

Fair Shake News: Pandemic Pandemonium Edition

Hi Readers ~

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health mentally, physically and philosophically/spiritually.

This is a frustrating and confusing time for everyone. The television, radio and newspapers tell certain stories (they can't tell them all) and the source you choose determines the information you receive. Many of the important goings-on are withheld from our knowledge: like what's happening with the EPA, now that the controls have been weakened? And where is our \$2 trillion dollars, and why didn't our friends, the small business owners, receive any of that support?

Accurate and punctual crisis-release information is even more elusive. The "news" from state and federal sources is inconsistent, the information we receive is incomplete, and the controllers on all levels are working hard to maintain predictability.

In addition to the lack of objective journalism today, the internet is not keeping up with the demand for many of us. (One aspect of the digital divide.) Corrlinks disconnects regularly and without warning and websites take a long time to locate. Searching for and sharing information becomes frustrating and difficult.

I recently learned a useful word to describe our communication troubles currently: INFODEMIC. According to the online dictionaries an INFODEMIC is "an excessive amount of information concerning a problem such that the solution is made more difficult." Two more words I ponder very frequently are ESSENTIAL and IRRESPONSIBLE. I'm curious to know if these words are changing for you, too.

We've lost entertainers during this crisis, including one of my favorite recording artists: Ellis Marsalis. When I saw his obituary in the paper, I cued up his music and was immediately lifted out of COVID-CRISIS mode. This is a plug to remind you of the emotional and often cathartic benefits of jazz when you make your next music purchase! A few other suggestions include: John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald, Herbie Hancock, Sarah Vaughn, Billie Holiday, Chick Corea....

Uplifting stories have come in, thankfully! mainly from newsletter readers, my neighbors, and even a local post office worker whose daughter is working in a hospital in New York City. Thank you for sharing your stories of hope, ubuntu and what is possible!

Speaking of 'what is possible', let's all give a nod in gratitude to the Fair Shake donors! They make this newsletter possible. With all the new subscribers that have just jumped on, the monthly cost is now around \$400. Sadly, many of the donors – both inside and outside of prison – are not working right now and must hold back on donations until they are stable again...which could be a very long time. The donors outside of prison can apply for unemployment compensation, but I believe there is no such opportunity inside prison. If you know of support of this kind, would you please share it with me? I would share it here, of course, and I would post it on the website for outside folks to access, too. Thank you!

NEW PAGES AND RESOURCES ON THE FAIR SHAKE WEBSITE!

I've been working hard to add resources, information and even new pages to the Fair Shake website to get ready for the SOFTWARE update and also to make sure the folks that support you have access to even more information ~ :)

CORRLINKS:

It's hard to help someone sign up for an account, or manage it, when you do not see what they see. A formerly incarcerated person helped me understand the sign up challenges and we build this page together. <https://www.fairshake.net/corrlinks-sign-up/> or search for "fairshake corrlinks sign up".

Federal Bureau of Prisons INFORMATION: <https://www.fairshake.net/bureau-of-prisons-information/>

On that page folks will find links to:

- Compassionate Release support including steps, tips and even a template that you can use to build your request.
- First Step Act and Risk Assessment information
- a link to the Corrlinks page
- Halfway House and RRM information

ADDING RESOURCES

I'm building out a lot of the individual pages and adding a lot of resources and reentry guides! The reentry guides and directories are located BELOW the Resource Directory search box and contain everything from city and county brochures and pamphlets to large books and interactive resource websites! "Jobs" will not be found in the directory...although employment agencies, training, and bonding/tax information will. To find available jobs on the Fair Shake website, you can find 16 job search engines (including one for non-profit jobs, one for employment for folks over 50, several for formerly incarcerated folks, and an awesome resource for "essential" trucking jobs!) on the Find A Job page! The website is FREE for anyone to access (free of cost AND free of data collection), so let your family, friends, caseworkers, etc. know that this free resource is available and growing every day! The software is free for all prisons and jails, too!

CRISIS CAPITALISM

For those of you who watch or read the news, you are aware of how horribly Wisconsin voters were treated a few weeks ago. Our Governor and our state legislature is a mess...yes...but the hands that reached in to control the system were not helpful fellow citizens, concerned about democracy, they were the hands of the Republican and the Democratic National Conventions, both of whom have worked hard this year to remove Bernie Sanders from the primary race. All citizens, regardless of party affiliation, should be gravely concerned about the state of democracy in our country. I drove all around the state with signs in my car to protest (from Saturday before the election through when the ballots were counted). I was chided as 'irresponsible' by some of my friends! I was in my car, for crying out loud...not shaking hands or kissing babies.

