure quality and conformity of filled or packaged products to standards.
- Monitoring the production line, watching for problems such as pile-ups, jams, or glue that isn't sticking properly.
- Attaching identification labels to finished packaged items, or cut stencils and stencil information on containers, such as lot numbers or shipping destinations.
- Stocking and sorting product for packaging or filling machine operation, and replenishing packaging supplies, such as wrapping paper, plastic sheet, boxes, cartons, glue, ink, or labels.
- Packaging the product in the form in which it will be sent out, for example, filling bags with flour from a chute or spout.
- Inspecting and removing defective products and packaging material.
- Starting machine by engaging controls.
- Removing finished packaged items from machine and separate rejected items.
- Counting and recording finished and rejected packaged items.
- Stopping or resetting machines when malfunctions occur, clearing machine jams, and reporting malfunctions to a supervisor.
- Removing products, machine attachments, or waste material from machines.
- Transferring finished products, raw materials, tools, or equipment between storage and work areas of plants and warehouses, by hand or using hand trucks.
- Packing and storing materials and products.
- Helping production workers by performing duties of lesser skill, such as supplying or holding materials or tools, or cleaning work areas and equipment.
- Counting finished products to determine if product orders are complete.
- Measuring amounts of products, lengths of extruded articles, or weights of filled containers to ensure conformance to specifications.
- Following procedures for the use of chemical cleaners and power equipment to prevent damage to floors and fixtures.
- Mixing water and detergents or acids in containers to prepare cleaning solutions, according to specifications.
- Loading and unloading items from machines, conveyors, and conveyances.
- Operate machinery used in the production process, or assist machine operators.
- Placing products in equipment or on work surfaces for further processing, inspecting, or wrapping.

### Relevant Production and General Labor Experience

#### General Laborer (Position while incarcerated)

State of Wisconsin / Badger State Industries / FBOP (whichever applies)

year - year

City, State

#### Previous Relevant Employment

Previous Employer

year - year

City, State

### Other Experience

#### Previous Relevant Employment

Previous Employer

year - year

City, State

### Education

Relevant Education

(Relevant Degree / Diploma)

Created by Maurice Sprewer Employment & Training Specialist / Reentry Coordinator  
DWD / Job Service 4201 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 602 Milwaukee, WI 53216

Your Name  
Milwaukee, WI  
Your email  
111-222-3333

**EXAMPLE of a  
Letter of Explanation**

Re: Letter of Explanation

Insert Date Here.

Dear Sir or Madam,

The things I value most are honesty, integrity and directness. Therefore, in anticipation of the criminal background check, you will find that in October of 2006 I was convicted of the offense of Armed Robbery - Use of Force. I served 24 months in prison for my crime. Upon release in 2008, I unfortunately, returned to the same negative influences and the same circle of negative associations and as a result, I re-offended in 2009. The charge was again, Armed Robbery this time as a Party to a Crime. I know that what I did was wrong. It was a result of poor decision making on my part and it hurt a lot of people. I've learned a great lesson and won't repeat those past mistakes.

While incarcerated, I completed my HSED through the Warren Young School. In addition, after a period of careful self-examination, I began working on ME. I successfully completed coursework in **Walking the Line - the Vow to Succeed Program, Cognitive Intervention Phases I and II, and Re-Entry bridge to Success programs**. I then continued my education, gaining **certifications in Telecommunications Technologies as a Network Cabling Specialist in Copper Based Systems**. Since my release I have done some full time work as laborer in a tannery and volunteered my time at my 11 year old son's school. However, I am looking forward to getting back to work full-time in the field of Telecommunications as an installer so I may further demonstrate the changes in my life and be a responsible member of society.

I can understand why you may be hesitant to hire someone with my background. However, I am eligible for **The Fidelity Bonding Program which can insure you for up to \$25,000** against any act of dishonesty on my part. Additionally, when you hire me, you will be eligible for **Work Opportunity Tax Credits to save you up to \$9,000 this year**. I will be happy to provide you more information about those programs during our interview. Lastly, I recently successfully completed the **Pipeline to Employment Training Program for Former Offenders** sponsored by the **State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development** and I can provide a letter of recommendation from them at your request.

I am eager to pursue this or other opportunities with your company because I am confident my skills and experiences will dovetail with the needs of your business.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name here

*Created by Maurice Sprewer Employment & Training Specialist / Reentry Coordinator  
DWD / Job Service 4201 N. 27<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 602 Milwaukee, WI 53216*

## Thank You Letter

Writing a thank you letter allows you the opportunity to share your reflections from the interview, including topics that were discussed and your decision to accept the job if it is offered to you. If you do not want the job you can write a short thank you letter stating that you wish to withdraw your application. If you do want the job, restate the qualifications and social skills you possess related to the requirements of the position and culture of the company. Be sure to send your thank you letter within a day of your interview.

Sue Kastensen  
PO Box 63  
Westby, WI 54667  
608-634-6363  
sue@gmail.com

January 20, 2021

Alex Wikstrom  
Sun Dog Manufacturing  
123 Swiggum St.  
Westby, WI 54667

Dear Mr. Wikstrom:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me yesterday about the Shipping Manager job opening. I appreciate the opportunity to interview for this position.

Upon reflection, I believe I am a good fit for the Shipping Manager position and also for the company. I bring four years experience in shipping and receiving and I am familiar with nearly all of the tools you showed me. I learn quickly and will be able to master each of the computer shipping programs easily. My personality is well-suited to accommodate the variety of employees who will bring items to be shipped, and also the freight handlers that I will interface with.

Thank you for listening to me describe my past and what I have learned from my incarceration. Be assured that I have reflected upon, learned from, and moved beyond all types of criminal behavior. I am ready and willing to be a reliable benefit to Sun Dog Manufacturing.

I'm very interested in working with you and your team. I am a dedicated worker and can commit to supporting Sun Dog Manufacturing well into the future. Please feel free to contact me if you would like further information. My cell phone number is 608-634-6363

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

**Signature Here**

Sue Kastensen

\*\*\* For many more examples, Search the Internet for *Thank You Letter Examples* \*\*\*

# How Do You Solve a Problem Like Reentry?

Sue Kastensen, Founder and Director, Fair Shake

Imagine, if you can, being snugly stuck in a building with 1,600 other people, all of whom share your physical gender; never leaving, eating in the cafeteria that offers no choices, and sleeping in a room that is the size of your current bathroom, which, by the way, you share with one or two “roommates” not of your choosing. Imagine, also, that you have no internet access, no cell phone, and no computer. Your phone calls, on an old-school pay phone, will be conducted in a large room filled with boisterous people. You are restricted to one 15-minute call after which you must wait one hour before you are permitted to make another. Finally, you are only offered short intervals of time in the exercise room and library, and you receive few, if any, very short visits from family or friends. Oh, and you’ll share the bathroom with 50 people.

