

REENTRY PACKET

Your Customized Guide to Support your Successful Transition



National Web-based Reentry Resource Center

www.fairshake.net

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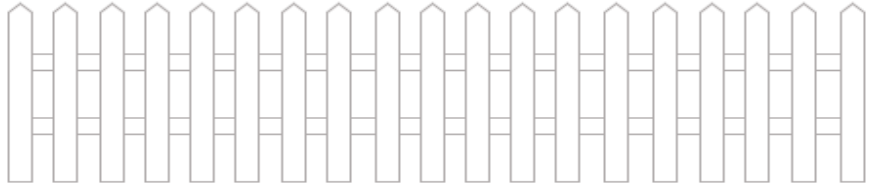
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Boundaries



I didn't set this boundary to offend you or to please you.

I set boundaries to manage the priorities and goals that I have set for my life. - Unknown

If I can't say "no", then my "yes" has no meaning. – Peter Block

Boundaries define us. They define what is me and what is not me. – Dr. Henry Cloud

Good boundaries protect you; they protect and preserve your goals, your time, your health and your identity.

I explore this crucial topic here with the help of several guides, including The School of Life, Mark Manson and Dr. Henry Cloud, who have written careful and thoughtful articles that illuminate tricky aspects of boundary setting.

From The School of Life: *because most of us have not been educated in this byway of emotional maturity, (our) boundaries are either non-existent or else get thrown up in a jerky and destructive manner. It takes a little self-confidence and courage to be able to notice just how bad we may be at the art of boundary-laying. We may have spent a large chunk of our lives already in an essentially passive relationship to everyday infringements by people close to us. But we aren't a piece of helpless flotsam on the river of others' wishes; we have agency, direction and – as it were – a rudder. The price to pay for affection isn't compliance. We can prove loveable and worthy of respect and at the same time, utter a warm-sounding and definitive 'no'.*

Mark Manson reminds us: taking responsibility for your own actions and not blaming others are two of the pillars in *Nathaniel Branden's Six Pillars of Self Esteem*. People with high self-esteem have strong personal boundaries. And practicing strong personal boundaries is one way to build self-esteem.

Boundaries protect and preserve our time for thinking (or not thinking) and doing for ourselves. Time that we need to work toward our own unique goals, including meeting with new people, outside our usual circles!

We also need to create healthy boundaries around our learning, our growth and our change. Once we start to make changes in our lives, we will find that some people do not support our growth and will try to convince us to stop, or to once again do what we used to do when we did not have the knowledge we have now. They are afraid of change, but we can't let their fears hold us back. We can politely let them know we respect and understand them, but we are on our own path, and we hope they can respect and understand us, too.

Boundaries liberate you to continue to become your unique, authentic self! (We are always becoming...)

Let's clarify a few words and concepts before we continue:

Autonomy - Humans have a deep need for autonomy. From the Stanford Philosophy website, the definition of autonomy is: to govern oneself, to be directed by considerations, desires, conditions, and characteristics that are not simply imposed externally upon one, but are part of what can somehow *be considered one's authentic self*. (plato.stanford.edu) Our AGENCY is our ability to ACT on our decisions.

Belonging - Humans have deep need for belonging, too. To be a part of a group, a family, to feel we contribute; in other words: the feeling of being accepted and approved of by a group or by society as a whole, according to the American Psychological Association.

Boundaries - Our boundaries are shaped in the balance between our need for autonomy and our need for belonging. It is up to each one of us to determine where to draw our lines. We move the line as we learn new things, reflect on our values, make decisions and create goals. Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Thompson share this description: Boundaries define us. They define what is me and what is not me. A boundary shows me where I end and someone else begins, leading me to a sense of ownership. Knowing what I am to own and take responsibility for gives me freedom.

Healthy personal boundaries (includes) taking responsibility for your own actions and emotions, while NOT taking responsibility for the actions or emotions of others. - Mark Manson

Laying down a boundary involves informing those around us – colleagues, parents, children, lovers – of a set of reasonable things that we require to feel respected and happy. - The School of Life

Your personal boundaries protect the inner core of your identity and your right to your choices.

– Gerard Manley Hopkins

Boundaries and Our Health



Healthy boundaries increase our mental and physical health! Boundaries are determined by our core values. If you have not taken inventory of your values lately, there's no better time than now. It's good to check in on your values now and then because we're always changing, always becoming. As we change, our perspective changes and our values change. Reflecting on our changes, and then checking on our boundaries, helps us stay clear and consistent, even during our changes.

The Health Affiliates of Maine share this on their website: *Being consistent with implementing external and internal boundaries will increase your self-esteem, conserve emotional energy, and create more independence in your life. Once you've made your boundaries known in your life, it's natural for people to test them. We all have different values and boundaries and we all deserve to have them respected. What matters most to you? What are you unwilling to compromise on? Use meditation, prayer, journaling or time outside to allow for a space of self-awareness. These realizations may not all come immediately. That's okay—have patience and continue showing up for yourself.* (www.healthaffiliatesmaine.com)

- + Look to your core values
- + Follow your instincts
- + Be assertive and consistent
- + Learn to say “no”
- + Communicate clearly

"No" is a complete sentence.
- Annie Lamott

Build your 'courage' muscle. Brush up on the "delicate art of graceful objection"!

Unhealthy Boundaries

“When we have unhealthy boundaries, we end up feeling like we have to hold everyone else’s feelings but our own, and that leads to resentment, anger, anxiety, depression, and stress,” says Babita Spinelli. People find it empowering to make decisions for themselves and experience their feelings rather than being told how they should feel. (www.thehealthy.com)

Boundary Maintenance: Based on your core values, reassess your boundaries as you learn new things. Pay attention to your feelings and needs so you know when to protect and when to expand. How can we support others to explore their boundaries while maintaining our own?

From MindBodyGreen: "Boundaries are about honoring your needs, not about judging other people's wants. For example: I set boundaries around phone time because I get overstimulated by tech. This boundary is to decrease my stress level and not about avoiding others' phone calls."

Clearly communicate your boundaries! Unclear proclamations will ensure greater difficulty later on.

Our Boundaries and Others



From Mark Manson: *A person with strong boundaries is not afraid of a temper tantrum, an argument or getting hurt. A person with weak boundaries is terrified of it. A person with strong boundaries understands that a healthy relationship is not controlling one another's emotions, but rather each partner supporting each other in their growth and path to self-actualization.*

Sometimes you have to make sacrifices for the people you love. If you make a sacrifice for someone you care about, it needs to be because you want to, not because you feel obligated or because you fear the consequences of not doing it. Acts of affection are only valid if they're performed without expectations. It can be difficult for people to recognize whether they're doing something out of perceived obligation or out of voluntary sacrifice. Here's the litmus test: ask yourself, "If I stopped doing this, how would the relationship change?"

