

**MAY** FS News:  
Essential Voices Edition

Hello Fair Shake readers ~

Happy Mother's Day to all! Some of the subscribers here are mothers, and we all owe our lives to our mothers! Today is a day for gratitude...for our physical, human mothers, for those who raised us and cared for us, and also for the mother of us all: the earth that provides everything we need, just as our mothers did before we were born.

Thank you, Moms!

Thank you, also, to the donors that continue to come through each month to make this newsletter possible! We have over 3550 readers today! The cost of sending the news continues to rise, while the income of both incarcerated and non-incarcerated people continues to be on shaking ground, at best. We are constantly reminded why it is so important to continue to stay strong and to support one other. Money and stuff is fleeting; our character and our connections are all we really have.

Back to Mother's Day: I have never known my biological mother (or father) having been given up for adoption when I was born (1963). As many of the readers of this newsletter know, my life was not simple or easy...in fact, I was in jail when I was 13 and did not again live with my adopted parents after that date. Like the seed that falls in rocky, dry soil, I had to leverage the life-enhancing nutrients I found to build fortitude and determination, in addition to mental and physical health. And like many in my situation, I stumbled and made mistakes, often misreading my feelings as I searched for belonging and security. Luckily, my sense of rebellion was strong, and I persevered primarily because I was not going to let mean people win.

This force that continues to drive me today. I learned to reshape the frustration and anger (sometimes, but not always - like voting day last month) into creativity, learning, and connection.

Much of my life prepared me for this time of change. I learned early on that I could never be sure about my future, just as none of us can - despite our constant quest for security and safety. We can see this clearly through the lens of the current crisis. This could be a moment to unite civilization! Sadly, or liberatingly, we have not yet seen an emerging global leader or vision.

"The future's here, we are it, we are on our own." ~ from "Throwing Stone's" by the Grateful Dead 1987

This is not a bad thing...it's just a thing...and now, like always, life is "dizzying, with the possibilities" (from the same song).

Heraclites realized more than 2500 years ago that the only thing we can count on is change. Now we, too, get to realize this because many of the anchors from our past have been pulled up. New ways of doing things, proving things, and learning things will take shape. CHANGE will give us gems, CHANGE will put boulders in our path, and CHANGE will occasionally give us a break and allow us to move forward without surprises.

Many of us (myself included) heard "Children should be seen and not heard". We are all still our mother's child, and we can now we can break the chains of being discounted - and commit to making our essential voice heard! We can and must participate in shaping the future.

Here are two opportunities for you to make YOUR ESSENTIAL VOICE heard right now!

#### PRISON JOURNALISM PROJECT

The Prison Journalism Project was established in 2019 to highlight the voices of people behind bars as well as those of their loved ones. We think what you have to say at this moment in time is tremendously

important, so we created a Medium publication (online magazine) to share your stories about dealing with the coronavirus from inside. We welcome first-time writers as well as experienced writers. Writers can be currently or previously incarcerated, a family member, a friend, a volunteer, a prison staff member, etc.

#### SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

Categories: journalism, memoir, fiction/poetry, visual stories. We accept all contributions that relate to the experience of dealing with the pandemic in some way.

Please make sure that your stories have a header with your full name, contact information, date, wordcount, genre and suggested title/headline for your piece. If you would like to publish by first name only, please attach a note at the bottom of your submission with your reason and we will honor that.

We invite you to include an accompanying photo, graphic or a suggestion of one. Also include a 2–3 sentence bio.

By submitting your work, you will be granting us permission to edit/condense your work and publish it on our site on a non-exclusive basis. You will retain the rights to your work and can publish it elsewhere as well. We will strive to publish at least an excerpt of every submission as long as they meet the requirements.

Send your submissions to:  
Prison Journalism Project  
2093 Philadelphia Pike #1054  
Claymont, DE 19703

#### HUDSON LINK COVID-19 PRISON EDUCATION ARCHIVE PROJECT:

The COVID-19 Prison Education Archive Project invites all individuals in the field of higher education in prison to participate in documenting their experiences related to COVID-19. We invite all students, alumni, and their families, faculty, program coordinators, prison staff members, and anyone else impacted by the field of higher education in prison to help document the perspectives of individuals in our community during this pandemic.

