

Fair Shake News on New Year's Eve edition

Hello Readers...you Awesome Donors...and Baby New Year ~

I'm so excited to see 2021 arrive! The last 10 months have been surreal; they seemed like they just went on and on, and I feel like I hardly accomplished anything. Thank goodness change is afoot.

I know 'things don't change overnight' but they do change over a series of nights...and, like the sun returning to the north for longer and longer periods each day (yay!), we will start to see improvements, slowly, in 2021. Soon enough it will again be summer, although we will not return to our old 'normal'. Many things will change for good; which is not all bad. In fact, while 'change is in the air' we have a better chance to insert our intentions into the 'change we wish to see in the world'. I get excited about our possibilities! Harambee! When we 'all pull together', we can have a much greater impact.

FUNCTIONAL PHILOSOPHY: BELIEF IS EVERYTHING

BELIEF: A belief is an attitude that something is the case, or that some proposition about the world is true. "Belief" refers to attitudes about the world which can be either true or false; acceptance of, or confidence in, an alleged fact - or body of facts - as true or right without proof.

CRUCIAL POINT #1: Our beliefs drive our behavior.

(Our beliefs are neither our thoughts or our feelings.)

CRUCIAL POINT #2: We can, if we wish, change our beliefs.

When we investigate our beliefs, assumptions, perspectives, and stories, we can pivot our lives to create and/or see new opportunities and possibilities!

We have been trained to avoid the word - and the adventure of - PHILOSOPHY. Yet it is philosophy that guides our values, judgements, choices, decisions and beliefs. Philosophy is our navigation system through life, and it is high time we talk about it and understand it! Fair Shake newsletters will now include a topic from at least one of the 5 main 'areas of study' within the developing FREE SCHOOL: Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Citizenship and Swellness.

BELIEF in YOURSELF:

Building the sense of Self-Efficacy (or Effectiveness) aka "I CAN DO THIS!"

When facing a challenge, do you feel like you can rise up and accomplish your goal or do you give up in defeat? Self-efficacy can play a role in not only how you feel about yourself, but whether or not you successfully achieve your goals in life. Self-efficacy also determines what goals you choose to pursue, how you go about accomplishing those goals, and how you reflect upon your performance.

Efficacy beliefs influence whether we think erratically or strategically, optimistically or pessimistically. They also influence the courses of action we choose to pursue, the challenges and goals we set for ourselves and our commitment to them, how much effort we apply to endeavors, the outcomes we expect our efforts to produce, how long we persevere in the face of obstacles, our resilience to adversity, the quality of our emotional life and how much stress

and depression we experience in coping with taxing environmental demands, the life choices we make and the accomplishments we enjoy. (Whew - that covers just about everything!)

Self-efficacy is entwined with our feelings of capability and agency. Building our sense of efficacy helps us grasp our desired personal and social changes so we can achieve goals and increase our satisfaction!

Albert Bandura, who developed the idea of self-efficacy, says: "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."

People understand that they have agency, that "they can choose their life path. This (knowledge) increases not only opportunity but also uncertainty. Ages ago, individuals may have been relatively secure in the knowledge that they could adopt a lifestyle in which their ancestors had lived successfully for generations. (Today) rapid changes in social and family life reduce personal feelings of certainty about one's life course. When faced with choice and uncertainty, people naturally reflect on themselves and their capacities to handle the challenges ahead. Thus, we live today in a world where reflections on self-efficacy are key to personal development; people with stronger beliefs in their efficacy for performance are more likely to develop the skills and exert the self-control and persistent effort that are required to tackle the challenges that world presents."

(This section was liberally edited/mashed from wikipedia, Kendra Cherry's article called "What is Self-Efficacy?" and a 2011 paper titled: "Psychological Functioning in Adulthood" by Daniele Artistico and others)

COVID-19 VACCINE ROLL OUT

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, "incarcerated people and corrections staff should be prioritized in COVID-19 vaccination plans. The COVID-19 case rate is four times higher in state and federal prisons than in the general population and twice as deadly. Since March, at least 227,333 people incarcerated in state and federal prisons have tested positive for COVID-19, and at least 1,671 have died. There have also been at least 56,496 cases and 105 deaths among prison staff." According to their findings, possible vaccines-for-the incarcerated roll-outs look like this:

Phase 1: CT, DE, MA, MD, NE, NM, PA

Phase 2: AL, AZ, CA, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, ME, MS, NH, NC, ND, OH, RI, TN, UT, VT, WA

Possibly Phase 2: NJ, VA, WV, WY Possibly Phase 3: HI, MO, MT, NV, NY

No specific plan: AK, AR, CO, FL, KS, MI, MN, OR, SC, SD, TX, WI

(No specific plan for staff, either: AK, FL, MI, OR, SD, TX, WI)

If you'd like to learn more about what the Prison Policy Initiative does, you can write to them at PO Box 127, Northampton, MA 01061

THANK YOU, DONORS!

