

Fair Shake October Newsletter - Spookster edition

Happy Halloween, for those who love it!

The moon will be full on the 31st this year but very few kiddies will get to trick or treat under its bright light.

What is truly scary this Halloween is COVID-19, as it continues to ravage bodies and minds. The number of infections across the globe - and in institutions - is on the rise once again. Perhaps you also remember that this was predicted in the spring.

Philip Zimbardo, creator of the famous "Stanford Prison Experiment" had this to offer us in his blog:

"Psychological Three R's while coping with this Pandemic":

RESPECT. Respect your emotions and needs. Respect the needs and emotions of others. Respect your own concerns, feelings of insecurity and danger, as well as those experienced by others. Be good companions for others through these challenging times, as well as for yourself. Provide social support where you are able.

REASON. Be reasonable and sensitive, protect yourself and others from dangerous situations. Protect them - as well as yourself - from unsubstantiated and biased information, in spite of chaos. Plan what you can and expect the unexpected; be ready to include "change", "mistake," and "crisis" into your game. Most importantly, compliment yourself on every step of your progress toward the goal – praise yourself until you blush. Care for others as well as for yourself with both reason and sensitivity, so you can stay well or get well soon. Every day is meaningful.

RESILIENCE. We are born with resilience and we can train it and increase it, too. Ask others for help. Trust your capabilities, you can manage and bear more than you can imagine. Still, should you consider to give up on something, first, have a good rest, get some fresh air (safely), eat and drink well before the decision. Treat yourself well – with gallantry, courage, and kindness; your knees may buckle under you, but you will soon get back up. Lift up others as well. You will become better in doing so, bit by bit every day.

IT'S ELECTION TIME

Slightly less scary, but sufficiently horror-laden, is the electrified polarization - and even viciousness - in our civil demeanor today; agitated by the many-headed Hydra aka "the media" (professional and un; it doesn't seem to matter to our citizens any more) to stoke the fires of outrage and profits.

Florida is an amazing example of the above, adding nasty politicians to the mix. A constitutional amendment was passed by two-thirds of Florida's citizens in 2018, only to be denied by slippery legislators who decided to require formerly incarcerated citizens to pay fines before they were allowed to vote. I spent some time looking around the Florida.gov website to see if all citizens are required to pay fines before they can vote. The answer is no. The Pay-to-Vote "Poll Tax" requirement is only levied on formerly incarcerated people. The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition estimates that 67,000 people with prior felony convictions are able to register to vote in this election, but the Sentencing Project estimates that about 900,000 more should have had that right restored.

My issue with the election circus is not all the hype, or the arguments, or the money. My concern is that the citizens – who foot the bill for our governance, our education, our laws, our military...and who bear the brunt of the decisions made for the many by the few...are never asked what it is we would like to see in this country live in, or even what is important to us. This simple act would stop the barrage of false dichotomies presented to us as choices (Are you with us? Or against us?) and force those who wish to run for office to appease us. The conversation, the debates and even the commercials would become unoffensive! Wouldn't that be nice?

Fortunately, Taiwan is shining a very bright light into the development of Direct Democracy. Their Digital Minister, Audrey Tang, is working with a large team of developers to create platforms and filters that allow for open-ended questions (not false dichotomies or even “pick one of these options”) and the organization of responses to be presented to the polis in a powerful and complex format, ready for consideration, questions and conversation. This is not a fast process, but it is inclusive and a (truly) smart use of technology to solve a very old problem. Anyone who is interested in it should look into Audrey Tang, Digital Democracy or Collective Intelligence. I am happy to see the light at the end of the Tunnel-Vision!

After all is said and done, I still feel very lucky to live in the US...where I can start a reentry organization on a whim, based on my ideas and oomph, mail things that I've written – and even software I've created - into secure facilities around the country...and send a monthly reflection to more than 4500 people, and - when the virus isn't competing with me – even come in to the prisons to share ideas with you in person. That is the freedom that I am the most grateful for: the freedom to be an activated citizen who doesn't need to wait for a bureaucracy to take action and begin building an extension to the American community project so that it includes - and connects - even more citizens! I could not do this without you and the larger community we are all connected to – including some who have been released and continue to share ideas, and some who support the work we are doing in a myriad of other ways.

Democracy, in its most beautiful form, holds the deep values of ubuntu: to be our full, authentic selves, while remembering that “who we are” includes “who we are TOGETHER”.

THANK YOU! generous donors for making it possible for this newsletter to come out, and for providing the energy (funding) that makes this conversation possible. Ubuntu!

Thank you also to those who have sent in book referrals! I will offer the complete list with the November news as recommendations are still coming in. There's still time to make a recommendation, just limit it to 100 words...which must include why you think the book has value, and why you think the readers here will enjoy it.

BOOK OF THE MONTH: EMPOWERING PUBLIC WISDOM: A Practical Vision of Citizen-Led Politics by Tom Atlee. This book demonstrates how we can generate wisdom through the voices and ideas of people from all walks of life. Our current “republican” democracy is clearly unable to deal with our current challenges and Atlee suggests that it is both vital and possible to generate authentic collective wisdom through the conversations of ordinary citizens. From the book: “The revolution in decision-making that citizen deliberative councils offer us is of comparable

magnitude to the revolution in decision-making created centuries ago by the idea of majority vote. It can be applied virtually anywhere, and it could make all the difference in the world.” Literally.

QUOTES:

“Since we have achieved our freedom, there can only be one division amongst us: between those who cherish democracy and those who do not.” “For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” – Nelson Mandela

“Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.” - Abraham Lincoln

Stay strong, stay safe and keep questioning.

To our successful transitions! Ubuntu! ~ sue

Fair Shake PO Box 63 Westby, WI 54667

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!