Why: Through national and statewide conversations it has become increasingly clear how this moment in our lives has impacted the lives of incarcerated individuals, the people that love them, and the programs that serve them. We invite the entire prison education community with the ambition of reflecting the wide-range of experiences in this time, in hope of learning from each other, and in an effort to connect our community in a time when we find ourselves physically distant. Our wish is that collecting these materials can bring a bit of solace and understanding in this transformative moment - solace and understanding for ourselves as well as future generations that may be able to make further progress in higher education and criminal justice by looking to our experiences.

#### What to submit:

- Photos
- Letters to and from teachers, students, friends, family members, Department of Corrections, etc.
- Memos and official correspondence from prisons
- Journal entries
- Emails
- Lesson Plans and assignments
- Artworks
- Creative Writing
- Notes, memories, and obituaries of currently and formerly incarcerated students and alumni

We intend to make this collection of shared lived experiences available to the public in a printed paper format, as well as create an online digital archive. A review committee will select content for the printed publication, as space will be limited.

How to participate: We are considering submissions of any length, typed or handwritten.  
Submissions may be mailed to:  
COVID-19 Archive  
23 State Street  
Ossining, New York 10562

#### MORE WRITING TIPS!

Our friend, Kelly Riggs, continues to build his Writing Tips section on the Fair Shake website. He has submitted many more tips since the "Author! Author!" edition of the newsletter; for a total of 14 tips presently. If you would like the full list of writing tips, please start a new email to me with Writing Tips in the subject line and I will send them all!

I thought this tip might be particularly relevant for the invitations above:

#### #11 OUTLINE! OUTLINE! OUTLINE!

Yeah that's right, your junior high school English teacher was right. I learned long ago that my mind tends to wonder. Because of that one inescapable fact I have learned that I must write down directions, instructions, and simple messages. So, how then could I possibly keep my thoughts together long enough to write a book? The trick is I outline. I outline not only my book ideas, but long chapters as well.

When I write anything of significant length, I outline it first. This goes for books, long letters, motions, petitions, and even some chapters. You want to be your best, learn to outline. You'll be amazed how fast the end of your great idea will sneak up on you.

#### READING RECOMMENDATION:

It's hard to keep up with all the news, the hype, the panic, the expectations! Some news is real, but all news tells only a part of the story. Since the telling of current events is incomplete, and the crystal ball of the future is cloudy, perhaps now would be a good time to read through your journals, or notes, or simply reflect on your transformation to becoming who you are now.

As I prepare to build the curriculum for the Free School, I'm finding valuable notes I've stashed away alongside notes that no longer make sense. As with all types of change, we, too, are constantly changing. It's fun to see how our perspective has evolved, how we've grown when we didn't realize we were growing, and where we can continue our studies and reflections to gain knowledge and to avoid traps that we fall into. (Many are deeply embedded from childhood and, like dandelions, the root can be tough to remove!) Finding our constant within our life of change can help to provide stability in an uncertain future. The only thing we could ever count on is ourselves. There's no time like the present to do a little inventory and make a list of what we might wish to add to the assortment of tools we've gathered to build the future!

#### QUOTES:

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

There's an interdependence between flowers and bees. Where there are no flowers there are no bees, and where there are no bees, there are no flowers. They are really one organism. And so, in the same way, everything in nature depends on everything else. ~ Alan Watts

I can do things you cannot; you can do things I cannot, together we can do great things. ~ Mother Theresa

Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much. ~ Helen Keller

Thanks again, FS donors, both incarcerated and not incarcerated! You have made sure we could send this newsletter to more than 3550 readers today!!

Stay Strong! Stay smart! And stay authentic.

"I need you to be YOU, so that I can be ME." ~ Rev. Desmond Tutu

To our successful transitions ~

Ubuntu! ~ sue

Fair Shake

PO Box 63

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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

(Newsletters are always available on the Fair Shake website for your family and friends to read or print!)