

Hello Fair Shake readers ~

Happy Summer!

And Happy belated Father's Day to fathers! I'm sure this year was painful for fathers and mothers since there were no visits. I want you to know I care, and I'm feeling for you and your loved ones.

It's been a tough month to decide when and how to write a newsletter. It seems we have mostly been reeling and reacting to shocking headlines each day. There is a lot of pain and frustration; and we are really struggling to figure out the depth of what's going on, and how we can shape what happens next. There is much to reflect on, to learn and to discuss.

The newspapers (and, I assume, news shows?) are filled with pontificators telling us what we need to do. A substantial amount of my daily exercise regimen comes from pushing back against their messages that aim to reduce freedom, agency or critical thinking. Each of us has our own unique and important thoughts. Some of us share them and some of us hold them close.

I'd like to start off this issue with a reflection on one of the US's most deeply held values, but one we rarely discuss, debate or fully understand:

A REFLECTION ON FREEDOM SHARED BY BRIAN ZATER

"Few people really truly understand what freedom entails, living more as a consequence of habituated ideas, attitudes and beliefs instilled by others than by ones independently developed by themselves. They fall asleep into these beliefs, allowing them to serve more as a puppet master than anything else. Unfortunately, too often these internal prisons are constructed by material that generate, predominantly, unhappiness. Having been in that prison, learning that freedom from it was an option, doing the work of breaking free and now recognizing the language and behavior of it, it's also possible to see the true person hiding behind the prison walls of their beliefs, crying to break out. It's heart breaking to meet so many people who've gone most their lives without ever having ever met themselves, having only ever lived as the accumulated pieces of other people's ideas, put together more like Frankenstein's monster than by personal spirit's directed design.

But when one breaks free, with that freedom comes a drive to share that freedom. To want it for others, it being the answer to most of life's woes."

Another request for YOUR views!

THE COVID COLLECTION (Exchange for Change)

The Covid Collection, a one-time literary journal publication, seeks compelling prose, poetry and art from incarcerated writers residing in a state or federal facility. Submissions should include work that was created during the quarantine period. It does not have to relate to Covid-19 but the submission should reflect the unique experience going on inside your carceral setting. Fiction, non-fiction, personal essays, poems, drawings encouraged. One submission per person. For poetry, three poems or less with a maximum of 1500 words. Prose, 1500-word limit. Submissions must be legible. Include your full name, and DOC number so we can contact you. Please include a few

lines about yourself as your bio. DEADLINE JULY 15, 2020. Send to Attn: Covid Collection, c/o Exchange for Change 2103 Coral Way 2nd Floor Miami, FL. 33145

HEROES ACT / CONSOLIDATE DEBT

An alert reader asked me about the HEROES ACT: basically, a second round of stimulus checks which was discussed in early May. Bill Fay, from Debt.org said in a June 22 article: "Pres. Trump stated in a taped interview that there would be another stimulus check, then backtracking to call it a "stimulus package." Trump: "We will be doing another stimulus package. I think it's going to be over the next couple of weeks."

I am cynical about "Acts", but I was truly excited to learn about DEBT.org!

Here's how they describe 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.

America's Debt Help Organization: DEBT.ORG
5750 Major Boulevard Suite 350
Orlando, FL 32819 877-764-5798

FREE SCHOOL NEWS: UBUNTUGOGY! (No, I did NOT make this up ~ :)

In 2005, Abdul Karim Bangura recognized that pedagogy (teaching children) and andragogy (learning in adulthood) were not enough to adequately teach learners in Africa. He coined the term "Ubuntu-gogy": The art and science of learning and teaching that is undergirded by humanity toward others" to build a new way of learning!

American schooling is beyond flawed, it is a set up. It is mandatory training to condition us to obey...it is not the place we go to learn how to learn, how to think, how to understand ourselves and each other, or even how to make good decisions.