People will tell you that they applaud your boundaries while they privately, or perhaps not-so-privately, hope that you will bend your boundaries in their favor. A little extra pressure, another chance to prove your devotion to them. But everyone is important. And it is important that you are able to recharge your own battery, so you can have good energy to share in the future, in an even more supportive way.

According to the School of Life: *three powerful anxieties bedevil the boundary-less person:*

- If I speak up, they will hate me.*
- If I speak up, I will become a target for retribution.*
- If I speak up, I will feel like a horrible person.*

A Note on Co-Dependency

Mark Manson writes: *In codependent relationships "victims" and "savers" both get kind of an emotional high off one another. The victim creates problems not because there are real problems, but because they believe it will cause them to feel loved. The saver doesn't save the victim because they actually care about the problem, but because they believe if they fix the problem, they will feel loved. In both cases, the intentions are self-sabotaging.*

If the saver really wanted to save the victim, the saver would say, "Look, you're blaming others for your own problems. Deal with them yourself."

The victim, if they really loved the saver, would say, "Look, this is my problem. Don't fix it for me."

For the victim, the hardest thing to do is to hold themselves accountable for their feelings and their life. They've spent their whole existence believing they must blame others in order to feel any intimacy or love; letting that go is terrifying.

For the saver, the hardest thing to do is to stop fixing other people's problems and trying to force them to be happy and satisfied. They've spent their whole lives only feeling valued and loved when they were fixing a problem or providing a use to someone; letting go of this need is terrifying to them as well.

People who blame others for their own emotions and actions do so because they believe that if they put the responsibility on those around them, they'll receive the love they've always wanted and needed. If they constantly paint themselves as a victim, eventually someone will come save them.

People who take the blame for other people's emotions and actions are always looking to save someone. They believe that if they can "fix" their partner, then they will receive the love and appreciation they've always wanted.

Co-dependency can take other forms as well:

We find it in the relationships where each party holds something the other wants, and they use it for manipulation: sex, money, children, access, etc.

And we also find it in relationships where one person is the authority (the parent, the controller), and the other is subservient, or the follower. We see this not only in personal relationships, but also in cultures.

Erich Fromm describes this in *Escape From Freedom*: *Is there not also, perhaps, besides an innate desire for freedom, an instinctive wish for submission? If there is not, how can we account for the attraction which submission to a leader has for so many today? Is submission always to an overt authority, or is there also submission to internalized...anonymous authorities like public opinion?*

Prepare for Challenges



Not everyone will appreciate your boundaries. Some will even insist that they get to plow right inside your boundaries to 'should' on you. I've seen it all aspects of my life: casual, personal and business. I tend to believe people 'should' on women more than men, but that's just my perspective...because I'm a woman! After figuring out my own unique approach to life and work, I find it very hard to not to be offended when other people want to tell me how to live according to their world view. (I share an example of this in "Sue's Anger Story" within the Managing Anger document found in this publication): Anger may be evoked as a response to a perceived provocation when

one's personal boundaries are violated; and anger may be utilized effectively by setting firm boundaries and avoiding unhealthy situations in the future. Power dynamics often add a complex level of difficulty to the situation.

Problem: When you show you are strong, capable, and operating with intent, people will want you to do even more for them, claiming they do not possess your abilities.

I know that my commitment to my boundaries demonstrates my dependability, tenacity and care so I get asked to manage things, run things, or follow up on things all the time. I'm grateful that others trust me. I get to help them build their own skills in those areas by politely saying 'no'. In asking me to do something, they say they cannot do that thing, so they want me to do it. I tell them "I had to learn to do it, too!" I am, first and foremost, an "Agent of Agency", so I must give them (back) the power they had hoped to give to me.

If you are thinking of starting your own business, clear, well-maintained boundaries is a must!

We Are All Teachers



Teach others about healthy boundaries by enforcing yours. – Bryant McGill

We teach each other many things simply by doing them. We can teach our family and friends about boundaries. We can help them fortify their boundaries by demonstrating courage and strength as we define ours.

Wouldn't it be helpful today if we would have studied how our minds work when we were younger? Thankfully, it is never too late to reach out to the young people coming behind us. We can make sure they are not denied the education we all deserve: primarily the education about ourselves as individuals and as community members.

Do you want to help our youth make better decisions? There is no better way to teach than by showing: model boundary setting with courage and compassion. Where do we learn to build and maintain boundaries? Where do we learn to assess our values and build courage? School, television, and most adults will not model boundaries. We are encouraged to be acquiescent to authorities, professionals and experts.

"Very few of us were modeled the delicate art of "graceful objection" - School of Life

Children today deserve to learn how to protect themselves from predators of all kinds, including marketers. They need to learn how to say 'no', and how to recognize and avoid unhealthy situations and relationships. We can, and we must, show them how. Not by telling, but by doing.

Model courage! Model strength! And model the "graceful art" of saying "no".

Can you find one person, or a small group, to discuss the many challenges that arise from declaring and maintaining boundaries? Perhaps each person can research the topic, and then share what you find? Constructive learning increases our access to knowledge and widens our perspective, to ponder other viewpoints!

Primary References:

Dr. Henry Cloud - Boundaries Guidance website

<https://www.boundaries.me/blog/how-freedom-and-responsibility-can-transform-a-relationship>

Dr. Henry Cloud – How to Set Boundaries (6 min video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjcPkKHZRCg>

Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend - Define Boundaries

<https://www.cloudtownsend.com/what-do-you-mean-boundaries-by-dr-henry-cloud-and-dr-john-townsend/>

Mark Manson <https://markmanson.net/boundaries>




School of Life <https://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/learning-to-lay-down-boundaries/>



WELCOME TO FAIR SHAKE! ➔ www.fairshake.net

PRINT THIS PAGE to guide you as you explore the Fair Shake Do-It-Yourself Reentry Resource Center. There is a lot of information on the website! This guide will help you get find your way around.

3 important items for you to remember:

1. If you ever get lost on the website (or any website), click on the logo to return to the home page.
2. Words in blue are links to pages on our website, other websites or documents that you can also print.
3. Icons you will see:
 -  Available off-line and on-line
 -  Available on-line only
 -  Documents available off-line and on-line



➤ [Resource Directory](#)
➤ [Resource Directory](#)

Fair Shake Website Home Page: ➔ www.fairshake.net



Do It Yourself!

- You are unique! No one knows what you need better than you do
- Explore new opportunities!
- No tracking, nudging, or monitoring



Fair Shake Reentry Tool Kit

- [Resource Directory](#)
- [Reentry Packet](#)
- [Ownership Manual](#)
- [Building Computer Skills](#)
- [Find a Job](#)
- [Become a Member!](#)
- [Educate Yourself!](#)

Find RESOURCES:

Resource Directory – search our huge data base!
Resource Guides – local, regional, and national brochures, books, and interactive websites

Find EMPLOYMENT

Prepare For Work
Find A Job (also includes Start Your Own Business)
Help an Employer Hire You!

