

September FS News: BACK TO (FREE) SCHOOL edition

Happy Fall, Fair Shake subscribers!

My how time flies...like the leaves floating from the trees. We are starting to see a fair amount of color here in central/western WI...and soon enough we will have almost no color at all.

I'm wishing everyone a thoughtful, heartwarming and grateful Indigenous Peoples' Day on October 12th! Corn, squash and beans, known as the Three Sisters, are native to this side of the planet and have been grown together, across the continents, for more than 5,000 years. I love all three, and am grateful to be enjoying these delicious foods today. Miigwetch! (Thank you!)

Since we (people in the US), have been talking and thinking a lot about slavery these days, I thought I would celebrate the life of the amazing young Lemhi Shoshone woman, Sacajawea because many do not know that she was a slave. In 1800, when she was about 12 years old, Sacajawea and several other girls were kidnapped. A year later she, along with another 13-year-old named Otter Woman, were purchased by Toussaint Charbonneau, a French-Canadian fur trader. They lived near what is known today as Bismarck, ND. On February 11, 1805 (brrr!), Sacajawea gave birth to her first child. Less than three months later, she was included the US Army "Corps of Discovery" (Lewis and Clark). They left Fort Mandan in late April to start their 1300+ journey over the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, which they reached in less than 7 months. The Corps of Discovery's objectives were "scientific and commercial - to study the area's plants, animal life, and geography, and to learn how the Louisiana Purchase could be exploited economically". Sacajawea showed William Clark a route through the mountains where, 80 years later, the Northern Pacific Railroad built its main line through what is now called the Yellowstone Valley and Bozeman Pass. Some stories say Sacajawea died in 1812 at Fort Lisa, on the Bighorn River in WY; and some stories say she escaped Charbonneau around that time and eventually made it back to her family in Idaho, where she lived to be 95 years old.

## WE DESERVE A BETTER EDUCATION

History is written by the conquerors...and also by the literate. The stories they tell are the stories we are expected to believe. When we read history, it is important to remember that we are reading interpretations of events, which is very different than learning the truth about events (a very important lesson). The stories told in movies and TV are extremely far from the truth. When we let our guard down and unquestioningly allow these representations of stories into our minds, we can find ourselves believing in a history that is very much like our childhood belief in Santa Clause or the Tooth Fairy. To allow a more complete picture of the real and complex story, it is important that we ask ourselves critical questions as we watch, and then follow up with explorations of our own to learn more!

All written, video, and audio projects have an agenda. It is our job to find out what the agenda is, what the more complex and more complete story is, and why important pieces were highlighted, changed or omitted. More information means more ways to guide ourselves as we moving forward; deepening knowledge and growing wisdom. I have yet to find a place where I cannot learn.

IT'S YOUR SCHOOL NOW

Learning to learn is the most important thing we can do - especially at this moment in time -to develop more completely as a whole human being, to prepare for reentry success, and – crucially – to guide and protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities.

Learning to learn includes:

\* Questioning what we “know” or what we think we know. (our epistemology) “Our behavior is affected by our assumptions or our perceived truths. We make decisions based on what we think we know.” - Simon Sinek

\* Reflecting on whether beliefs that were once true, or once seemed true, are still true today.

\* Discussing with others if they, too, have found old beliefs that are no longer serving them. (Santa is an easy place to begin ~ : )

\* Reading and Researching to learn more, and to consider if the new information fits, or doesn't fit, with your current “worldview” or “philosophy of life”.

WE ARE FREE TO ASK WHY!

“School” taught us to follow, obey, baselessly recall, and accept that the information we were given was true, relevant, important and useful. Today we can ask all of those questions that we were not allowed to ask when we were young...and it is imperative that we do! Much of what we were trained to believe is not only not true, but it is at the core of why we are suffering so much now...personally, and as a society. But be careful; you will find a lot of people will take offense when you ask questions...

Here are 3 ‘primer’ questions to consider, reflect on, research, discuss, etc. (They are rhetorical; meaning they have been created simply for you to ponder.)

1. Coercion vs Intrinsic Motivation?

What is coercion (examples: extrinsic motivation, carrots and sticks, bribes, pressure to conform to the group or fit the expectations of others, enticements...like commercials with images of pizza or grandmothers and babies)? And what is intrinsic motivation? How can we spot coercion and how can we tell when we are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated?

2. Competition vs Cooperation?

Why have we been taught that competition is good? Why were we not taught about cooperation when successful societies have been built on cooperation and one of our founding maxims is ‘united we stand’?

“People who weren't raised to worship winning are better able to understand that competition actually holds back everyone - even the winners - from doing their best.” – Alfie Kohn

3. Curiosity vs. “Answers”

Why are we discouraged from asking WHY? Why do people insist on telling us what is ‘right’ or ‘best’ or ‘appropriate’ while not equally offering us the chance to explore, consider, research and develop our own questions...and maybe even answers...or not. We can suspend answers, and we can change our answers. The truth emerges; it is not static.

