

FS News: Tackling Philosophobia Edition

Greetings, Readers, and Happy Fall!

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and spirits.

We continue to live in turbulent times and it has become obvious to everyone that “the only constant is change” (Heraclitus, 500 BCE). The tools you are gathering today for constant change will continue to be helpful throughout your life. Philosophy, or “the love of wisdom”, is one of the tools that will only get more helpful and more powerful with age.

For instance, with so much talk about ‘right’/‘wrong’, ‘good’/‘bad’ and ‘should’/‘shouldn’t’, why do we not explore these terms when we’re in school? Or discuss them with one another? Talking heads, experts, teachers, bosses, friends and family often have no qualms about telling us what is the right way to look at something, or the right way to act, but when we have a different opinion or perspective, our asking ‘why’ is rarely welcome.

“WHY?” has become taboo.

Sadly, Americans are petrified about philosophy. There is a name for this irrational fear: it’s called PHILOSOPHOBIA. We’re so scared, in fact, that we make fun of people who ‘get philosophical’, even though preschoolers practice philosophy when they cry out “that’s not fair!”.

The study of philosophy addresses the very core of human-ness: determining meaning in our lives. Through reflection, asking questions, assessing values, developing boundaries, and questioning assumptions, we can understand what drives us and we can take ownership of our lives. Gaining ownership is what will get us where we want to go. When we blame others, we lose power. Philosophy does so much more than this; philosophy determines what children learn in school, philosophy determines how we govern ourselves and how we treat one another.

Instead of exploring the ‘right’/‘wrong’ question when we’re young, Americans base our expectations for moral behavior on rules, laws,

‘authority’, and the status quo. Clearly this is not working for us because we put the largest percentage of our population in jail or prison. Empirical evidence, aka ‘proof’ for an effective democracy that is working well would show a very small prison population.

Philosophy can help us develop the arguments and ideas that could change the dismal 82% recidivism rate to an 82%...and rising...success rate. (I want to be clear here: the horrible recidivism rate is not a reflection of the individuals who are released. It’s a reflection of the abysmal failure of 30 years of ‘what works’ programming, extremely harsh sentences, and ‘mandatory education.’)

We need philosophy to take ownership of our lives, our communities, our world, and our destiny!

ON SUE’S DESK – Striving

Strive: “make great efforts to achieve or obtain something.” - Oxford online dictionary

I believe a crucial part of success in life is understanding our needs. I’ll explore many needs in upcoming newsletters, and I’m starting today with “striving”. Living things strive; even flowers grow between cracks in cement!

Care is at the root of our values, and what we care about guides our striving. We are constantly striving to meet our basic needs and our psychological needs. Sometimes the striving that we feel: for example: the desire for money - clouds the things that we are really striving for: security, health, acceptance in the community, etc. Money can provide many things, but it cannot deliver meaning or mental strength.

"A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself." - Abraham Maslow

Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, the creators of Self-Determination Theory, believe we are driven by our deep human needs for Autonomy, Relatedness and Competence. They, like me,

believe that the only lasting motivation is intrinsic (volition, aka 'your desire'). If striving and/or Self-Determination theory are interesting to you, I hope you'll share your thoughts or put in a request for more information and I'll send a basic outline of the theory and how it works!

DAN PINK: on MOTIVATING YOURSELF:
From an online interview: "Instead of saying "I can do this", ASK yourself "Can I do this? And if so, how?" It's called interrogative self-talk. It is helpful because statements are passive, but questions are interactive. "I got this" might lead to over-confidence. "Can I do this and if so, how?" helps us prepare, it helps us rehearse, and it helps us perform better in the real moment." (Dan is the author of "DRIVE: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us" and many other insightful books.)

URGE SURFING from the folks at **PRISON HEALTH NEWS** (written by incarcerated folks)
Urge Surfing is a technique for managing your unwanted behaviors. Rather than giving in to an urge, you will ride it out like a surfer rides a wave. After a short time, the urge will pass on its own. This technique can be used to stop or reduce any unwanted behaviors or habits, including emotional reactions such as "blowing up" when angry, overeating, and other unwanted behaviors.