Explore LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Formal, Informal, Non-formal
Higher Ed, Life Skills, Lifelong Learning

And Improve COMPUTER SKILLS!

Step-by-Step Tutorials and Internet Safety Tips

SEARCH the entire Fair Shake WEBSITE

It is like a REENTRY, DEVELOPMENT and COMMUNITY-BUILDING LIBRARY!

You can find all the pages on our website from almost any location on our website! By hovering over the four menu tabs on the left side of our home page, you will activate the menu bar to reveal links to pages organized under headings.

STEP BY STEP:

Look to the left side of any page and you will see a dark purple column. Do you see the words: Reentry Resources, Information Center, Member Menu and About Fair Shake? Hover your cursor (don't click) over the words Reentry Resources at the top of the column. To 'hover', move the cursor – which usually looks like an arrow – over a tab. You will see the cursor switch to the image of a hand. The Menu Title will then change to light-purple and the Menu will appear to the right. Next, you can move your cursor over the words in the menu. Hover over any of the titles and the color will change to orange and a line will be added underneath. Click on the title that interests you, and you will go to that page on the website.



Most websites work like Fair Shake:

- Click on the logo to return to the home page
- Find the sitemap at the bottom of almost every page
- Words that change color are often links
- Learn about an organization's Mission and Vision by visiting the "About Us" page.

Found at the bottom of each webpage, the Sitemap also shows all of the pages on the website:

Home / Sitemap / Privacy Policy / Help / Contact Us / Back to Top

Benefits of Fair Shake Membership

Bridges to working and networking in today's electronic world

The Member area of the website is exclusively for formerly incarcerated people and exists to provide access to and training in useful technological tools that can build opportunities. It includes free online tools such as a Personal Web Page, data storage area, and a Personal Resource Directory with tutorials to learn more about all of the above.

We recommend you engage in every way possible to demonstrate skills and knowledge you have acquired before, during and after incarceration. We believe that if you embrace this section of the website you will be able to put your best foot forward to demonstrate your intentions, your organizational skills, pride in your work, and commitment to the course you are now taking. We also believe that by utilizing these tools you can help others succeed!

Fair Shake offers the following FREE Benefits:

Personal Web Page: Your Personal Web Page is a comfortable environment to disclose the information you would like to share with people you permit to visit. Here you can introduce yourself, list your skills, your education and work history, show your photograph, link to your documents and provide relevant and important information not requested in many job applications.

Some people assume the worst when they hear you have been incarcerated and make incorrect judgments. Your Personal Web Page lets others learn about you at their leisure and provides an opportunity to make a personal connection in a non-threatening way.

Your page is password protected; you decide who has permission to visit. You can change the password at any time to control the amount of people that can view your page or have access to your documents such as your resume, identification, and certificates in education or specific skills.

Data Management: On the Data Management page you can upload documents and photos for storage. You will also see how much of your storage space remains available.

Personal Resource Directory: The Resource Directory is available to everyone, but when you are signed in to your Fair Shake account you can save resources to your own account, and thus create your own Personal Resource Directory. All the contacts you have saved and searches you have performed are here for your quick and easy reference. From this page you can review, delete and print. Printing makes these resources available to you while you are away from your Fair Shake account.

Tutorials: If only the world had a user's manual! This area is full of tutorials that will help you understand how to use your electronic tools. Tutorials we have written explain using all of the tools we give you within Fair Shake, and we also provide links to other tutorials on popular programs you may have access to.

Member Testimonial:

Fair Shake helped me to land the job I currently have. My boss was highly impressed with the array of resources I had at my disposal. What I like best about Fair Shake is that the member tools are restricted solely to inmates released from prison.

Potential employers see the information collected and displayed by and through your site and it gives them just enough pause to consider us as people. And for people like me, that was all I needed. I now have my own place to live, my own job, and I'm getting along just fine. Your site definitely played an integral part in this process.

~ Cody R.

How Do You Solve a Problem Like Reentry?

Sue Kastensen, Founder and Director, Fair Shake

Imagine, if you can, being snugly stuck in a building with 1,600 other people, all of whom share your physical gender; never leaving, eating in the cafeteria that offers no choices, and sleeping in a room that is the size of your current bathroom, which, by the way, you share with one or two “roommates” not of your choosing. Imagine, also, that you have no internet access, no cell phone, and no computer. Your phone calls, on an old-school pay phone, will be conducted in a large room filled with boisterous people. You are restricted to one 15-minute call after which you must wait one hour before you are permitted to make another. Finally, you are only offered short intervals of time in the exercise room and library, and you receive few, if any, very short visits from family or friends. Oh, and you’ll share the bathroom with 50 people.

Can you imagine this for even one full day? How about one week? A month? A year? People in U.S. prisons are serving sentences that exceed 1 year ... so let’s imagine five, 10, 20 or even 30 years.

The crowded picture in your head, however, doesn’t come close to the reality of life in prison. I have omitted the suffering, the sadness, and the loss of loved ones; the manipulations, the disrespect, and lack of trust; the fear, the censorship, and the razor-wire fence. And the heavy gates with electronic locks.

Today there is an added threat of a potentially deadly virus running wild within the building. The virus, by the way, can only enter the building with the people who come and go for work, but who do not live there.

Finally, I want you to imagine how anyone who does not have personal experience in this process could possibly

guide people to build successful lives in a busy world once the exit door is opened to them. Where does one start to offer information about an ever-changing society when it is difficult to keep up, even for those who are fully engaged?

At least one building, full of the people in the thought exercise, opens its doors to release the inhabitants each day; 7 days per week (Carson, 2020). There are approximately 1.4 million prisoners currently serving time in state and federal prisons (Carson, 2020), and 95% of them will be returning to society (Hughes & Wilson, 2020). They are all excited to experience freedom again, but many are also extremely fearful of failure.

Very few prisons offer resources, support, or information to the incarcerated that will help them make vital connections for housing, medical support, or clothing prior to release. No prisons allow those who have recently come home to share their experience with those who are preparing for the transition.

Incarcerated people, when they can work, make less than 30 cents per hour, on average (Sawyer, 2017). It’s nearly impossible to save up for today’s cost of living on that wage, and the difficulty is exacerbated when landlords or employers refuse to consider leasing to or hiring formerly incarcerated applicants after running a background check.

With such a steep hill to climb, it should come as no surprise that less than 10 years after release from prison, 83% of those who have been released will find themselves back in prison (Alper, Durose, & Markman, 2018).



Photo credit: Federal Bureau of Prisons

Sue Kastensen presenting Fair Shake in a federal prison.

But it is a surprise. It’s shocking. A 17% success rate for an organization of any kind is ridiculous! How is this even possible? It’s embarrassing, unacceptable, maddening, and, for me, motivating.

Minding My Own Business

Prior to 1999, I — like most of my fellow Americans — was not aware of the formidable and terrifying gauntlet of challenges waiting for those who are returning to society from prison.