Can you imagine this for even one full day? How about one week? A month? A year? People in U.S. prisons are serving sentences that exceed 1 year ... so let’s imagine five, 10, 20 or even 30 years.

The crowded picture in your head, however, doesn’t come close to the reality of life in prison. I have omitted the suffering, the sadness, and the loss of loved ones; the manipulations, the disrespect, and lack of trust; the fear, the censorship, and the razor-wire fence. And the heavy gates with electronic locks.

Today there is an added threat of a potentially deadly virus running wild within the building. The virus, by the way, can only enter the building with the people who come and go for work, but who do not live there.

Finally, I want you to imagine how anyone who does not have personal experience in this process could possibly

guide people to build successful lives in a busy world once the exit door is opened to them. Where does one start to offer information about an ever-changing society when it is difficult to keep up, even for those who are fully engaged?

At least one building, full of the people in the thought exercise, opens its doors to release the inhabitants each day; 7 days per week (Carson, 2020). There are approximately 1.4 million prisoners currently serving time in state and federal prisons (Carson, 2020), and 95% of them will be returning to society (Hughes & Wilson, 2020). They are all excited to experience freedom again, but many are also extremely fearful of failure.

Very few prisons offer resources, support, or information to the incarcerated that will help them make vital connections for housing, medical support, or clothing prior to release. No prisons allow those who have recently come home to share their experience with those who are preparing for the transition.

Incarcerated people, when they can work, make less than 30 cents per hour, on average (Sawyer, 2017). It’s nearly impossible to save up for today’s cost of living on that wage, and the difficulty is exacerbated when landlords or employers refuse to consider leasing to or hiring formerly incarcerated applicants after running a background check.

With such a steep hill to climb, it should come as no surprise that less than 10 years after release from prison, 83% of those who have been released will find themselves back in prison (Alper, Durose, & Markman, 2018).



Photo credit: Federal Bureau of Prisons

*Sue Kastensen presenting Fair Shake in a federal prison.*

But it is a surprise. It’s shocking. A 17% success rate for an organization of any kind is ridiculous! How is this even possible? It’s embarrassing, unacceptable, maddening, and, for me, motivating.

## Minding My Own Business

Prior to 1999, I — like most of my fellow Americans — was not aware of the formidable and terrifying gauntlet of challenges waiting for those who are returning to society from prison.

I was also not aware of the extremely long sentences and collateral consequences imposed by our war on drugs, or that people convicted of committing burglary were much more likely to commit another crime than people convicted of committing murder, or that many people convicted of sex offenses would be listed on a national registry for the rest of their lives.

I had never thought about the psychological hurdles to reengagement: building the courage and confidence to apply for a job, the frustrations of learning to use technology, needing strong boundaries to resist the

lure of using shortcuts to acquire money, finding and building healthy relationships (including reconnecting with children, parents and partners); or the intense tenacity and dedication to stay committed to goals made while incarcerated.

I never thought about any of that because in 1999, I — like most Americans — was focused on myself and my future. I was an enthusiastic 36-year-old business owner, manufacturing products that were in high demand in a rapidly growing market. I needed machines, and the employees to build and run them. Amid the growth and excitement, an employee took me aside one day and quietly asked if I might consider hiring her friend who would be coming home from prison soon.

Entrepreneurs are often courageous to try new and different things, but this question put me in a difficult position. I wanted to protect the loyal team that was cranking out our products every day, and I also wanted to give this person a “second chance.” Besides, if I did not say I’d consider this question in my small community of 2,000 people, who do I think should?

I said “yes.”

I learned a lot about reentry challenges from Rick, the applicant who became our new employee. He and I continued our conversation while I brainstormed on building a tool that could help people find needed resources. I knew that, at the very least, I could contribute an online reentry resource library! I called it “Fair Shake.”

Wanting to connect with professionals who help prisoners prepare for release, in 2002 I joined the Correctional Education Association and started searching for a mentor. I found one, and by 2005, I had sold my business, eager to create a nonprofit that would help people transition from prison to life after prison.

### Unique Qualifications

Since before I can remember, I have been a risk-tolerant, extremely curious, self-determined, anti-fragile, and somewhat courageous individual. My approach to life did not bode well with authorities and by 8th grade, I felt I was being developmentally stunted at home and in school. In order to survive my teens, I had to find my own path.

After getting kicked out of my parents’ home at 13 — and after five high schools, four foster homes, several stays in group homes, a couple of jail visits and a few years in a Catholic reform school — in 1979, when I was 16 years old, I wanted to drop out of school and become an emancipated adult. I felt I was serving a sentence that had no end and no purpose. Authorities wanted me to stay in school, so I said I would continue with high school if I could attend Walden III, an alternative high school (which still exists today).<sup>1</sup> This was my last opportunity for a formal education and, thankfully, I flourished.

The school engaged in very little top-down pedagogy and primarily worked from a framework of student-centered, constructive, and problem-solving perspectives. Even the students were teaching classes! Some of my most cherished and important lessons were not taught in the classrooms; they were felt within the care of the community, for which I had yearned for so many years. The comradery, respect, interactions, support, and cooperative learning — unheard of in public or private schools in 1979 — gave me a deep understanding of authenticity, freedom, ownership, agency, interdependence, and even the importance of history.

At the start of my junior year, I detested school but at the end of the year, I found myself deeply in love with learning. I know now that we can find this love no matter where, or when, we find ourselves.

### Lifewide Learning

Between selling my business and organizing a nonprofit, I worked in fair trade for a few years. During that time, I learned about stakeholders in the food chain: the farmworkers, farmers, processors, distributors, retailers, and consumers (we did not include the waste process at that time). My mind opened; I realized that the onus for reentry success did not solely fall on the person coming home from prison — that person also needed to be accepted for employment, housing, higher education, in places of worship, and more. In short, their success depended on all of us! I realized that I had to offer support to other stakeholders, too. I started thinking about ways to support and encourage family and friends, employers, landlords, corrections, and citizens to participate in this common goal for reintegration.

By creating, and listening, and creating some more, amazing things started to happen.

In 2014, I received a call from a reentry affairs coordinator in a federal prison in Colorado. She contacted me because the resource-selection tool on the Fair Shake website<sup>2</sup> was not working properly. After we talked for some time, she invited me to present Fair Shake at the prison complex. She said I would speak with hundreds of men in institutions that covered three levels of security. This would be my first opportunity to present Fair Shake to the incarcerated!