The full publication is online at:
www.prisonhealth.news

GEORGIAN DELEGATES VISIT FAIR SHAKE
Georgia, the country, not the state! A small delegation of folks involved in corrections, esp. reentry, shared a full day of learning and sharing at the Fair Shake office in late October. Speakers from around the country shared their thoughts about voting in prisons, the value of visiting, and the trials and tribulations of life after incarceration.

The young professionals informed us that pregnant women who are convicted rarely go to jail; they serve their term at home until the baby turns 1. Women who give birth while incarcerated, on the other hand, keep the baby 'til it turns 3. Just one tidbit of many about what is possible!

SOCIAL PURPOSE CORRECTIONS

A new organization called "Social Purpose Corrections" has been created to take the profit incentive out of the private prison model. They hope to become a direct competitor to the private prison industry very soon. From their website: "Social Purpose Corrections (SPC) was predicated on one key question: *What if 100% of prison net revenues were reinvested into drug/alcohol rehabilitation, onsite job training and education programs, accessible mental health and self-care treatment, mentorships, employee training, medical care, real world re-entry assistance, with the single goal of creating a sustainable correctional model that truly reduces the rates of incarceration and recidivism?*"

FREE INSURANCE!

One year ago I reported on an opportunity for all returning citizens to receive free insurance. It was a new program, and I had no testimonies to share. Today I'm happy to report that it is available in every state! Parks Insurance Agency offers many benefits including zero-cost health plans, free physicals, prescription coverage for new and prior medications, access to recovery treatment, mental health counseling, doctor and hospital visits, and all pre-existing health conditions will be covered (i.e., asthma, diabetes, cancer, etc.). The benefits also extend to household family members upon your release. For more information contact: Parks Insurance Agency, 153 S. Oakland Ave, Rock Hill SC 29730 Phone: 866-932-7200. Your supporters can find out more here: <https://parksinsured.com/> .

FAIR SHAKE SUPPORT: HELP ON THE WAY
I'm poised to launch the Fair Shake fundraising store - www.bendingbean.com – in one week. Folks who prefer to support Fair Shake through purchases will be able to buy high-quality natural products with 100% of the profits directly funding the website, this newsletter, printing and mailing - both letters and the Reentry Ownership Manual, and creating and distributing the free software. My fingers are crossed in the hopes that this will work!

LBGTQ NEWSLETTER:

This news is from a fellow FS News subscriber: Are you part of the Wisconsin LGBTQ family, or a supporter of someone who is? Do you have a tablet and want to receive a monthly LGBTQ newsletter full of great info? If so, add rippnewsletterwis@gmail.com

to your contacts and sign up for the monthly free newsletter.

WHAT MATTERS IS THE CHOICE YOU MAKE RIGHT NOW By Lori Deschene, heavily edited by me.

"Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it." ~Charles R. Swindoll
When I read this quote, something shifted inside me. Maybe my life wasn't the sum of my hurts and mistakes. Maybe instead of judging myself for where I'd been and feeling down on myself for where I was, I could empower myself to create something different from that moment forward. Maybe all that really mattered was the choice I made right then. I changed my inner monologue from, "Why did I make such bad choices?" to "What's the best choice I can make now?" The biggest difference between me now and me then is that I no longer sit alone in shame, compounding negative feelings with self-judgment, which only keeps me feeling stuck. I accept that I am human, and that a part of that is going through highs and lows. I know I will go through tough times, and I know I can bounce back from them, even if it takes a while. I have learned that we are not powerless. It may not always seem like it, but we have a say in what happens - and when events seem beyond our control, we have a say in how we respond to them. That's all we can ever control, and that's what really matters: the choice we make right now.
tinybuddha.com/blog/what-matters-is-the-choice-you-make-right-now

SELF-CARE AND HEALTHY BOUNDARIES – by Mark Manson Set a boundary in one of your relationships. (This is for ALL relationships, not just romantic relationships.) The process is simple: 1. Decide what you will and will not accept in the relationship. 2. Decide on the consequences if the person does not respect your decision. 3. Communicate the expectations clearly, without judgment.

