

Fair Shake News: Complex Issues edition

Happy Summer, everyone!

I hope everyone had a powerful Juneteenth Day! It was the first-time folks in many places were able to gather and celebrate together in more than a year. What an apt beginning to the season of celebrating freedom!

Thank you, Donors, for making sure this newsletter is FREE for nearly 4000 readers to receive each month. Your commitment – some of you on an ongoing, monthly basis – provides a perspective many readers would not otherwise get to consider.

So, what's complex? Frankly, the word 'freedom'. The Fourth of July celebrates America's most deeply-held value...yet we can't openly discuss what the word, or the philosophical value, means.

When confronted with deep moral concepts, we do what American's do best these days: we consume. We make red, white and blue food, we go on vacation, we spend way too much money on fireworks and we wear clothes that look like flags. These demonstrations 'signal' our devotion to freedom, but I find they lack in substance and care.

I'm opening my shop soon (more below). I told my dad that the shop would have a computer for people can learn about Fair Shake, it would have books for people to explore some of the ideas I share with all of you. Then I said "I want people to feel comfortable talking about things like freedom"...and he called me a communist. The following day I told my daughter that I was going to create a 'safe space' for people to talk about freedom, self-determination, and empowered citizenship. Her reply was: "You are aware that Socrates was killed for that, right?" One's a democrat, one's a republican - yet they both told me talking about freedom was dangerous. Of course, that was all I needed to hear to know I on the right track.

As someone who thinks about freedom almost all the time, one question that baffles me is how do we know when we're free? You know I have no television...so my life is free from persuasive advertising and manipulative and fear mongering news, so does that make me free from norms and the status quo? (no)

How about the stories we tell ourselves about our past? How can we own them and also free ourselves from the shame and fear so we can freely build a future of possibilities?

Can we find friends who will support our freedom? Allow us to be authentic, free selves; growing and changing, learning and healing? Sometimes the people who are closest to us are the ones who are the most afraid of our freedom.

We are told 'apps are free', and if we "buy 3, we'll get one free", and we can watch videos online for free. None of those things are yours without a cost.

FREE & FREEDOM are words that should be rigorously discussed. And the conversation should start when we start asking 'why'....and never end.

Perhaps we are the most free when we don't have much stuff.

"Three elements that characterize free will: spontaneity, self-determination and choice." – Peter Block

**CONNECTICUT: THE FIRST STATE TO MAKE ALL PHONE CALLS FREE**

Free for Real: after decades of overcharging for phone 'privileges' one state corrections department has made all phone calls free. It allows incarcerated men, women and juveniles a minimum of 90 minutes a

day of free calls. The state has a prison contract with phone vendor Securus Technologies, which charges up to \$5 for a 15-minute call. Each person is afforded a minimum of 90 minutes of call time per day.

#### FREE BOOKS!

From their latest newsletter: "Haymarket Books, an independent, radical, non-profit publisher, is committed to making our books available for free to people who are incarcerated." We continue (to) expand our donations of books to people who are incarcerated." We will try to send out the requested book within a month". Your outside supporters could make a request for you here: [www.haymarketbooks.org/blogs/329-haymarket-books-not-bars-program](http://www.haymarketbooks.org/blogs/329-haymarket-books-not-bars-program). Write to: Haymarket Books PO Box 160185 Chicago, IL 60618

Shared by a FS news subscriber:

PARC (Prison Activist Resource Center) and they publish a free 24-page resource guide called the PARC NATIONAL PRISONER RESOURCE DIRECTORY. The directory is free to inmates and has a good bit of information in various categories. Most of the info an inmate can send for is free but there are a few which cost or require a SASE, etc. Inmates can order the guide by mailing their request to: PARC PO Box 70447 Oakland, CA 94612

TIPS WHEN WRITING FOR INFORMATION: (also shared by a newsletter subscriber!)

At some time during our incarceration, we will likely write to organizations requesting information. Here are some things to consider from a fellow inmate.

BE SPECIFIC - Always indicate "why" you are writing and state the specific information or material being requested. Or let them know if you are seeking "general information".

BE COURTEOUS - Remember these two basic rules: (1) No one "owes" you anything; (2) You are "entitled" to nothing. You are asking a complete stranger to use their own limited resources to provide you with information and materials - be grateful. At the end of your letter, always thank the recipient for their time, effort and info. Good manners go a long way.

DON'T BE A SCROOGE - enclose a SASE (Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope). Most non-profits are very small and have limited staff and funds. Postage normally takes up a very large portion of a very small budget. Your stamps help, and, a SASE will often get you a quicker response.

WHAT ABOUT THIS SO-CALLED "FREE-MARKET ECONOMY"?