After I nervously introduced myself and provided an overview of Fair Shake, I asked the group if they would tell me what information and resources they were looking for that would help them find success after release. Once we started talking, I relaxed and they, too, became increasingly comfortable with our conversation. By the end of the presentation, I felt like we had an energizing reentry brainstorming session!

In addition to gaining insight from the responses to my question, I also discovered that most of the people in that room were corresponding with family and friends through a secure email server called CorrLinks and that I could continue to communicate with them through that service by creating a newsletter and sharing best practices.

I also learned an even more important lesson: A lot of incarcerated people go to great lengths to help one another.

In early 2016, I started writing a monthly newsletter and by the end of the year, 250 readers had signed on. (Today there are more than 4,000 subscribers.) It is not a broadcast newsletter, either. It is a place to share and build ideas. The readers know more than I do, so we advise and inform one another.

Once that door was opened, I committed myself to spend as much time as I could to engage in in-person conversations with incarcerated people. For the next three years, I traveled all around the country: north to south and coast to coast, presenting Fair Shake in many types of prisons and all levels of security.

For each trip, I created a route that put me on the road for up to one month. I had to drive to the institutions because it made no sense to fly. Prisons are mostly located far away from airports and amenities and can get locked down without notice. I learned to be very flexible!

When I would arrive at an institution where the myriad of presentation participants — incarcerated people, prison staff, and public servant visitors — had seen the Fair Shake Reentry Packet<sup>3</sup> or the free Fair Shake software application or even the website (in a staff office; prisoners do not have access to the internet), someone would inevitably ask me how my bubble truck<sup>4</sup> was running and if I had new stories from meeting people along the way (I always did).



*Sue Kastensen with her bubble truck.*

My truck, with a camper on the back, made my travels possible. It was vital to have my kitchen, office, and bedroom with me at all times.

My travels are on hold for now, but prison reentry and education staff around the country have been staying in touch. Some check-in to make sure I will still be coming to their institutions when they open their doors again to volunteers, and others contact me to ask when the new software will be released. Robert Cialdini's (1984) "Scarcity Principle" is working in my favor, and suddenly Fair Shake is in high demand!

So, who comes to the presentations, and who signs up for the newsletters?

One can make almost no assumptions at all about who is in prison. As you have likely seen in the news, lawyers, CEOs, entertainers, and elected officials can be found in prisons; along with mothers, fathers, young people, and elders — many of whom have been in prison most of their lives and may have entered prison before they turned 18. The people serving time inside prison are as diverse as the people outside of prison, and many who have been convicted of committing crimes have also been victims themselves.

Criminologists, correctional administrators, elected officials, many academics, and, of course, the media, attempt to impress upon us that there is a specific type of person who commits a crime. They want us to believe that this "type" has "needs" that are unlike our usual human needs and they call them "criminogenic needs." They believe that these needs are like an addiction

and that most people who commit a crime must vigilantly "desist" from crime for many years, and possibly the rest of their lives because the needs are so strong. These people are put into groups according to their "risk of recidivism," their propensity to commit a new crime and return to prison.

To ensure that most prisoners from powerful and influential backgrounds will not be included in medium- or high-risk groups, the criminologists have devised a way for the majority of white-collar criminals to be excluded from having these "needs" (e.g., Jeffrey Epstein, Martha Stewart). The high-profile prisoners can often skip the dehumanizing, behaviorism-based programming and lengthy stretches of time in higher security prisons, where "assigning low-risk offenders to intensive programs designed for high-risk offenders" ... "can make things worse," according to the National Institute of Justice (2012, p. 109).

Considering the amount of time, effort, money, and research invested, I find it very disappointing that the criminologists have not created instruments that allow them to observe how people change. Many people grow, learn, feel deep remorse, and develop a world view that will lead to a law-abiding life, even without programming.

It is no wonder people are mystified about corrections, reentry, and how they can get involved to improve the corrections system or support the lives of those who have been released. National corrections associations, academics and elected representatives — the self-proclaimed "experts" — discourage others from getting involved in attending to the "broken system," as President Obama referred to it. They want us to trust them and leave the "reform" to them. After all, they will assert, they are informed by "evidence."<sup>5</sup>

These experts have been asking the question "What works?" to reduce recidivism for 50 years. In 1974, Robert Martinson answered their question.

Photo provided by the author.

After visiting many prisons and looking at the programming available in each one, he concluded that not one program worked for everyone. He found that some people benefited from one type, and others benefited from another, but no perfect program that applies to all had been created; there was no silver bullet. His findings liberated corrections from their duty of rehabilitation, creating a gap for the criminologists, with their medical model of interventions, dosages, and programming, to step in.

After more than 20 years of their studies, “evidence” and best practices, the criminogenic approach has only increased recidivism and failed to address the issues that it accuses the incarcerated population of engaging in in the first place: anti-social thinking and behavior. (See the Criminogenic Need Factors chart [National Parole Resource Center, 2014].)

have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of, and commitment to, them! In fact, many of our incarcerated have become far more prosocial than the people who determine them to be a high-risk for recidivism.

**What You Focus on Grows**

Since I have been presenting in several institutions annually, the prisons that have reentry councils, or think tanks, or other groups dedicated to problem-solving, often invite me to join their groups for an hour or two of conversation after my presentation. Over the course of a few meetings, we gain a deeper understanding of the unique qualities that each of us brings separately — and together — to the solution of the reentry problem.

It was through one of these opportunities that I was able to create a workshop for a National Conference on

It was a crazy idea that was fairly difficult to execute but we pulled it off. We were even able to include recorded presentations by Mike, the incarcerated member, and also the voices of the Fair Shake newsletter subscribers who shared their thoughts in writing.

The conference organizers greatly underestimated the interest in this topic: they gave us a small room for our presentation that we filled to more than 250% of capacity, while we had to watch many interested attendees walk away. Unfortunately, like so many things, the conference has been canceled this year, so we will not be able to rekindle and continue the conversation in person. The idea, however, will persist.

**The Fair Shake Operating System**

Creating a web and technology-based prisoner-reentry nonprofit organization that serves millions of people, on-demand, is a huge undertaking.

Many of my toughest lessons were learned simply by deciding to take this on! I had to learn to manage the daily website development by myself, to communicate with several stakeholders using a variety of tools, and to grasp several software tricks and tools involving Office, Adobe and Windows OS. And I have to keep on learning those tricks and tools, too, because software makers often change them when they update.