For the last hundred years, at least, controllers have rubbed their little hands together and looked at crisis with a sparkle in their eye. They leverage confusion and misinformation to salvage, reorganize, and crush business...all while preaching the gospel of the "Free Market Economy", which – of course - we have not yet experienced. Watch how this shakes out. Look at what has

already happened with the \$2 Trillion Bailout: the small businesses have been left in the dark and they are the ones who are most often deemed 'non-essential'. There is another stimulus bailout on the table to address them, but it does not include the workers.

We like to put our blinders on here in the US and pretend there are only two parties: With Us and Against Us. The rest of the world allows many voices and representatives such as Labor, Workers, Green, Libertarian, Communist, Socialist, and, since 2006, my favorite: the Pirate party! Pirate parties support civil rights, direct democracy, reform of copyright and patent law, free sharing of knowledge (open content), information privacy, transparency, freedom of information, free speech, anti-corruption and net neutrality.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION: THE SHOCK DOCTRINE: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism (2007)
by Naomi Klein

It will make you upset, it might even make you feel a little ill (I can only read a few pages at a time) but it tells the story of how we get duped with every crisis. We lose rights, we support the already uber-wealthy controllers and we have to make more 'sacrifices' in education, lack of wage increases and other social supports. Milton Friedman said "Only a crisis - actual or perceived - produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around." But the ideas "lying around" were created and filed by powerful forces that carefully prepared clear, concise steps to creating, responding to, and managing citizens, and the economy, in every crisis.

"There are very few books that really help us understand the present. The Shock Doctrine is one of those books." - John Gray, The Guardian

"Impassioned, hugely informative, wonderfully controversial, and scary as hell." —John le Carré,
Author

"A brilliant, brave, and terrifying book. It's nothing less than the secret history of what we call the 'free market.'" —Arundhati Roy

PANDEMIC DEFENSE:

Writer Mark Manson said recently: "over the coming weeks and months, as people are forced to face the naked truth of their relationships, there will be a lot of emotional stress to compound the existential stress of the pandemic."

In May, the FS newsletter will begin to explore concrete ways to build strength, knowledge and ubuntu-connection to build our mental and emotional safety net....TOGETHER.

TOM ASACKER shared these thoughts recently in a piece called "Will Everything Change?" (which I have severely edited)

Will this timeout create a new era of possibility?

Will we design new and better ways to live and play?

Ones that foster openness, candor and cooperation?

I wouldn't bet on it.

Fear and uncertainty tend to narrow perspectives.

Giving rise to a myopic and suspicious self-interest.

And so we will likely turn inward.

Like turtles withdrawing into protective shells.

Strengthening governments and reinforcing nationalism.

Curbing economic globalization and international interdependence.

And yet, as history has proven, over and over again.

The power of the human spirit will prevail.

We are already seeing it.

An important question is: Will it change... you?

Will you become the person the world needs you to be?

Will you empower your loved ones to overcome their fears?

Will you selflessly serve your community and encourage others?

Will you dance with reality as a more compassionate and inspired human being?

Victor Hugo wrote, "Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise."

Yes, the sun will eventually rise on a new normal for all of us.

In the meantime, let us be a bright light that shines the way.

IT'S TIME TO RECALIBRATE!

Many of the jobs we were educating ourselves for are going to change. We don't know what's coming, so this is the best time to consider the importance of knowing and growing yourself. A time to hone your tools for resiliency, resolve, change and connection. No matter what comes next, we will all need strong brains and hearts to master critical thinking, do a little house-cleaning on our values and perspectives, increase our emotional intelligence, establish and maintain good boundaries, and to recognize – in ourselves and others – biases and faulty logic. We will also need a wide variety of skills for trades, which will be evolving, but the most valuable skill in the future will be to KNOW HOW TO LEARN...to learn about things, about yourself and about strengthening community. The Fair Shake Free School is being developed specifically to provide this foundation! You'll see more on this in upcoming issues and, of course, additions to the software and on the website.

QUOTES:

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less." - Marie Curie, pioneering physicist on radioactivity

"It's not bringing in the new ideas that's so hard; it's getting rid of the old ones." ~ John Maynard Keynes

"A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty." - Albert Einstein

"The difference between what we are doing and what we are capable of doing would solve most of the world's problems." - Mohandas Gandhi

Thanks again, FS donors!

Stay Strong! and get stronger! ~ ;)

To our successful transitions ~

Ubuntu! ~ sue

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As always, remember to look up free support in your phone-gizmo:

2-1-1

Rzero.org

Fairshake.net

HelpYourselfTherapy.com