

January 2021 - FS News: 'Always Light' edition

Here we are in 2021! We made it!

We are in uncharted territory; there is no longer a 'normal', no path to follow, no trustworthy security, safety or guarantee like we once thought we had. But that's okay. We will become stronger, more creative, and more collaborative as we build what comes next.

The 'hero' era has finally come to an end. No one is coming to fix everything (they never were, but we were led to believe that story). This is great news! This is a democracy; we should not be handing the reigns to anyone; we should be making America great and building back better wherever we are.

Just look at what we are able to do here! Thanks to the FS donors (many of whom are readers), we're able to share information, ideas and a very unique constructive conversation through the FS news. Many thanks for your donations of ideas and funding!

To prepare ourselves for the future, let's read the last four lines of Amanda Gorman's inspiring inauguration poem "The Hill We Climb":

The new dawn blooms as we free it  
For there is always light,  
if only we're brave enough to see it  
If only we're brave enough to be it

If you would like to read the entire poem, please send me a NEW email with "The Hill" in the subject line, and at least one word in the body of the email. I will reply soon with the full poem. In order to make it fit, I have to combine a few of the lines. I will insert an asterisk (\*) between them so you will know which ones they are.

**FREE SCHOOL STUDIES: SWELLNESS - Where our minds and our bodies meet for our health!**  
Trusting Your Gut by Tara Swart (enormously edited) 2.26.2020 article in Fast Company

We live in a world that values logic and considers our gut and emotions as weak. We've demoted depth, passion, instinct, love, values, joy. But one thing is a scientific certainty: the gut-brain link is far from a mystical 'sixth sense'. In fact, your gut produces 90% of your serotonin; the key hormone that stabilizes your mood, feelings of well-being, and happiness. Serotonin enables brain cells and other nervous system cells to communicate with each other and it even helps with sleeping, eating, and digestion.

The gut is part of a complex communication system between the millions of neurons embedded in the gut walls and the limbic brain, which is integral to our decision-making capability. The gut-brain system helps govern not only our digestive system but also complex brain functions like motivation and wisdom.

A 2016 research paper shows that probiotics (bacteria that increase gut function) reduce negative thinking. A depleted, inflamed, or struggling gut will cloud our intuition and our outlook. When the brain is stressed, the gut responds by using less energy for digestion.

To support your intuition, your digestion, and your communication with your brain, you may wish to keep an intuition journal about your emotions and your decision-making process, in addition to other reflections you might wish to reflect on and record. Reading your entries later can be enlightening, affirming and even help with problem-solving.

You may also wish to spend a moment, a few times a day, focusing on sensations and intuitive feelings in your body. Emotional "signatures" can be felt in different parts of the body and are tied to biological systems. For instance, happiness can be felt throughout your whole body, but anger is usually concentrated in your head.

There are times when you should question gut! For instance, we all have biases; and many of these are embedded at a gut level. The next time you feel tempted to act mindlessly, stop to question: is this feeling just an annoying bias, or is my well-attuned gut trying to tell me something?

### THE EMPLOYMENT FORECAST LOOKS GREAT!

For those of you readers who are concerned about employment, I want you to know that I receive calls and emails from companies all around the country, asking if I can send applicants to them. Jobs are available! Employers are looking for you!

### ATTENTION BLACK ENTREPRENEURS!! (please share this info with family and friends)

The Black Entrepreneur Initiative is a nationwide program dedicated to offering Black entrepreneurs' access to foundational business-skill-building tools and resources delivered through The Lonely Entrepreneur Learning Community. It provides single-point access to the foundational entrepreneurial skills, tools and support they need to start or grow a business.

For more information write to: The Lonely Entrepreneur Attn:

BEI 336 Lexington Ave. Suite 5, NY, NY 10010 617-966-8484

[www.lonelyentrepreneur.com/bei/](http://www.lonelyentrepreneur.com/bei/)

### PREP YOUR APPLICATION FOR ROBOT BIAS

Ever wonder why you only hear back from a handful of companies after applying to hundreds? It's because Artificial Intelligence reads your job application first. In fact, over 98% of Fortune 500 companies use robots to screen applications and 75% will be cut before they're seen by human eyes. To get past the robot, tailor your resume to fit each job's description. Find keywords from the requirements and include them in your work experience. After applying online, reach out by email to someone in the company. If you want to check to see if your resume is readable to a robot, go to [www.topresume.com/resume-review](http://www.topresume.com/resume-review) for a free analysis. This article was originally written by a robot! (and then edited, as they all are, by me)

### COVID REFLECTIONS REMINDER:

Two organizations have created online outlets "to share your stories about dealing with the coronavirus from inside." If you'd like their information, please start a NEW email to me with "COVID writing outlets" in the subject line and I'll send them to you!