It was during one of these updates that I became very frustrated. I felt that no matter how hard I tried to keep up, Microsoft et al., were not interested in having me get my work done, they were mainly interested in making me learn things that served their interests. I felt like I was working for them!

My son calmly offered me an alternative to the commercial “matrix.” He asked me to consider learning to use an operating system called Ubuntu, which was constantly and seamlessly updated and improved by developers who ask for input from the users. He said it

Image credit: National Parole Research Center

Antisocial attitudes, beliefs and values	Attitudes, values, beliefs, and rationalizations supportive of crime; cognitive emotional states of anger, resentment, and defiance
Antisocial behavior patterns	Early and continuing involvement in a number and variety of antisocial acts and a variety of settings
Antisocial peers and associates	Close association with criminal others and relative isolation from anticriminal others; immediate social support for crime
Antisocial personality and temperamental factors	Adventurous, pleasure seeking, weak self-control, restlessly aggressive
Family/marital stressors	Two key elements are 1) nurturance and/or caring, and 2) monitoring and/or supervision
Substance abuse	Abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs
Lack of education, employment stability or achievement	Low levels of performance and satisfaction in school and/or work
Lack of pro-social activities in leisure time	Low levels of involvement and satisfaction in anticriminal leisure pursuits

*Criminogenic Need Factors*

Fancy (and expensive!) assessments, algorithms, and programming have been built to disregard the attributes, characteristics, and qualities they say criminals lack, which include building capabilities, perspective change, prosocial studies, engagements (such as mentoring), ownership, self-determination, critical thinking, and commitment to community. We want our nation’s citizens — as parents, employees, friends, and community members — to embrace these empowering and liberating qualities; and incarcerated people would like to

Higher Education in Prison with three men; two of whom I had met several times in the same prison and had been released; and one I met in a different prison and was still incarcerated. We wanted to find out if the academic attendees would help us think about how we could switch the reentry goal from being a negative one (reducing recidivism) to a positive one (building a satisfying and successful life) since it is far easier (and much more sensible!) to pursue a positive goal.

was a little harder to get started, but he assured me that once I got the hang of it — like driving with a manual transmission — it would become easy.

I wasn't ready for it when he offered, but I very much liked the idea of the operating system and how it was created. It reminded me of what I was doing with Fair Shake. Fair Shake, too, was a little harder, and people had to "do it themselves," but in the end they would be more informed, and Fair Shake would continue to become more relevant and supportive. I promised to look it up later.

Later came hard. It was when I was being forced to abandon Windows XP, which I loved so much, that I decided I'd had enough; it was time to try Ubuntu. I searched online to download it and the search results provided not only the computer operating system, but more importantly, they provided a link to a vital philosophy for our human operating system!

I was like a kid in a candy store as I explored the information online about Ubuntu! I was so excited to read and hear and learn about this traditional, sub-Saharan African philosophy, founded on the idea of interdependence. Ubuntu can be understood through the Zulu maxim, "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu," or "a person is a person through other persons." It means, according to Desmond Tutu (2015), that it is the very essence of being human that we belong in a bundle of life, and that the solitary individual is a contradiction in terms.

I couldn't believe my eyes. I recognized this as Fair Shake's operating system and since then I have been weaving the philosophy into all of the information I share. I also close the newsletter with "Ubuntu" to remind the subscribers that we are in this together.

### Education for Democracy

Understanding and effectively running a large democracy is an enormous undertaking and proper preparation should begin at an early age. We must nurture care in our youth and demonstrate ways they can think about themselves as individuals-within-community. Their education must include how to express — and listen to — a wide variety of perspectives in problem-solving debates about how to achieve social goals. It will take all of the formative years of schooling to develop these crucial and necessary thinking, reflection, communication, and feeling skills.

Rather than provide powerful tools for ownership, engagement, and intellectual expansion in a vibrant democracy, however, today's foundational pedagogy, with its attendant testing and comparisons, conditions our children to passively receive and believe information. The unspoken argument (unless you ask, like I always have) is that if we just rely on experts, follow the rules, and pursue employment, we will create the means to achieve happiness, security, and satisfaction in our lives.

We need not look further than the front page of the newspaper on any given day to see the devastating suffering and failure of this approach: increased polarization and authoritarianism across civil society, increased mental illness, suicide, anxiety, depression, addiction and opiate use in individuals; and the enormous loss of meaning and control in our lives.

Our citizens are waiting for a courageous and benevolent leader to do the heavy lifting of leading civil society. We want to believe that reform is happening and that infusing money into bad systems is making them better. We are waiting for the white knight to come and save us, but we can't yet see her on the horizon. The education system we count on to properly prepare our youth to recognize and solve social, regional, and global problems is failing our

future leaders by withholding the very tools they must use to develop their capabilities, at our nation's collective peril.

In 2007, just one month after receiving my bachelor's degree (at 44 years of age), I read an article in the *Journal of Correctional Education* that offered a new lens for me to use as I think about "correctional education." In it the author, Cormac Behan (2007), argued: "[T]he current penal orthodoxy must be challenged and alternative discourses explored within and without of correctional settings" (p. 158). I agreed! I read on, and found myself weaving these considerations into my perspective:

Educators need to create an alternative discourse about how we define our progress. It could shift the focus of the argument from a defensive position to a positive one. This might be achieved by arguing for a different approach to education than what the prison authorities or politicians may want. Mezirow's theory of Transformative Learning has a lot to offer prison educators. It encourages individuals to challenge the way they make meaning in the world. This requires transforming frames of reference which begins with critical reflection, i.e., assessing one's assumptions and presuppositions. It begins with encouraging students to engage in critical thinking which, according to Stephen Brookfield, is what one should strive for in an adult education process. ...This is the beginning of liberating learning. (Behan, 2007, p. 160)

I had just finished school, but I wanted to head straight back to the library to find out more about transformative learning theory! After all, wouldn't we all benefit from taking the time to think critically, reflect, question our assumptions, biases and beliefs, and discuss our thoughts with others?

After 10 years of self-study, I gathered all my savings and returned to school to pursue a master's degree in education. I needed to learn about education theory, curriculum-building and evaluation, so I could build a place where all people — regardless of their educational attainment or relationship — could freely learn how to learn. We have the right, as citizens and humans, to know how to think deeply, how to find information that is not offered through the “news,” to consider other perspectives, build agency, and expand our capacity for complexity, caring, and knowledge. We deserve to have a place to break free from the limitations of other people's educational norms, goals and expectations, and think outside of the social or tribal bubble. A place where learners of any age and any educational attainment level could continue freely on their personal path of acquiring wisdom.