Wow! Several readers sent in donations this month: THANK YOU! Fair Shake would not exist without you...and without (Yes, I'll say it again) Harambee: all of us pulling together!

A FORMER SUBSCRIBER SHARES HIS THOUGHTS:

Wayne was incarcerated for 30 years and is finding success after incarceration. He wrote this to you while on the verge of purchasing his first home:

“Miracles happen every day but what I learned is that sometimes I must do my part to make a miracle happen. I do what I believe to be the right thing and then get out of the way. I refused to give up my fight for freedom and fought 14-years to get Good Conduct Time. My last victory allowed me to leave for a halfway house on 08/28/2019, instead of 12/26/2019. My hope for better days got me through the dark days spent inside the dungeons of the United States Federal Bureau of Prisons. Today, hope keeps me moving in a positive direction in pursuit of the many goals I remain focused on achieving. Never lose hope!”

FREE BOOK! "We're All Doing Time"

Bo and Sita Lozoff founded the Human Kindness Foundation Prison-Ashram Project in 1973. Bo's first book, "We're All Doing Time", has been lauded by prisoners and prison staff as one of the most helpful books ever written for self-improvement. The primary purpose of the Prison-Ashram Project is to inspire and encourage prisoners and prison staff to recognize their depth as human beings, and to behave accordingly. "We're All Doing Time", as well as many other books, are available to any incarcerated person who requests them. You can contact and make requests to Human Kindness Foundation at:

Human Kindness Foundation PO Box 61619 Durham, NC 27715

PELL GRANT REINSTATEMENT!

The Pandemic Relief Bill includes a provision to “restore prisoners’ eligibility for federal Pell grants for college (grants are not loans; the money does not have to be paid back), simplify the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form used to apply for financial support (reducing the number of questions from 108 to 36), and erase more than \$1 billion in federal debt for historically Black colleges”, according to the Associated Press. The package would also restore Pell eligibility for students who have been convicted of a drug-related offense.

It's been 26 years since the Pell Grant was available for incarcerated learners. Education in prison is about to go through a dramatic change! Are you ready? If not, perhaps you will be invigorated when you read these motivating words about education from Steve, below. The text is part of the commencement speech he wrote for his fellow (incarcerated) graduates at San Quentin last spring:

“I believe an educated incarcerated population is critical to our transitioning out of this era of mass incarceration. Education is the great equalizer for those of us who have been disenfranchised. It builds equity and helps define who we are, what we believe, and where we stand on important issues. It equips us to be leaders. Education puts us in a better position to confront any and all dark times that may be ahead. It gives us hope. Being able to get together with other people and connect, share ideas, and grow together is special. Feeling the appreciation of others and appreciating others along the way is nourishment to the soul. To be able to share the human struggle and experience with others, and to be fascinated and left in suspended animation together over the unlimited possibilities of life is truly invaluable.”

HOW TO REQUEST THE “READERS RECOMMENDATIONS” BOOK LIST:

Several people have requested the book list but have not yet received it. I want to make sure everyone knows exactly how to receive your copy: Start a new email. In the subject line write “Book List”. In the body of the message write something short like “thanks!” or “looking forward to it” or “happy new year”, etc. I will then reply to your email with two responses; each reply will

be full of book recommendations from the other newsletter subscribers! (Sorry, there is no room for a book review this month!)

Quotes for the New Year!

The most important conversation is the conversation you have with yourself each day. - James Clear

Magic is believing in yourself. - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

I want to make a New year's prayer, not a resolution. I'm praying for courage. - Susan Sontag

You are never too old to reinvent yourself. - Steve Harvey

Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely. - Karen Kaiser Clark

It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are. – e.e. cummings

What the new year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the new year. – Vern McClellan

Take a leap of faith and begin this wondrous new year by believing. - Sarah Ban Breathnach

Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end. - Lucius Annaeus Seneca

The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot. - Michael Altshuler

Many thanks to all who sent Holiday Greetings! You made my holidays merry and bright ~ :)

I'm sending my best wishes to you all for a Healthy and Happy New Year!

Ubuntu! ~ sue

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As always, when you are released, remember to look up free support in your phone-gizmo:
2-1-1 AuntBertha.com Fairshake.net HelpYourselfTherapy.com

Newsletters are available at FairShake.net for your family and friends to read or print.