Bitter Chocolate: Who Stands Against Modern Slavery? Not our Supreme Court. Just two days before we celebrated Juneteenth, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of American companies that continue to engage with companies who use slave labor. On June 17th they ruled, 8 - 1 (!) in support of Nestle and Cargill, who they knowingly bought cocoa beans from farms in Africa using child slave labor. Only Justice Alito ruled against the American companies. Six adult citizens of Mali have been involved in this case for several years. They were taken from their country as children and forced to work on cocoa farms in neighboring Ivory Coast. The case involves a law enacted by the very first Congress in 1789, the Alien Tort Statute. Adding complexity, NEAL KATYAL, former acting SOLICITOR GENERAL UNDER PRESIDENT OBAMA, represented Nestlé and Cargill.

#### BUSTING OUT

Speaking of free...I'm busting out of my office for about 10 days. I am in Montana, getting ready to visit my incarcerated friend. (I found out last fall that he was incarcerated!) Long-time readers of this newsletter will remember when I wrote about my travels, prior to the pandemic, when I would drive around the country in my truck/camper and present Fair Shake in prisons from coast to coast. The truck/camper and I really miss these travels and have been itching to get out...and it's just so ironic that our first trip is to a prison. I can't volunteer...but I can visit! On my drive, I will explore the complex

feelings that I have about my freedom. I drove 200 miles on a two lane road today with only two opportunities to purchase fuel. My truck does not have a radio...and I certainly never missed it.

I will have my computer but I will not be emailing after I send this newsletter. I will finish up the Ownership Manual and the additions to the website. Finally! But I won't be doing anything else... so you won't hear from me for ten to twenty days, depending on how many messages build up while I'm gone. I do everything at Fair Shake by myself, so it will be a great relief to be free of the office to only work on the website and the new packet!

A little more on the store: Long-time readers will also remember when I talked about restarting my old for-profit company so it could become like 'Newman's Own', where all profits are donated to charity (or, in this case, Fair Shake) since it is very hard to get funding for this level of freedom ~ : ) Well, I'm finally doing it. I'm building a website where folks can purchase products and I'll have a real store where I make the products and where people can shop, learn, talk, explore, create! I don't have the name figured out yet. (r)Evolution Wellness Center? Suecratique? The Bending Bean? (an old-time phrase for 'thinking')

#### MORE REQUESTS FOR EMPLOYEES

This week Burpee Seeds contacted me: "We are looking for general labor and/or machine operators that can get to our 300 Park Avenue site in Warminster, PA, 30 mi. north of Philadelphia.

Fair Shake is in WI. I do not reach out to employers...yet they are scouring the internet in search of employees - specifically returning citizens – as an 'under-tapped market'!

Book Review: YOUR BRAIN ON STORY by Tom Asacker

I know, another Tom Asacker book! But this one is brand new, and it's very short! It is written as a dialog to give us a clear picture of how to "wake up, be truly alive, and infuse our lives with peace and possibility". Tom says "We live in an amazing world with a vast and vibrant landscape of possibility. But we don't often experience the profound sensations and excitement of life, and that's because our minds have been programmed to live an anxious, routine, and restrained existence. You'll discover why:

- Certainty is the killer of curiosity
- Comparison is the killer of compassion
- Comfort is the killer of creativity"

It is an invitation to own - and celebrate - our interdependent life. His book can be read quickly and effortlessly as a spirited and engaging conversation. It can also be read slowly and thoughtfully; savoring Tom's illuminating ideas in a hundred deep, reflective dives into our pursuit of control, security, identity and happiness.

This small, powerful book has helped me widen my perspective and expand my intellectual and emotional capacity. I am grateful for this sparkling new lens, which I can use to view myself and the world...and create the future.

#### QUOTES:

"To be free simply means that there are always alternatives among which we can choose even if none of the alternatives are ones we are pleased with." - Peter Block

"You have freedom when you're easy in your harness." - Robert Frost

"...freedom cannot be bestowed; it must be achieved." - Franklin D. Roosevelt

"This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless it's a good place for all of us to live in." – Theodore Roosevelt

"None but ourselves can free our minds." - Marcus Garvey

"Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves." – Abraham Lincoln

"Freedom is means choosing your burden." – Hephzibah Menuhin

"Don't regard yourself as a guardian of freedom unless you respect and preserve the rights of people you disagree with to free, public, unhampered expression." – Gerard K. O'Neill

Finally, for the day we celebrate the beginning of the United States of America:

"A real patriot is the fellow who gets a parking ticket and rejoices because the system works."  
- Bill Vaughan

To our pursuit of freedom! Happy 4th ~ : )

Ubuntu! ~ sue  
Fair Shake PO Box 63 Westby, WI 54667

Remember these resources can be found in your phone-gizmo: 2-1-1 AuntBertha.com Fairshake.net  
HelpYourselfTherapy.com

You can share the Fair shake newsletter with folks who have access to the internet here:  
[www.fairshake.net/fair-shake-newsletter](http://www.fairshake.net/fair-shake-newsletter).