Where I once thought a certificate was the answer, I grew to understand that employers et al. were understandably cynical about the value of certificates that cannot show commitment, moral fortitude, team building or critical thinking. They want to judge the person for themselves, which makes sense. After all, a driver's license does not verify a willingness to use turn signals, only that the driver knows how to use them.

It takes courage to face an employer in an interview following many years of incarceration. It also takes courage to say “no” to a powerfully persuasive family member or close friend. It takes great bravery to do the right thing when our group is doing the wrong thing. We can muster the strength that we need to create good boundaries, expand our capabilities, and reduce our suffering. From there, we can feel strong enough to reach out to help others .... and discover that helping them helps us even more. No certificate shows this level of growth, determination, or commitment.

I was extremely fortunate to have been diverted from dropping out of school to finding a reason to love learning. In the halls of Walden III, at the age of 16, I was able to experience the process and value of transformative learning. I am deeply grateful and, like many believers, I feel a responsibility to offer this opportunity to others.

### **The Fair Shake Free School**

So now, while I am not able to get into the prisons to talk with people face-to-face, but while the interest rises in newsletter subscriptions, creating think tanks, exploring biases, and more, I am pushing the creative side of my mind to its limits (which will, thankfully, expand even more) to figure out how one person can maintain and even build a lifelong learning “community center” that not only offers information, but asks visitors to contribute.

The Fair Shake Free School will more deeply investigate these areas:

- Philosophy — to explore epistemology, purpose, morality, care for humanity, values, etc.
- Psychology — to explore the feeling/thinking problem, our needs and wants, uniqueness, dropping unwanted baggage, motivation, etc.
- Sociology — to explore TV and media and it's impacts, how authority impacts groups, how being in groups impacts individuals, etc.
- Citizenship — building community and capabilities together, education, democracy, global village, etc.
- “Swellness” — where our physical health meets our mental health.

We now live in a world of constant change; where lifelong learning is no longer just a good idea, it is vital for security, satisfaction, meaning-making, and building trust.

Fair Shake will not engage in top-down pedagogy but will, instead, rely on a learning foundation based in

heutagogy (self-determined learning), ubuntu (teaching and learning undergirded by humanity toward others), and transformative learning theory (critical reflection and potential for perspective change).

Looking through the heutagogical lens (Glassner & Back, 2020), learners will understand that they are the captains of their learning adventure and they will “make the road by walking” (Machado, 1912). They will learn how they can discern the value of the information they entertain, ask relevant questions for proper reflection, and construct knowledge to build their life to its fullest.

By applying the lens of ubuntu (Bangura, 2005), learners will be able to think deeply about what is at the core of being a human: relationship! They will be able to remember that we learned how to be human from other humans, and that we can build information in a way that honors, accepts, and encourages others. Ubuntu is such an important philosophy for democracy that, in 1997, the South African Department of Welfare stated that Ubuntu “acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being” (p. 12).

Finally, the transformative learning lens (Mezirow, 1990) will equip learners with ways to foster critical self-reflection, challenge social norms, engage in dialog with greater confidence, and consider other perspectives, including changing our own. These tools will support compassion as well as capacity-building in a world of constant change and emerging truth.

### **Our Opportunity**

Let us think again about those who are stuck in the building:

The monolith of correctional bureaucracy and its supporters — the current managers of the building — have no incentive or desire to improve their performance. In accordance with

our current contract, they can keep us out, but they cannot stop us from reaching in to connect, to listen, and to share time, learning opportunities, and humanity. They can also not stop us from changing our contract with them in the future.

We can change the building; for instance, we can create a campus with choices. We can continue to include limitations and restrictions, while we also include decency, respect, and opportunities. We can remind those inside that we know they are bringing unique and important contributions to our communities.

The management of the building, and the welfare of those being held within it, is OUR business; we have a right and a duty to build possibilities with our fellow citizens. As we now properly recognize ourselves as the owners, and see our neighbors inside as co-creators, we can experiment with new ways of thinking about how to help them prepare to leave the building and find success in our dynamic, technology-based world.

Remember, more than 1,600 of our fellow citizens will walk out of those doors full of hope and determination each day. With our eyes and hearts open, I am certain that we can switch the 83% failure rate to an 83% success rate.

What works to improve reentry success? We do. Together.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Walden III, Racine, Wisconsin: <https://www.rusd.org/district/walden-iii-middle-high-school>
- <sup>2</sup> Fair Shake website: <https://www.fairshake.net/>.
- <sup>3</sup> Fair Shake Reentry Packet: <https://www.fairshake.net/reentry-resources/ReentryPacket/>.
- <sup>4</sup> If you'd like to learn about the philosophy behind the bubbles, please check out the "On Sue's

Desk" page of the website and scroll down until you see Bubble Truck Philosophy (<https://www.fairshake.net/suesdesk/>).

- <sup>5</sup> To see the survey that the Federal Bureau of Prisons use to assess the "risk of recidivism," please find the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA) survey on the Fair Shake website: (<https://www.fairshake.net/risk-assessments/>), or on the Research and Practice in Corrections Lab website: [https://sites.google.com/a/siu.edu/corrections-and-research\\_lab/Downloads](https://sites.google.com/a/siu.edu/corrections-and-research_lab/Downloads). See the "Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)" questionnaire (please scroll down to find it) and the "Measures of Criminal and Antisocial Desistance (MCAD)" survey — worth a moment while you're there!

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## Quotes Out of Context:

### *Vision and Oomph!*

*"Once you see the boundaries of your environment, they are no longer the boundaries of your environment."* - Marshall McLuhan

*"The question is never whether a diamond exists, the question is whether anyone is willing to find it."*  
- WI Judge Everett Mitchell  
(illiterate after graduating high school)

*"Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be."*  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

*"Transformation comes more from pursuing profound questions than seeking practical answers."* - Peter Block

*"I must create a system (for myself) or be enslaved by another man's."* - William Blake

*"We are all connected; To each other, biologically. To the earth, chemically. To the rest of the universe atomically."* - Neil deGrasse Tyson

*"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."* - Chief Seattle

*"Not only do self-love and love of others go hand in hand but ultimately they are indistinguishable."*  
- M. Scott Peck

*"Trust is built in very small moments."*  
- Brene' Brown

*"Questions draw us together. Answers push us apart."* - Peter Block

*"Loved people, love people. Love someone, so they can love someone."* - Marvin Beauchamp

*"I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain."*  
- James Baldwin

*"Sometimes in life you are responsible for changing something, not because you are to blame, but because you're the only person who can."*  
- Lisa Feldman Barrett