QUOTES

"The mark of an educated mind is the ability to hold two contradictory ideas without necessarily believing either of them." - attributed to Aristotle
"School gave us hammers to live in a world that requires a full set of tools." - anonymous

"In a world that marginalizes the invisible and prioritizes external validation and conformity, living a life that's guided by your inner wisdom and passion is a revolutionary act." - Tom Asacker

"If you want to change the culture, you have to start discussing the undiscussable." – Dave Gray

"The darkness we are in is an invitation to be great." - Indy Johar

"If you're afraid to offend, you can't be honest." - Thomas Paine

"We're born alone, we live alone, we die alone. Only through our love and friendship can we create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone." Orson Welles

"Man is not a rational animal; man is a rationalizing animal." - Robert Heinlein

"It's hard to say "I made a mistake" or "I changed my mind" in our social climate today. We need social climate change!"

"Freedom turns out to be a very important ingredient to progress." - Eric Weinstein

"Nothing will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must first be overcome." - Samuel Johnson

To our thriving...together!
Ubuntu, ~ sue

As always, when you are released, remember to find support in your phone-gizmo:
2-1-1 Fairshake.net HelpYourselfTherapy.com FindHelp.org

National Reentry Helpline (24/7): 844-916-2577

Free reentry publication; write for your copy! "Mapping Your Future – National Reentry Guide" is available in English y Español. Send your request to: Education Justice Project 1001 South Wright Street Champaign, IL 61820

Newsletters are available at FairShake.net for your family and friends to read or print.

Social Purpose Corrections

WHO WE ARE

Social Purpose Corrections (SPC) is the country's first and only secure nonprofit full-service corrections corporation. Our business model is a new concept in managing secure correctional and re-entry facilities. All net revenues from federal and state contracts will be reinvested in resident safety, programming, education, healthcare and staff development - no shareholders or red tape.
Reinventing Incarceration

The premise of the current corrections culture is predicated on the punishment model. At least 95% of people will be released from incarceration at some point. These individuals will become our neighbors. Do we want them to return to us better through education, therapy and training?

SPC believes in the Dynamic Security Model, which is a secure balanced approach of safety, mutual respect and supportive rehabilitation that will enhance existing security protocols, reduce violence and encourage self-improvement. Re-entry preparation begins on day one of incarceration. We call this social profit, as society at large derives the real profits. how are we different?

PEOPLE FIRST

SPC believes in a culture of safety and security, openness and mutual respect between leadership, staff and residents that will foster trust and meaningful rehabilitation.

We will engage correctional residents by providing a wide variety of onsite learning, cultural, and self-improvement opportunities, accessible mental health and wellness programming and emotional intelligence counseling, 1:1 drug/alcohol rehabilitation, and industry recognized employment credentialing opportunities. We will provide consistent staff training that is equally focused on safety and security, and the art of inspiring self-improvement in others.

Staff will be paid a fair and livable wage which will allow us to hire and retain the most qualified correctional professionals.

SPC will develop a College of Corrections for staff, and share with other correctional systems, focused on evidence-based resident change initiatives, professional development, and real-time recidivism tracking and analysis.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Our sole mission is to help residents do better through consistent and meaningful programming, therapy, access to healthcare, and job training before they return as citizens.

SPC plans for a resident's re-entry on day one of incarceration.

Social impact and public safety is how we measure success, not by bed-count.

Society at large derives the real profits from a system that invests in their most important asset - their people.

NONPROFIT TRANSPARENCY

Net revenues are reinvested in resident programming and staff development - no shareholders or red tape.

Operating as a 501(c)3 means performance is public record.

SPC will be transparent with successes and challenges by posting a dashboard on our website that tracks our progress.

INNOVATION

SPC will utilize long-term residents from various correctional systems as part of a Think Tank for social change so they may assist our country's leaders with solutions for social justice reform and lowered recidivism across the board.

We will hire returned citizens who specialize in rehabilitation and re-entry services. If anyone knows what is needed, it's these individuals.

SPC will include family-friendly programming with a focus on parent-child relationships, which helps to promote positive family connections early on. Supportive family relationships during incarceration motivates residents to do better and be better when they are released.

We will assist correctional residents with I.D. and documentation services and connect them to social services and re-entry support prior to release.

Nonprofit Business Model

SPC will secure performance based management contracts and lease/manage existing and vacant prison/detention facilities from the government and correctional organizations. These contracts will cover the day-to-day costs of running a safe secure facility. We will manage operations as a nonprofit entity, which means transparency and profits will not go to shareholders. Instead, 100% of net revenue will go directly toward resident safety, meaningful programming and rehabilitation, and staff training.