### FAIR SHAKE'S RECOMMENDED READING LIST

I've completed the Suggested Reading list for the 2021 Reentry Ownership Manual. If you would like a copy of the book list, be sure to start a new email (do not reply to this email) with FS 2021 Book List and I'll send it...in two parts! If you are unclear how to start a new email, please ask someone near you how to do this. It's the only way I can send the list.

## MARSHALL PROJECT: NEWS INSIDE – Free?

The most recent CURE (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants) newsletter announced that incarcerated readers can subscribe to the Marshall Project's News Inside for free! I sent two emails to them but I have not received a response. With this information, is it worth \$.55 for you to write to them to find out? If so, here's their address:

The Marshall Project Attn: The News Inside

156 W. 56th St. - Suite 701

New York, NY 10019

If you receive a copy of the publication, I hope you'll let me know!

## Book Recommendation:

COMMUNITY: THE STRUCTURE OF BELONGING by Peter Block

This is an actionable book about building a sense of ownership within communities of change. According to Block, the first and most pressing challenge is to transform people's sense of isolation and self-interest into an experience of connectedness and caring for the whole. He says we need to change our narrative from one of deficiencies and entitlement to one of possibility and generosity. A key challenge to this is creating structures for authentic engagement such as 1) building the context that nurtures an alternative future based on gifts, generosity, accountability and commitment; 2) convening conversations in small groups through questions; and 3) listening and paying attention. Block insists this is really simple, once we decide it is essential. It's important to ask the right questions, including: What's the commitment you hold that brought you into this room? What's the crossroads you face at this stage of the game? And, what's your contribution to the very thing you complain about? By exploring them we become more accountable, more committed, more vulnerable; and when we voice our answers to one another, we grow more intimate and connected.

## SAFETY FIRST!

As I again learned on January 6th, watching TV can be dangerous to our health. Please be sure you are mentally strong and physically capable to take the constant barrage of hyped-up reports and information called 'news', meant to make us feel weak, needy, afraid, anxious and expert-dependent. Here are some TV news-watching tips from Neil Postman and Steve Power's 2008 book "How To Watch TV News":

1. Before encountering a news show, keep a firm idea of what is important.
2. In preparing to watch a TV news show, keep in mind that it is a 'show'.
3. Never underestimate the power of commercials.
4. Learn something about the economic and political interests of those who run TV stations.
5. Pay special attention to the language of newscasts.
6. Reduce by at least one-third the amount of TV news you watch. (Read the news, too!)
7. Reduce by one third the number of opinions you feel obligated to have.
8. Do whatever you can to help children learn how to watch a TV news show

## A NOTE TO ALL OF US:

Sue, I'd like to thank you and everyone who has contributed to the newsletter. I've been incarcerated in the Wisconsin prison system for 26+ straight years; much of that time (over 13 years), I spent doing segregation time. It wasn't until I changed my perspectives and view of the world and possibilities I could achieve, that things finally started to change for me. Now I'm a tutor and I'm coming up for parole. I attribute my success to my mantra of "Being Suckka Free"! It's a concept of not allowing anyone or anything to get you off your square. Being able to do that has helped me to dramatically change the course of my life. Remember: recovery is a

process, not a destination. I send a prayer out to all of my brothers and sister's incarcerated in these iron houses: stay strong and keep your head up! It can only get better! W/ all my heart, ~ your brother in the struggle!

Quotes:

We are a community of possibilities, not a community of problems. We currently have all the capacity, expertise, programs, leaders, regulations, and wealth required to end unnecessary suffering and create an alternative future. - Peter Block

Successful outcomes are never the result of a single choice. They are built up through a series of good choices over time. – James Clear

Don't let someone dim your light simply because it's shining in their eyes. - Jessica Ainscough

It is often an assumption that because we are sitting in the same room, we are sitting in the same reality. - Orland Bishop

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent. - Eleanor Roosevelt

We must believe in free will, we have no choice. - Isaac Bashevis Singer

Stay safe, smart and strong. I'm sending my best wishes for you all to get your vaccines as soon as possible ~ :)

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