*"You can't think yourself into a new way of acting, but you can act yourself into a new way of thinking."* - Dave Gray

*"When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen."* - Ernest Hemingway

*"If you really want the last word in an argument, try saying 'you're right'."* - Unknown

*"Maturity is the ability to prioritize values before feelings."* - Mark Manson

*"There are no passengers on spaceship earth. We are all crew."* - Marshall McLuhan

*"The best way to have good ideas is to have lots of ideas...and then throw away the bad ones."*  
- Linus Pauling

*"If we believe something does not exist unless we measure it, then we put aside: love, feeling, intuition, art and philosophy."* - Peter Block

*"Your belief system saturates the space around you."* - Aaron Huey

*"...the ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently."* - David Graeber

*"It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it."* - Upton Sinclair

**HOT AND SPICY ROLL**

## Ingredients

1 bag of white rice  
 1 sausage log  
 jalapeño slices  
 ½ cup of shredded hot pepper cheese  
 tortillas

**Instructions**

1. Cut up sausage roll in small pieces
2. Put rice, sausage and enough water to cook the rice. Boil for 20 minutes.
3. Warm tortillas in the microwave or pan.
4. Put some cheese and jalapeño slices onto the warm tortillas, add the rice and sausage combination, and roll up.

**SESAME NOODLES**

1 pkg ramen noodles (hot & spicy flavor only)  
 2 dollops of peanut butter (or any nut butter)  
 1 tbsp garlic powder  
 1 tbsp soy sauce  
 1 tbsp of hot sauce  
 black pepper (to taste)

**Instructions**

1. Boil water, in microwave, until it's a rolling boil. Put noodle block in there as is. It will separate into strands over the course of 3 minutes.
2. Drain noodles, put aside.
3. Plop noodles in bowl, add at least 2 dollops of peanut butter and mix well.
4. Add the garlic powder & soy sauce (to taste)
5. Season with hot sauce & pepper to taste.

**CHICKEN JALAPEÑO RANCH BURRITOS**

1 (18oz) bag of rice,  
 1 Chile lime ramen soup,  
 1 (4.5oz) chicken breast,  
 1 container of jalapeño cream cheese (could use cheese cup),  
 1 pack of shells,  
 2 (1.5oz) packs of ranch dressing,  
 1 teaspoon garlic powder.  
 Optional: Hot sauce.  
 Peanut butter lid to measure out food.

In microwave-safe bowl, place 1 lid full of rice and 1.5 lid fulls of hot water, cook until fully cooked. Then cook half of the noodle w/out seasoning. After cooked drain excess water and let rice and

noodle to cool. Place rice, noodle, cream cheese, ranch dressing, garlic, and half chili lime seasoning packet and mix. As you mix add chicken. When done mixing put mixture on shells, should make 4 burritos.

**CHICKEN & BEAN DIP**

1 pkg of chicken ramen  
 ½ cup of shredded chicken  
 1 chopped jalapeño  
 1 cup of boiling water  
 2 cans/16 oz of refried beans  
 Tortilla chips

1. Crush the ramen in the wrapper and empty into a large bowl. Set aside the seasoning package (for a different recipe).
2. Add the water, cover, and let sit for 8 minutes. Then, drain off the excess water.
3. Mix the chicken, refried beans and chopped jalapeño into bowl.
4. Cover and microwave for about 5 minutes until hot.
5. Add the ramen and mix well.
6. Dip tortilla chips into the dish and eat!

**SWEET & SOUR PORK**

4 pkgs ramen noodles  
 1 sausage log  
 2 pkgs of pork rinds  
 2 tbsp of hot sauce  
 6 tbsp cherry Kool-Aid  
 chopped jalapeños (to taste)

Boil enough water to cover the blocks of ramen, let sit for 8 minutes. Then, drain of the excess water. In another bowl, chop the sausage log into small pieces, add the pork rinds and chopped jalapeno (to taste) into bowl. Then, cover and nuke it until hot. Add the ramen, hot sauce and cherry Kool-Aid to the hot bowl and mix well!

**FRUITY TEA**

1 tea bag A few pieces of orange peel  
 5 cherry cough drops 1 tsp of honey  
 1½ cups of boiling water

Put the tea bag, orange peel and cough-drops in a big mug. Pour over water, add the honey, and stir. Let steep for 4 min, remove the tea bag. Drink while hot or enjoy cold.

### **SUGAR RUSH DELIGHT**

Ingredients:

2 honey buns,  
peanut butter,  
2 candy bars of your choice, and  
1 pack of M&Ms.

STEP 1: flatten Honey buns with your hands while still in the wrapper.

STEP 2: warm up the desired amount of peanut butter and pour desired amount over the honey buns.

STEP 3: crush candy bars of your choice while still in the wrapper by hitting it on the ground then sprinkle 1 crushed candy bar on each honey bun.

STEP 4: crush M&Ms and sprinkle on honey buns.

STEP 5: fold each honey bun in half like a taco.

STEP 6: enjoy!!!

### **THE REAL HOT SHOT!!! (MAKES 16oz)**

Ingredients:

2 spoons of hot cocoa,  
1 big spoonful of coffee,  
1 candy bar of your choice (or 2)  
2 spoonful's of cappuccino mix (optional).

STEP 1: heat up 16 oz worth of hot water.

STEP 2: add cocoa, coffee, cappuccino into cup.

STEP 3: smash candy bar on the ground, open it up, and pour into your cup.

STEP 4: add the hot water to your cup.

STEP 5: stir mixture thoroughly until chocolate, coffee, and cappuccino mix is dissolved.

STEP 6: enjoy!!!

### **STRAWBERRY PARFAITS (4 servings)**

- 4 cups of vanilla pudding  
- ½ bag of tropical mix  
- 2 packets of regular oatmeal  
- ½ bottle of strawberry jelly  
- a cup of creamer

1) In a separate bowl, stir together the jelly, creamer, and pudding cups.

2) in a cup, put 2 banana chips on the bottom.

3) put a scoop or two of strawberry mix over chips.

4) pour a layer of oatmeal on the mix. Smoothen.

5) add more strawberry mix on that until there is ½ inch left on cup. Put raisins or some fried fruit and sprinkle some more oatmeal. 6) repeat for next cups. \*Optional: put strawberry mix on ice for 30 min before separating in cups.

### **APPLE PIE**

3-4 apples for a medium size pie. 5-6 for large.

Cut apples into thin slices, you can keep the peel on if you like but when it cooks it won't get soft.

Put all apple slices in a bag with 10-12 butters.