I was also not aware of the extremely long sentences and collateral consequences imposed by our war on drugs, or that people convicted of committing burglary were much more likely to commit another crime than people convicted of committing murder, or that many people convicted of sex offenses would be listed on a national registry for the rest of their lives.

I had never thought about the psychological hurdles to reengagement: building the courage and confidence to apply for a job, the frustrations of learning to use technology, needing strong boundaries to resist the

lure of using shortcuts to acquire money, finding and building healthy relationships (including reconnecting with children, parents and partners); or the intense tenacity and dedication to stay committed to goals made while incarcerated.

I never thought about any of that because in 1999, I — like most Americans — was focused on myself and my future. I was an enthusiastic 36-year-old business owner, manufacturing products that were in high demand in a rapidly growing market. I needed machines, and the employees to build and run them. Amid the growth and excitement, an employee took me aside one day and quietly asked if I might consider hiring her friend who would be coming home from prison soon.

Entrepreneurs are often courageous to try new and different things, but this question put me in a difficult position. I wanted to protect the loyal team that was cranking out our products every day, and I also wanted to give this person a “second chance.” Besides, if I did not say I’d consider this question in my small community of 2,000 people, who do I think should?

I said “yes.”

I learned a lot about reentry challenges from Rick, the applicant who became our new employee. He and I continued our conversation while I brainstormed on building a tool that could help people find needed resources. I knew that, at the very least, I could contribute an online reentry resource library! I called it “Fair Shake.”

Wanting to connect with professionals who help prisoners prepare for release, in 2002 I joined the Correctional Education Association and started searching for a mentor. I found one, and by 2005, I had sold my business, eager to create a nonprofit that would help people transition from prison to life after prison.

Unique Qualifications

Since before I can remember, I have been a risk-tolerant, extremely curious, self-determined, anti-fragile, and somewhat courageous individual. My approach to life did not bode well with authorities and by 8th grade, I felt I was being developmentally stunted at home and in school. In order to survive my teens, I had to find my own path.

After getting kicked out of my parents’ home at 13 — and after five high schools, four foster homes, several stays in group homes, a couple of jail visits and a few years in a Catholic reform school — in 1979, when I was 16 years old, I wanted to drop out of school and become an emancipated adult. I felt I was serving a sentence that had no end and no purpose. Authorities wanted me to stay in school, so I said I would continue with high school if I could attend Walden III, an alternative high school (which still exists today).¹ This was my last opportunity for a formal education and, thankfully, I flourished.

The school engaged in very little top-down pedagogy and primarily worked from a framework of student-centered, constructive, and problem-solving perspectives. Even the students were teaching classes! Some of my most cherished and important lessons were not taught in the classrooms; they were felt within the care of the community, for which I had yearned for so many years. The comradery, respect, interactions, support, and cooperative learning — unheard of in public or private schools in 1979 — gave me a deep understanding of authenticity, freedom, ownership, agency, interdependence, and even the importance of history.

At the start of my junior year, I detested school but at the end of the year, I found myself deeply in love with learning. I know now that we can find this love no matter where, or when, we find ourselves.

Lifewide Learning

Between selling my business and organizing a nonprofit, I worked in fair trade for a few years. During that time, I learned about stakeholders in the food chain: the farmworkers, farmers, processors, distributors, retailers, and consumers (we did not include the waste process at that time). My mind opened; I realized that the onus for reentry success did not solely fall on the person coming home from prison — that person also needed to be accepted for employment, housing, higher education, in places of worship, and more. In short, their success depended on all of us! I realized that I had to offer support to other stakeholders, too. I started thinking about ways to support and encourage family and friends, employers, landlords, corrections, and citizens to participate in this common goal for reintegration.

By creating, and listening, and creating some more, amazing things started to happen.

In 2014, I received a call from a reentry affairs coordinator in a federal prison in Colorado. She contacted me because the resource-selection tool on the Fair Shake website² was not working properly. After we talked for some time, she invited me to present Fair Shake at the prison complex. She said I would speak with hundreds of men in institutions that covered three levels of security. This would be my first opportunity to present Fair Shake to the incarcerated!

After I nervously introduced myself and provided an overview of Fair Shake, I asked the group if they would tell me what information and resources they were looking for that would help them find success after release. Once we started talking, I relaxed and they, too, became increasingly comfortable with our conversation. By the end of the presentation, I felt like we had an energizing reentry brainstorming session!

In addition to gaining insight from the responses to my question, I also discovered that most of the people in that room were corresponding with family and friends through a secure email server called CorrLinks and that I could continue to communicate with them through that service by creating a newsletter and sharing best practices.

I also learned an even more important lesson: A lot of incarcerated people go to great lengths to help one another.

In early 2016, I started writing a monthly newsletter and by the end of the year, 250 readers had signed on. (Today there are more than 4,000 subscribers.) It is not a broadcast newsletter, either. It is a place to share and build ideas. The readers know more than I do, so we advise and inform one another.

Once that door was opened, I committed myself to spend as much time as I could to engage in in-person conversations with incarcerated people. For the next three years, I traveled all around the country: north to south and coast to coast, presenting Fair Shake in many types of prisons and all levels of security.

For each trip, I created a route that put me on the road for up to one month. I had to drive to the institutions because it made no sense to fly. Prisons are mostly located far away from airports and amenities and can get locked down without notice. I learned to be very flexible!

When I would arrive at an institution where the myriad of presentation participants — incarcerated people, prison staff, and public servant visitors — had seen the Fair Shake Reentry Packet,³ or the free Fair Shake software application or even the website (in a staff office; prisoners do not have access to the internet), someone would inevitably ask me how my bubble truck⁴ was running and if I had new stories from meeting people along the way (I always did).



Sue Kastensen with her bubble truck.

My truck, with a camper on the back, made my travels possible. It was vital to have my kitchen, office, and bedroom with me at all times.

My travels are on hold for now, but prison reentry and education staff around the country have been staying in touch. Some check-in to make sure I will still be coming to their institutions when they open their doors again to volunteers, and others contact me to ask when the new software will be released. Robert Cialdini's (1984) "Scarcity Principle" is working in my favor, and suddenly Fair Shake is in high demand!

So, who comes to the presentations, and who signs up for the newsletters?

One can make almost no assumptions at all about who is in prison. As you have likely seen in the news, lawyers, CEOs, entertainers, and elected officials can be found in prisons; along with mothers, fathers, young people, and elders — many of whom have been in prison most of their lives and may have entered prison before they turned 18. The people serving time inside prison are as diverse as the people outside of prison, and many who have been convicted of committing crimes have also been victims themselves.

Criminologists, correctional administrators, elected officials, many academics, and, of course, the media, attempt to impress upon us that there is a specific type of person who commits a crime. They want us to believe that this "type" has "needs" that are unlike our usual human needs and they call them "criminogenic needs." They believe that these needs are like an addiction

and that most people who commit a crime must vigilantly "desist" from crime for many years, and possibly the rest of their lives because the needs are so strong. These people are put into groups according to their "risk of recidivism," their propensity to commit a new crime and return to prison.