I believe Bangura's perspective should be considered in ALL schools:

- Ubuntu philosophy: being an individual means "being-with-others." The word "individual" signifies a plurality of personalities corresponding to the multiplicity of relationships in which the individual stands. As relationships change, so do the characters of the individuals.
- Ubuntu requires an authentic respect for human/individual rights and related values, and an honest appreciation of differences. Ubuntu inspires us to expose ourselves to others, to encounter the differences of their humanness in order to inform and enrich our own. To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others in its infinite variety of content and form. "I need you to be YOU, so that I can be ME." ~ Desmond Tutu
- The flexibility of the other is well noted in ubuntu. For the African humanist, life is without absolutes. An ubuntu perception of the other is never fixed or rigidly closed; rather, it is adjustable or open-ended. It allows the other to be, and to BECOME. It acknowledges the irreducibility of the

other: i.e. it never reduces the other to any specific characteristic, conduct, or function. This underscores the concept of ubuntu which denotes both a state of being and one of becoming. As a process of self-realization through others, it simultaneously enriches the self-realization of others.

“Evidence-based” simply means “what has been observed”. It is not at all surprising that the only aspects of ‘learning’ that are studied currently are those that fit in with the “automaton” agenda. That agenda restrains us from developing the intelligence - or care - to build a system that serves humanity. The “EVIDENCE-BASED” rhetoric has failed us for 20+ years. It’s time that we provide what we want researchers to observe! Like Bangura, it’s time that WE create WHAT WORKS.

Why a FREE SCHOOL? Because the old stories are fading. We are between worlds: the old ‘normal’ and what is possible. We have time to THINK: to study, to question, to listen and to consider different perspectives. We have a chance to build the future collectively! We can break the dividing wall of “with us or against us”. We can talk about how we want society, our communities and ourselves, to be flourish and grow and wean ourselves from the “49% vs the other 49% trap” that keeps us in turmoil, while the 1% languish in wealth-building comfort.

The Free School must be FREE because:

- Money controls the message, the outcome, and the learning in schools
- We are denied the education we need to be FREE to CHANGE, GROW, DEVELOP, ENGAGE and liberate us from expectations and limitations.
- We are denied the education we need that would free us from the control of the media, the status quo, and the puppeteering of the 1%
- We need to explore existential freedom and collective freedom

Who supports FREE WILL and SELF-DETERMINATION? We need UBUNTUGOGY!!

A NOTE ABOUT AGENCY

One's agency, or control center, is one's independent capability to act independently and make free choices. This ability is affected by the cognitive belief structure which one has formed through experiences, and the perceptions held by the society and the individual, of the structures and circumstances one is born into. “Structures” are those factors of influence (such as social class, religion, expectations within roles, ethnicity, ability, incarceration, etc.) that may limit an agent and their decisions. The influences from structure upon agency are hotly debated.

Q: Is it possible to become free without agency and free will?

WHY WE FORGIVE by Desmond Tutu (a very small excerpt)

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 jailer. 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.

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.” Research also shows that people who are more forgiving report fewer health and mental problems, and fewer physical symptoms of stress.

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.

THANK YOU DONORS!!!!

I'm grateful the generosity of donors who continue to support Fair Shake even though employment - and income - have been greatly reduced for many. Our readership here has increased by 50% since January: from 2600 to more than 3900 today! Thank you donors, for making this newsletter possible!

FYI: When I'm not answering emails, or responding to real mail, I'm working on the website, building a new Reentry Packet and working on the free school. If you get short answers, or don't receive an email reply for a week or more, that's why! ~ :)

QUOTES:

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.
– Socrates

The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking. – Albert Einstein

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek, – Barak Obama

We Can Do It! - Rosie the Riveter poster, WWII

2 book recommendations: RACE MATTERS and DEMOCRACY MATTERS by Dr. Cornel West

Let Freedom Ring!

To our successful transitions ~

Stay strong and stay smart.
Ubuntu! ~ sue

Fair Shake
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Westby, WI 54667

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!)