Next take 3-6 packs of cinnamon roll oatmeal's and put over bowl with paper on top. Take paper

and punch holes in it so when you pour the packet out the oatmeal won't get through. You just want the cinnamon. Add all the cinnamon to the bag

and add a generous amount of sugar to the mix. A splash of water too. Put in hot pot and let cook

for 2-3 hours. It may take longer, it just depends on how thin you slice the apples next, take a bag

of nilla wafers and crush them finely. Add to this the same amount of butters and sugar and a

splash of water. Pat it down into a nice smooth crust and put it on ice. Once the pie filling is hot

and soft pour it on top of crust and spread it evenly. Let sit for an half hour to an hour. If you

got it eat it ala mode!!!! Put more packets of cinnamon in the mix if you really want that flavor

to pop!! Enjoy!!

### **CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER BROWNIES**

Ingredients:

1 (16oz) bag of Vanilla wafers,

1 (10oz) packet of cocoa,

2 (14.4oz) boxes of Graham crackers,

1 (18oz) jar of Peanut butter,

1 large glass of tap water.

Optional: mixed nuts, trail mix, or M&M's

Break one sleeve of Graham crackers into dime size pieces, and set aside. Place remaining

sleeves of Graham crackers and wafers into a bag and crush into dust. Mix in cocoa, peanut

butter, and slowly add water and mix until gooey.

\*May not need all water. Can mix while in bag or a

bowl. Add dime size chunks and any optional

items, be careful not to over mix at this point. On

plastic surface, roll out mixture until 1/2 or 3/4 inch

thick. Let rest to set. Cut into 2" squares.

### **PEANUT BRITTLE**

Two bags of butterscotch buttons and half jar of peanut butter

Melt buttons with peanut butter until smooth

Add 1 bag peanuts.

Spread on a surface to cool.



# A LIBERATORY LEXICON

A Tiny, Sprouting Glossary for Self-Determination

Words and ideas to expand possibilities and bust through limiting beliefs!

**AGENCY** Capacity to act, to exert power. oed  
Capacity to decide; to act on your choices. smk

**ANDRAGOGY** - The method and practice of teaching adult learners. oed Adult learning. smk

**AUTONOMY** - The capacity of reason for moral self-determination. Liberty to follow one's will; control over one's own affairs; freedom from external influence, personal independence. oed

**CITIZEN** - Inhabitant of a nation, possessing civic rights and responsibilities. oed

**CULTURE** - The distinctive ideas, customs, social behavior, products, or way of life of a particular nation, society, people, or period. Hence: a society or group characterized by such customs oed

**CUSTOM** - A mode of behavior which is widely practiced and accepted in a particular society, community, etc.; a convention; a tradition oed

**DISPARITY** - The quality or state of being of unequal rank, condition, circumstances. oed

**ETHICS** – The guidelines, rules, agreements and group approaches to morality. smk

**EPISTEMOLOGY** – How do you know what you know? smk

**HARAMBEE** – Pulling together. oed It means "All Pull Together" in Swahili and is the national motto of Kenya.

**HEUTAGOGY** - Self-Directed Learning

**MEANING** (in our life): gives purpose, fulfilling smk

**MORAL** - Of or relating to human character or behavior considered as good or bad; of or relating to the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil, in relation to the actions, desires, or character of responsible human beings. oed

**KEY:** OED = Oxford English Dictionary  
smk = Sue's perspective

**MORALITY** - knowledge concerned with right and wrong conduct, duty, responsibility, etc. oed

**OWNERSHIP** - The fact or state of being an owner; proprietorship, dominion; legal right of possession or solving a problem. oed

**PHILOSOPHY** - The love, study, or pursuit of wisdom, truth, or knowledge. oed  
Once a foundation of learning, now rarely studied, yet critically needed. smk

**SELF-AWARENESS** - Conscious knowledge of one's own character, thoughts, emotions; awareness of the fact of one's own existence. oed

**SELF-CONTROL** - The ability to control one's emotions, desires, and reactions, esp. in difficult situations oed

**SELF-DETERMINATION** - The power or freedom to direct oneself or act independently; the capacity for free will; the process of, or capacity for, determining one's own course of life. oed

**SELF-GOVERNANCE** - The ability to govern or control oneself or one's emotions, desires, etc.; the fact of governing oneself in this way; self-control, self-discipline. oed

**SELF-REALIZATION** - Realization of one's true nature or ideal self; fulfilment of one's potential by one's own efforts. oed

**UBUNTU:** I am who I am because of who we all are. (aphorism)

oed: embodying the various values and virtues of essential humanity  
Desmond Tutu: the sense that my humanity is bound up in your humanity

**UBUNTUGOGY** – Framing our learning within the belief that everything is connected so all learning must include and address connections and interdependence. smk

## WHY AM I SO OBSESSED WITH LIBERATION & FREEDOM?

### WHY QUESTION BELIEFS THAT WERE GIVEN TO US?

### WHY DO I WORRY ABOUT LIBERATION FROM LIMITING THOUGHTS?

I want you to be able to find what you need to build a satisfying life. I believe a lot of the things that we really need to do that are not taught to us in school. It is my hope that by building this Manual, and by sharing ideas with its readers - that we will continue to build the book and the website together. Together, we can offer even more tools and information, including tools to build trust and community. The most important thing we need is deep, not fleeting, desire. If that flame is burning, we can learn to locate and reinforce everything else.

I believe:

If we want to build the life a life filled with meaning and connection -

If we want to be successful -

If we want to navigate the world safely -

If we want to learn, to develop, to build the future with intention -

If we want to support families, friends and communities -

*THEN*, it might be beneficial to:

Think about how we think. (cognition)

Think about how we know what we know. (belief / epistemology)

Think about how we feel. (some of what we believe is based on feelings that go way back...)

Think about how we sense. (we learn through our body and our surroundings, too)

Think about what we project on to what we think we know. (we assume our beliefs are true)

and Think about how we are 'persons-in-the-world', not 'solitary individuals'.

When we sharpen our skills and our care, we'll build our vehicle to a better future.

**We can't always calculate and strive, however....**

**...we need to rest and reflect, too.**

A couple of ways you can relax and reinvigorate your mind:

Reflect	Yoga / Meditate	Listen to an elder
Write in a journal	Mow / Shovel / Dishes	Listen to music w/o words
Walk / Run / Swim	Read with a child	Read by yourself
Laugh	Day dream	Paint, draw, dance, etc

## Sue's Suggested Reading List 2026

These books and authors have powerfully influenced my perspective. Many of the authors have TED talks, if you can get the chance to check them out.