“Answers, at their best, are temporary responses whose accuracy changes and shift and decays over time, needing to be reformed and remade and reevaluated as the world itself changes.” - Teach Thought group

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR EDUCATION SOLEY FOR EMPLOYMENT:

Google has a created yet another tool:

### GOOGLE CAREER CERTIFICATES

Learn job-ready skills to start or advance your career in high-demand fields. These certificates developed by Google connect you to top national employers who are hiring for related roles.

Why earn a Google Career Certificate?

- A pathway to jobs: Certificate completers can directly connect with a group of top employers.
- Become job-ready for in-demand, high-paying roles: Qualify for jobs across fields with median average annual salaries of over \$50,000.
- Earn a certificate that helps you stand out: You can share your Google Career Certificate on your LinkedIn profile and on printed resumes, CVs and other documents to help stand out to employers.
- Gain access to career resources: Learners will have access to resources to facilitate their job search and interview preparation.
- About six months to complete
- No previous experience required
- Entirely developed by Google
- Grants and scholarships will be available
- Hosted on Coursera (apply for scholarships with them, not through Google)

“Become job-ready in about 6 months, no prior experience required.”

The cost, as it is listed on website, is \$49 / month.

Google claims to offer more than 100,000 scholarships, grants and support for learners. I searched for over an hour to find one link to share, that would lead to a scholarship application, but I found nothing at all.

If you are strong and awake, I'm certain you could leverage this tool to your advantage.

“GETTING A JOB IS NOT A PROBLEM”

I've heard several stories about folks having “jobs to choose from” when they are released from prison. They've said that getting the job is easy, but getting their identification documents is difficult, since most government offices are still closed to foot traffic. Be sure to get your paperwork in motion to obtain your social security number and birth certificate, and identification, if possible, prior to release!

RESOURCE INFORMATION: MISSISSIPPI LIBRARY COMMISSION

I've heard from newsletter readers that the Mississippi Library Commission “provides a free email service to inmates through Corrlinks that allows inmates to ask questions and have a librarian look up and provide a sourced and reliable answer to the best of their ability. I really LOVE the service they provide and it has been IMMENSELY helpful to myself and other inmates.”

Another person said: "We ask questions, they send answers - usually within a day or two, or longer if they need to do some research. It is essentially Google for inmates, and it's free! If stuff doesn't fit into an email, they will mail you the information, up to 15 pages, free! They are VERY good..." You can reach them here: [MLCReference@gmail.com](mailto:MLCReference@gmail.com)

### RUNAWAY SUE REFLECTIONS

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about what we could say (or not say) to Runaway Sue! Reflections are still coming in...but in the next week or two I will compile them into one document which I will share with all 4200+ readers! If you have not shared your thoughts, but would like to, there's still a little time.

### COVID COUNT IN PRISON, as found in THE MARSHALL PROJECT

By Sept. 22, "at least 132,677 cases of coronavirus (have been) reported among 1,618,000 prisoners, and 107,762 prisoners have recovered. By Sept. 22, 1,108 prisoners have died of coronavirus-related causes. To collect the information, the Marshall Project "request(s) data every week from state departments of corrections and the federal Bureau of Prisons", but "testing figures do not include private prisons".

### BOOK RECOMMENDATION: There Will Be No Miracles Here by Casey Gerald

"There Will Be No Miracles Here has the arc of a classic rags-to-riches tale, but it stands the American Dream narrative on its head. Even as he attains the inner sanctums of power, Casey sees how the world crushes those who live at its margins. He sees how the elite perpetuate the salvation stories that keep others from rising. And he sees, most painfully, how his own ascension is part of the scheme. There Will Be No Miracles Here inspires us to question—even shatter—and reimagine our most cherished myths.

Casey said: "One of the big lessons of our generation has been that it's a very dangerous thing to put all our faith in a savior who's going to solve all our problems, (such as) a successful nonprofit or a charismatic entrepreneur. We don't need permission from a central authority to solve the challenges that we see."

### QUOTES

The future is certain; it is the past that is unpredictable. - Soviet joke.

Who you are is defined by what you're willing to struggle for. - Mark Manson

When I read about the evils of drinking, I gave up reading. - Henny Youngman

Great companies don't hire skilled people and motivate them; they hire already motivated people and inspire them. - Simon Sinek

"The only source of information for most people now is a machine that is designed to partially inform people, misinform people, spread conspiracy theories, and lies faster than facts." - Tristan Harris

What are you doing, without coercion, where you are, everyday? That is who you are and what you are committed to. Is it personal development? Is it ubuntu development? Is it 'getting smarter' so you can help others get smarter, too? We don't need more rules, regulations, gizmos, programs or policies: we just need to think harder, care courageously, and commit to

humanity. It's time for us to build what we need and stop waiting for someone to deliver it. No one is coming; we are it!

Many thanks to our donors for making sure this newsletter continues to circulate widely! We can use this platform to build community and create a safety net. We do not need permission to do this, we only need wisdom and dedication. The donors make it possible; I make it approachable and buildable; and you make it a living, learning, developing organization.

Stay strong, stay safe and keep questioning.  
To our successful transitions! 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!