To ensure that most prisoners from powerful and influential backgrounds will not be included in medium- or high-risk groups, the criminologists have devised a way for the majority of white-collar criminals to be excluded from having these "needs" (e.g., Jeffrey Epstein, Martha Stewart). The high-profile prisoners can often skip the dehumanizing, behaviorism-based programming and lengthy stretches of time in higher security prisons, where "assigning low-risk offenders to intensive programs designed for high-risk offenders" ... "can make things worse," according to the National Institute of Justice (2012, p. 109).

Considering the amount of time, effort, money, and research invested, I find it very disappointing that the criminologists have not created instruments that allow them to observe how people change. Many people grow, learn, feel deep remorse, and develop a world view that will lead to a law-abiding life, even without programming.

It is no wonder people are mystified about corrections, reentry, and how they can get involved to improve the corrections system or support the lives of those who have been released. National corrections associations, academics and elected representatives — the self-proclaimed "experts" — discourage others from getting involved in attending to the "broken system," as President Obama referred to it. They want us to trust them and leave the "reform" to them. After all, they will assert, they are informed by "evidence."⁵

These experts have been asking the question "What works?" to reduce recidivism for 50 years. In 1974, Robert Martinson answered their question.

After visiting many prisons and looking at the programming available in each one, he concluded that not one program worked for everyone. He found that some people benefited from one type, and others benefited from another, but no perfect program that applies to all had been created; there was no silver bullet. His findings liberated corrections from their duty of rehabilitation, creating a gap for the criminologists, with their medical model of interventions, dosages, and programming, to step in.

After more than 20 years of their studies, “evidence” and best practices, the criminogenic approach has only increased recidivism and failed to address the issues that it accuses the incarcerated population of engaging in in the first place: anti-social thinking and behavior. (See the Criminogenic Need Factors chart [National Parole Resource Center, 2014].)

have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of, and commitment to, them! In fact, many of our incarcerated have become far more prosocial than the people who determine them to be a high-risk for recidivism.

What You Focus on Grows

Since I have been presenting in several institutions annually, the prisons that have reentry councils, or think tanks, or other groups dedicated to problem-solving, often invite me to join their groups for an hour or two of conversation after my presentation. Over the course of a few meetings, we gain a deeper understanding of the unique qualities that each of us brings separately — and together — to the solution of the reentry problem.

It was through one of these opportunities that I was able to create a workshop for a National Conference on

It was a crazy idea that was fairly difficult to execute but we pulled it off. We were even able to include recorded presentations by Mike, the incarcerated member, and also the voices of the Fair Shake newsletter subscribers who shared their thoughts in writing.

The conference organizers greatly underestimated the interest in this topic: they gave us a small room for our presentation that we filled to more than 250% of capacity, while we had to watch many interested attendees walk away. Unfortunately, like so many things, the conference has been canceled this year, so we will not be able to rekindle and continue the conversation in person. The idea, however, will persist.

The Fair Shake Operating System

Creating a web and technology-based prisoner-reentry nonprofit organization that serves millions of people, on-demand, is a huge undertaking.

Many of my toughest lessons were learned simply by deciding to take this on! I had to learn to manage the daily website development by myself, to communicate with several stakeholders using a variety of tools, and to grasp several software tricks and tools involving Office, Adobe and Windows OS. And I have to keep on learning those tricks and tools, too, because software makers often change them when they update.

It was during one of these updates that I became very frustrated. I felt that no matter how hard I tried to keep up, Microsoft et al., were not interested in having me get my work done, they were mainly interested in making me learn things that served their interests. I felt like I was working for them!

My son calmly offered me an alternative to the commercial “matrix.” He asked me to consider learning to use an operating system called Ubuntu, which was constantly and seamlessly updated and improved by developers who ask for input from the users. He said it

Image credit: National Parole Research Center

Antisocial attitudes, beliefs and values	Attitudes, values, beliefs, and rationalizations supportive of crime; cognitive emotional states of anger, resentment, and defiance
Antisocial behavior patterns	Early and continuing involvement in a number and variety of antisocial acts and a variety of settings
Antisocial peers and associates	Close association with criminal others and relative isolation from antirriminal others; immediate social support for crime
Antisocial personality and temperamental factors	Adventurous, pleasure seeking, weak self-control, restlessly aggressive
Family/marital stressors	Two key elements are 1) nurturance and/or caring, and 2) monitoring and/or supervision
Substance abuse	Abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs
Lack of education, employment stability or achievement	Low levels of performance and satisfaction in school and/or work
Lack of pro-social activities in leisure time	Low levels of involvement and satisfaction in antirriminal leisure pursuits

Criminogenic Need Factors

Fancy (and expensive!) assessments, algorithms, and programming have been built to disregard the attributes, characteristics, and qualities they say criminals lack, which include building capabilities, perspective change, prosocial studies, engagements (such as mentoring), ownership, self-determination, critical thinking, and commitment to community. We want our nation's citizens — as parents, employees, friends, and community members — to embrace these empowering and liberating qualities; and incarcerated people would like to

Higher Education in Prison with three men; two of whom I had met several times in the same prison and had been released; and one I met in a different prison and was still incarcerated. We wanted to find out if the academic attendees would help us think about how we could switch the reentry goal from being a negative one (reducing recidivism) to a positive one (building a satisfying and successful life) since it is far easier (and much more sensible!) to pursue a positive goal.

was a little harder to get started, but he assured me that once I got the hang of it — like driving with a manual transmission — it would become easy.

I wasn't ready for it when he offered, but I very much liked the idea of the operating system and how it was created. It reminded me of what I was doing with Fair Shake. Fair Shake, too, was a little harder, and people had to "do it themselves," but in the end they would be more informed, and Fair Shake would continue to become more relevant and supportive. I promised to look it up later.

Later came hard. It was when I was being forced to abandon Windows XP, which I loved so much, that I decided I'd had enough; it was time to try Ubuntu. I searched online to download it and the search results provided not only the computer operating system, but more importantly, they provided a link to a vital philosophy for our human operating system!

I was like a kid in a candy store as I explored the information online about Ubuntu! I was so excited to read and hear and learn about this traditional, sub-Saharan African philosophy, founded on the idea of interdependence. Ubuntu can be understood through the Zulu maxim, "umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu," or "a person is a person through other persons." It means, according to Desmond Tutu (2015), that it is the very essence of being human that we belong in a bundle of life, and that the solitary individual is a contradiction in terms.

I couldn't believe my eyes. I recognized this as Fair Shake's operating system and since then I have been weaving the philosophy into all of the information I share. I also close the newsletter with "Ubuntu" to remind the subscribers that we are in this together.