### **7½ Lessons About the Brain**

Lisa Feldman Barrett 2020 Mariner Books

### **Amusing Ourselves to Death**

Neil Postman 1985 Penguin Books

### **Being You: A New Science of Consciousness**

Anil Seth 2021 Dutton Books

### **Black Prophetic Fire**

Cornel West, Christa Buschendorf 2015 Beacon

### **Business of Belief**

Tom Asacker 2013 CreateSpace

### **Calling Bullshit: The Art of Deception in a Data-Driven World**

Carl Bergstrom and Jevin West 2020 Penguin

### **The Careless Society: Community and Its Counterfeits**

John McKnight 1996 Basic Books

### **Community: The Structure of Belonging**

Peter Block 2018 Berrett-Koehler

### **Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers**

Kwame Appiah 2007 W. W. Norton and Co.

### **Creating Capabilities:**

The Human Development Approach

Martha Nussbaum 2013 Belknap Press

### **The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity**

David Graeber and David Wengrow 2023 Farrar, Straus and Giroux

### **Democracy and Education:**

An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education

John Dewey 1916 The Free Press

### **Democracy's Discontent: A New Edition For Our**

Perilous Times

Michael Sandel 2022 Belknap

### **The Depression Cure:**

The 6-Step Program to Beat Depression Without Drugs

Stephen S. Ilardi 2010 Da Capo Press

### **The Doors of Perception**

Aldous Huxley 1954 Harper Perennial

### **The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School**

Neil Postman 1996 Vintage

### **Enshittification: Why Everything Suddenly Got Worse and What to Do About It**

Cory Doctorow 2025 MCD

### **Escape From Freedom**

Erich Fromm 1941 Henry Holt and Company

### **Everyday Ubuntu:**

Living Better Together, the African Way

Mungi Ngomane 2020 Harper

### **The Experience Machine:**

How Our Minds Predict and Shape Reality

Andy Clark 2023 Pantheon

### **The Evolving Self:**

A Psychology for the Third Millennium

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi 1994 Harper Perennial

### **Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood**

Jack Mezirow 1990 Jossey-Bass

### **The Globalization of Addiction:**

A Study in Poverty of the Spirit

Bruce K. Alexander 2010 Oxford University Press

### **Happiness Hypothesis:**

Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom

Jonathan Haidt 2005 Basic Books

### **How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain - How We Create Emotions Through Brain, Body, and Culture**

Lisa Feldman-Barrett 2018 Mariner Books

### **Hypercapitalism: The Modern Economy, Its Values, and How to Change Them**

Larry Gonick 2018 New Press (cartoon history)

### **In My Father's House:**

Africa in the Philosophy of Culture

Kwame Anthony Appiah 1993 Oxford Univ. Press

### **Learned Helplessness:**

A Theory for the Age of Personal Control

Peterson, Maier and Seligman 1993 Oxford

### **Learning as Transformation:**

Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress

Jack Mezirow 2000 Jossey-Bass

### **Learning to Be a Person in Society**

Peter Jarvis 2009 Routledge

**The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity**  
Kwame Appiah 2019 Liveright Publishing

**Liminal Thinking: Create the Change You Want  
by Changing The Way You Think**  
Dave Gray 2016 Two Waves Books

**Man for Himself:**  
An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics  
Erich Fromm 1947 Henry Holt and Company

**Man's Search For Meaning**  
Victor Frankl 1946 Beacon Press

**No Contest: The Case Against Competition**  
Alfie Kohn 1986 Houghton Mifflin

**No Mud, No Lotus: The Art of Transforming Suffering**  
Thich Nhat Hanh 2017 Aleph

**On Personal Power:**  
Inner Strength and It's Revolutionary Impact  
Carl Rogers 1977 Delta Books

**Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative**  
Ken Robinson 2001 Capstone Publishing

**The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less**  
Barry Schwartz 2004 Ecco

**Practical Wisdom:**  
The Right Way to Do the Right Thing  
Barry Schwartz, Kenneth Sharpe 2010 Penguin

**The Psychology of Attitude Change and Social  
Influence**  
Philip Zimbardo and Michael R. Leippe 1991  
McGraw-Hill

**Race Matters**  
Cornel West 1994 Vintage Books

**The Revolution Will Not Be Funded:**  
Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex  
INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence  
2017 Duke University Press

**The Righteous Mind:**  
Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion  
Jonathan Haidt 2012 Pantheon Books

**Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies**  
Ed. Albert Bandura 1995 Cambridge Univ. Press

**The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck: A  
Counterintuitive Approach to Living a Good Life**  
Mark Manson 2016 Harper

**A Theory of Justice**  
John Rawls 1999 Belknap Press

**Tyranny of Merit:**  
What's Become of the Common Good?  
Michael Sandel 2020 Farrar, Straus and Giroux

**Ubuntu and the Reconstitution of Community**  
James Ogude 2019 Indiana University Press

**Underground History of Education: An Intimate  
Investigation Into the Prison of Modern Schooling**  
John Taylor Gatto 2017 Valor Academy

**Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the  
Secret Joys of Bureaucracy**  
David Graeber 2016 Melville House

**Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data  
Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy**  
Cathy O'Neil 2017 Crown

**What About Me?**  
The Struggle for Identity in a Market-Based Society  
Paul Verhaeghe 2012 Scribe Publications

**What Does It Mean To Be Well-Educated?**  
Essays on Standards, Grading & Other Follies  
Alfie Kohn 2004 Beacon Press

**What Doesn't Kill Us:**  
The New Psychology of Posttraumatic Growth  
Stephen Joseph Ph.D. 2013 Basic Books

**Why Are We Yelling?**  
The Art of Productive Disagreement  
Buster Benson 2019 Portfolio

**Why We Do What We Do: Understanding  
Self-Motivation**  
Edward Deci and Richard Flaste 1996 Penguin

**Winners Take All:**  
The Elite Charade of Changing the World  
Anand Giridharadas 2019 Vintage Books

**The Wisdom of Insecurity:**  
A Message for an Age of Anxiety  
Alan Watts 1951 Vintage Books

**You Call This A Democracy?**  
Who Benefits, Who Pays And Who Really Decides?  
Paul Kivel 2004 Rowman and Littlefield

**You're Not Listening:**  
What You're Missing and Why It Matters  
Kate Murphy 2020 Celadon Books

Neil Postman on the difference between  
1984 (George Orwell) and *Brave New World* (Aldous Huxley)

*What Orwell feared were those who would ban books.*

*What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one.*

*Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information.*

*Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism.*

*Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us.*

*Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance.*