Education for Democracy

Understanding and effectively running a large democracy is an enormous undertaking and proper preparation should begin at an early age. We must nurture care in our youth and demonstrate ways they can think about themselves as individuals-within-community. Their education must include how to express — and listen to — a wide variety of perspectives in problem-solving debates about how to achieve social goals. It will take all of the formative years of schooling to develop these crucial and necessary thinking, reflection, communication, and feeling skills.

Rather than provide powerful tools for ownership, engagement, and intellectual expansion in a vibrant democracy, however, today's foundational pedagogy, with its attendant testing and comparisons, conditions our children to passively receive and believe information. The unspoken argument (unless you ask, like I always have) is that if we just rely on experts, follow the rules, and pursue employment, we will create the means to achieve happiness, security, and satisfaction in our lives.

We need not look further than the front page of the newspaper on any given day to see the devastating suffering and failure of this approach: increased polarization and authoritarianism across civil society, increased mental illness, suicide, anxiety, depression, addiction and opiate use in individuals; and the enormous loss of meaning and control in our lives.

Our citizens are waiting for a courageous and benevolent leader to do the heavy lifting of leading civil society. We want to believe that reform is happening and that infusing money into bad systems is making them better. We are waiting for the white knight to come and save us, but we can't yet see her on the horizon. The education system we count on to properly prepare our youth to recognize and solve social, regional, and global problems is failing our

future leaders by withholding the very tools they must use to develop their capabilities, at our nation's collective peril.

In 2007, just one month after receiving my bachelor's degree (at 44 years of age), I read an article in the *Journal of Correctional Education* that offered a new lens for me to use as I think about "correctional education." In it the author, Cormac Behan (2007), argued: "[T]he current penal orthodoxy must be challenged and alternative discourses explored within and without of correctional settings" (p. 158). I agreed! I read on, and found myself weaving these considerations into my perspective:

Educators need to create an alternative discourse about how we define our progress. It could shift the focus of the argument from a defensive position to a positive one. This might be achieved by arguing for a different approach to education than what the prison authorities or politicians may want. Mezirow's theory of Transformative Learning has a lot to offer prison educators. It encourages individuals to challenge the way they make meaning in the world. This requires transforming frames of reference which begins with critical reflection, i.e., assessing one's assumptions and presuppositions. It begins with encouraging students to engage in critical thinking which, according to Stephen Brookfield, is what one should strive for in an adult education process. ...This is the beginning of liberating learning. (Behan, 2007, p. 160)

I had just finished school, but I wanted to head straight back to the library to find out more about transformative learning theory! After all, wouldn't we all benefit from taking the time to think critically, reflect, question our assumptions, biases and beliefs, and discuss our thoughts with others?

After 10 years of self-study, I gathered all my savings and returned to school to pursue a master's degree in education. I needed to learn about education theory, curriculum-building and evaluation, so I could build a place where all people — regardless of their educational attainment or relationship — could freely learn how to learn. We have the right, as citizens and humans, to know how to think deeply, how to find information that is not offered through the “news,” to consider other perspectives, build agency, and expand our capacity for complexity, caring, and knowledge. We deserve to have a place to break free from the limitations of other people's educational norms, goals and expectations, and think outside of the social or tribal bubble. A place where learners of any age and any educational attainment level could continue freely on their personal path of acquiring wisdom.

Where I once thought a certificate was the answer, I grew to understand that employers et al. were understandably cynical about the value of certificates that cannot show commitment, moral fortitude, team building or critical thinking. They want to judge the person for themselves, which makes sense. After all, a driver's license does not verify a willingness to use turn signals, only that the driver knows how to use them.

It takes courage to face an employer in an interview following many years of incarceration. It also takes courage to say “no” to a powerfully persuasive family member or close friend. It takes great bravery to do the right thing when our group is doing the wrong thing. We can muster the strength that we need to create good boundaries, expand our capabilities, and reduce our suffering. From there, we can feel strong enough to reach out to help others and discover that helping them helps us even more. No certificate shows this level of growth, determination, or commitment.

I was extremely fortunate to have been diverted from dropping out of school to finding a reason to love learning. In the halls of Walden III, at the age of 16, I was able to experience the process and value of transformative learning. I am deeply grateful and, like many believers, I feel a responsibility to offer this opportunity to others.

The Fair Shake Free School

So now, while I am not able to get into the prisons to talk with people face-to-face, but while the interest rises in newsletter subscriptions, creating think tanks, exploring biases, and more, I am pushing the creative side of my mind to its limits (which will, thankfully, expand even more) to figure out how one person can maintain and even build a lifelong learning “community center” that not only offers information, but asks visitors to contribute.

The Fair Shake Free School will more deeply investigate these areas:

- Philosophy — to explore epistemology, purpose, morality, care for humanity, values, etc.
- Psychology — to explore the feeling/thinking problem, our needs and wants, uniqueness, dropping unwanted baggage, motivation, etc.
- Sociology — to explore TV and media and its impacts, how authority impacts groups, how being in groups impacts individuals, etc.
- Citizenship — building community and capabilities together, education, democracy, global village, etc.
- “Swellness” — where our physical health meets our mental health.

We now live in a world of constant change; where lifelong learning is no longer just a good idea, it is vital for security, satisfaction, meaning-making, and building trust.

Fair Shake will not engage in top-down pedagogy but will, instead, rely on a learning foundation based in

heutagogy (self-determined learning), ubuntu (teaching and learning undergirded by humanity toward others), and transformative learning theory (critical reflection and potential for perspective change).

Looking through the heutagogical lens (Glassner & Back, 2020), learners will understand that they are the captains of their learning adventure and they will “make the road by walking” (Machado, 1912). They will learn how they can discern the value of the information they entertain, ask relevant questions for proper reflection, and construct knowledge to build their life to its fullest.

By applying the lens of ubuntu (Bangura, 2005), learners will be able to think deeply about what is at the core of being a human: relationship! They will be able to remember that we learned how to be human from other humans, and that we can build information in a way that honors, accepts, and encourages others. Ubuntu is such an important philosophy for democracy that, in 1997, the South African Department of Welfare stated that Ubuntu “acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being” (p. 12).

Finally, the transformative learning lens (Mezirow, 1990) will equip learners with ways to foster critical self-reflection, challenge social norms, engage in dialog with greater confidence, and consider other perspectives, including changing our own. These tools will support compassion as well as capacity-building in a world of constant change and emerging truth.

Our Opportunity

Let us think again about those who are stuck in the building:

The monolith of correctional bureaucracy and its supporters — the current managers of the building — have no incentive or desire to improve their performance. In accordance with

our current contract, they can keep us out, but they cannot stop us from reaching in to connect, to listen, and to share time, learning opportunities, and humanity. They can also not stop us from changing our contract with them in the future.

We can change the building; for instance, we can create a campus with choices. We can continue to include limitations and restrictions, while we also include decency, respect, and opportunities. We can remind those inside that we know they are bringing unique and important contributions to our communities.

The management of the building, and the welfare of those being held within it, is OUR business; we have a right and a duty to build possibilities with our fellow citizens. As we now properly recognize ourselves as the owners, and see our neighbors inside as co-creators, we can experiment with new ways of thinking about how to help them prepare to leave the building and find success in our dynamic, technology-based world.

Remember, more than 1,600 of our fellow citizens will walk out of those doors full of hope and determination each day. With our eyes and hearts open, I am certain that we can switch the 83% failure rate to an 83% success rate.

What works to improve reentry success? We do. Together.

Notes

- ¹ Walden III, Racine, Wisconsin: <https://www.rusd.org/district/walden-iii-middle-high-school>
- ² Fair Shake website: <https://www.fairshake.net/>.
- ³ Fair Shake Reentry Packet: <https://www.fairshake.net/reentry-resources/reentry-packet/>.
- ⁴ If you'd like to learn about the philosophy behind the bubbles, please check out the "On Sue's

Desk" page of the website and scroll down until you see Bubble Truck Philosophy (<https://www.fairshake.net/suesdesk/>).

- ⁵ To see the survey that the Federal Bureau of Prisons use to assess the "risk of recidivism," please find the Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA) survey on the Fair Shake website: (<https://www.fairshake.net/risk-assessments/>), or on the Research and Practice in Corrections Lab website: https://sites.google.com/a/siu.edu/corrections-and-research_lab/Downloads. See the "Measures of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (MCAA)" questionnaire (please scroll down to find it) and the "Measures of Criminal and Antisocial Desistance (MCAD)" survey — worth a moment while you're there!

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Resisting Influence

This is a shortened version of the original which was prepared by Dr. Philip Zimbardo and Cindy X. Wang
You can view the full Resisting Influence Guide here: <http://www.lucifereffect.com/guide.htm>

Our daily lives are wrought with compelling social tensions. Many of us hope that we are immune to compliance tactics, have the courage to resist unjust authority, and would never abandon our core beliefs and principles in the face of social pressures.

This document was created for learning how unwanted and unjust influence can impact your daily life and to better equip you to resist these forces. By understanding the contexts of influence and social compliance, we hope you will be able to identify the principles and strategies that professional agents of influence may use to gain your compliance.

We will look at frameworks to understand social influence and identify how you can apply these ideas to your own life, we will discuss ways to utilize your new understanding of the principles of social influence for positive social change, and finally we provide hints from Dr. Z on how to resist unwanted influences.

Varieties of Influence

We listen to a debate with each side presenting seemingly compelling reasons to endorse one or another point of view. We get messages from advertisers, from the government, from assorted authorities to take particular actions, like buy a product, vote for a candidate, give blood, avoid impending disasters, and more. Such attempts to influence our attitudes, values or actions are considered forms of persuasive communication. **"Do as I say,"** is the persuasive motto.

Other times the influence comes not dressed up in words in persuasive messages or visually appealing ads, but simply when the members of a group you are in, or want to belong to, act in a particular way. They don't have to tell you what to do; they simply exhibit the behavior or the style of action that is expected of "good team members." That form of social influence is known as conformity. **"Do as we do,"** is the conformity motto.

Go along with the majority and be accepted. Refuse to dress as they do, talk like they do, value what they value, or act in ways that are the accepted social norm for this group, and you are rejected, isolated, expelled, ridiculed. The power of groups in our lives to influence our thoughts and actions can be enormous, especially when we desperately want to be accepted by the group. But you don't need a group to put pressure on you to act as they expect you to do; in fact, much social influence comes from a singular source - another person.

Compliance is a form of influence in which direct pressure is put on individuals to take some specific action, such as doing a favor or buying a product. The influence agent doesn't want to change your mind, only to get you to act on his or her request. Sometimes the request is pro-social, like donating blood, but more often than not, the request is to get people to purchase products that they might not need or even want initially.

All of these sources of social influence are external; they are imposed from the outside of you through influence agents (people who work hard to convince you to think a certain way).

One of the most powerful forms of influence is self-persuasion, which encourages individuals to engage in personal thought and decision processes. One tactic for inducing self-persuasion comes from role-playing positions that are contrary to one's beliefs and values. When we engage in public behavior that does not follow from our personal beliefs, cognitive dissonance is created. To the extent that we come to believe we made that commitment freely, without (awareness of) external situational pressures, we rationalize it and convince ourselves that it was the right action and the right position to hold.

What can you do to weaken or counter each of these varieties of social influence? Knowledge of how these influence settings work and what you can do to resist them is the first step in becoming a wiser consumer of social influence. You have to be continually vigilant and continually put into operation these resistance tactics for you to inoculate yourself against their insidious power.

How We Are Persuaded

Communicators are most effective if they are perceived as Credible, meaning they have both expertise relevant to their message and are trustworthy - honest, and unbiased.

Communications come in many forms: some rational, some hit at our emotions, some inform us of the action we should take, and others leave the action hidden. Some messages are simple, others complicated, some lead with the request, others build up to it. Ideally, we need to process communications systematically, that means taking the time to figure out what is being requested, what evidence is being presented, and how contrary views are dealt with. Too often, we take short cuts and process the information only peripherally: too focused on the packaging and not the product. We may give excessive value to the speaker's tone of voice, or his or her good looks; and too little to what they are actually hawking. Always try to figure out who the message is intended for and what action are they requesting.

Why We Conform: The Power of Groups

Whenever we change our behavior, views, and attitudes in response to the real or imagined presence of others, we are experiencing conformity. Two main types of conformity have been studied: *informational* and *normative*. **Informative conformity** often occurs in unfamiliar situations when we are likely to shape our behavior to match that of others. The actions of others inform us of the customs and accepted practices in a situation: what is right to do, how to behave.

Normative conformity occurs when we want to be liked or approved of by the group. This is the dominant form of social conformity. Though we may disagree secretly with the group opinion, we may verbally adopt the group stance so that we seem like a team player rather than a deviant.

Both of these pressures impact us everyday. A staple of a functioning society is that people follow social norms such as obeying traffic laws, respecting others' property, and diffusing aggression in non-violent ways. However, conformity can have deleterious effects if one conforms automatically without questioning of the validity of social norms. In Nazi Germany, many ordinary people did not dissent to the ongoing atrocities because few other people resisted.

In our daily decisions, we should also examine whether our reasons justify our actions. In an unfamiliar situation, first ask yourself whether the actions you observe others performing are rational, warranted, and consistent with your own principles before thoughtlessly and automatically adopting them.

Similarly, in a situation in which you want to impress and be accepted by others, ask yourself whether the action conflicts with your moral code, and consider whether you would be willing to compromise your own opinion of yourself just so others would have a higher one of you. Ultimately, you are the only one who has to live with your actions. Be sure to take a time out to find out the correct information.

Cialdini's Principles of Social Influence

Having begun to understand the strength of social influence, we now move on to the principles of influence studied by social psychologist Robert Cialdini; a renowned social psychologist that has done extensive research on the domains in which social influence is most powerful. The following principles play on fundamental human instincts and can be exploited both intentionally and unintentionally.

Many of these may seem like obvious tactics that advertisers and influence agents will utilize to sway our opinion. However, when we are not prepared to scrutinize and resist them, these principles will often work subliminally and quite powerfully. An important part of resisting these influence tactics is awareness of their operating principles, contexts in which they are provoked, and methods to avoid falling prey to them.

We hope that by learning about these principles of persuasion, you will be better able to recognize the situations you are in that may lead to act against your will and then to have the tools to resist unwanted social influence. There are six basic principles, and each one is set in a specific Context. When you are aware of the Context, or the behavioral Setting, you will better recognize the principal at work, when you see the principal operating, you will understand the Context in which it is embedded

Reciprocity [Context: Obligation]

The rule of reciprocity requires that one person try to repay, in kind, what another person has provided. Supports the giving of favors since repayment is expected from the recipient

The Basics

- Sense of future obligation makes it possible to develop continuing relationships and exchanges
- We are trained from childhood to abide by the reciprocity rule or suffer social disapproval

How It's Exploited

- Rule can spur unequal exchanges
- "Door-in-the-face" – relies on persuader making an outrageous, extreme request first, then conceding to a comparatively small request (one desired all along) that will likely be accepted because it appears to make a concession

Best Defense

Reject initial offers, favors, concessions; redefine them as tricks and refuse to feel obligated to respond reciprocally

Consistency [Context: Commitments]*The Basics*

- People desire to look consistent within their words, beliefs, attitudes, and deeds
- Consistent conduct provides a beneficial approach to daily life and is highly valued by society
- Shortcut through complex decision-making reduces processing time in future decisions

How It's Exploited

- Profiteers exploit the principle by inducing people to make an initial commitment, take a stand or position that is consistent with requests that they will later ask of them
- Commitments are most effective when they are active, public, effortful, and internally motivated.
- If they are successful, abiding by this rule may lead to actions contrary to one's best interests

Best Defense

- Do not be pressured into accepting requests that you do not want to perform.
- Be sensitive to situational variables operating on your decision

Social Proof [Context: Consensus]*The Basics*

- A means to determine what is correct by finding out what other people think is correct
- Principle can be used to stimulate a person's compliance by informing the individual that many other individuals have been complying (compliance by famous or authoritative people is very effective)
- A shortcut for determining how to behave – while making us vulnerable to persuasion experts
- Most influential under two conditions:
 - Uncertainty – situation is ambiguous; more likely to accept the actions of others as correct
 - Similarity – people are inclined to follow the lead of similar others

How It's Exploited

- The Bandwagon effect – everyone who is anyone is doing it, why not YOU?
- The "In Crowd" has it right, do you want them to accept you or not? So act like them

Best Defense

- Develop counterarguments for what people are doing; their actions should not form yours
- Be aware that the others may have a biased reason for the action they are advocating
- Be aware that the others may be misinformed
- Remember the entire group might be wrong-headed because the leader has biased their opinions

Liking [Context: Friendship]

The Basics

- People prefer to say “yes” to individuals they know and like
- We want people to like us and we like those who show that they like us

How It's Exploited

- Persuasion experts manipulate factors that influence their likeability.
- Features that influence liking:
 - Physical attractiveness – attractive people are more successful in getting requests granted
 - Similarity – we like people who are like us; we more willing to say “yes” without thinking
 - Praise – compliments generally enhance liking and compliance
 - Familiarity – repeated contact with a person or thing normally facilitates liking
 - Association – making connections to positive things
 - Shadowing - persuader exhibits behaviors that match those of the target individual

Best Defense

- Developing a special sensitivity to suspicious and undue liking from the requester
- Separate the requester from the request, and make decisions based solely on the merits of the offer – not your feelings about the requester.

Scarcity [Context: Competition]

The Basics

- People assign more value to opportunities when they are less available—if there are fewer resources and less time to get them, we want them more
- Principle holds true for two reasons:
 - Things that are difficult to attain are typically more valuable
 - As things become less accessible, we lose freedoms and want them more than before
- Optimizing conditions for scarcity principle:
 - Value newly scarce items more than items that have been restricted all along
 - Most attracted to scarce resources when we must compete with others for them

How It's Exploited

- Use of this principle can be seen in compliance techniques as ‘limited number’ and ‘deadline’ tactics

Best Defense

- Step back and assess the merits of the opportunity, the value of the item, and why/if we want it
- Give an objective evaluation of its personal value; not overvalue it because it appears to be scarce

The Science of Social Influence – Anthony Pratkanis

Anthony Pratkanis has meticulously studied social influence tactics and classified numerous methods that humans utilize to manipulate and change the attitudes and beliefs of others.

Landscaping (Pre-persuasion tactics)

The following methods are some of the ways influence agents can have contexts working for them even before you know you're being influenced.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Define and label issue in a favorable manner | 5. Establish a favorable comparison point or set |
| 2. Association | 6. Control the flow of information |
| 3. Set expectations | 7. Limit and control the number of choices and |
| 4. Agenda setting | options |

Tactics that rely on social relationship (Social credibility and social rules)

One of the most important elements of convincing arguments is a reputable source. We are constantly bombarded by commercials that report experts such as dentists support a brand of toothpaste or professional athletes eat certain breakfast cereals. These tactics are surprisingly effective! By utilizing the following traits and characteristics, people can play on social relationships in order to persuade.

Tactics that rely on social relationship (continued)

1. Authority
2. Attractiveness
3. High Status
4. Similarity – “just plain folks like you”
5. Role-play
6. Social modeling
7. Social reinforcement
8. Multiple sources
9. Arguing against one’s own self-interest
10. Draw on well-being of friends and family

Effective message tactics

Effective communication depends on the strength and logic of the message. Here, we cite a few examples of how messages can induce the target to generate reasons for adopting recommended action:

1. Self-generated persuasion – give the target a chance to persuade themselves
2. Vivid appeals – emotionally interesting or compelling
3. Let the message recipient draw his or her conclusion
4. Rhetorical questions
5. Pique interest in message
6. Message fit with pre-existing beliefs, experiences, knowledge
7. Placebic reasons – arguments that appear to make sense but actually lack information
8. Defusing objections – acknowledging objections and refuting them before a target can raise them
9. Asking for small contributions initially
10. Message length = message strength
11. Repetition of message
12. Primacy effect – order of presentation

Emotional tactics

Emotions are often thought to infringe on our rationality and better judgment. Pratkanis presents this set of emotional tactics that take advantage of our subjective feelings, arousal, and tensions as the basis for securing influence.

1. Fear
2. Guilt
3. Embarrassment
4. Threat of insult
5. Flattery
6. Empathy
7. Reciprocity
8. That’s not all – sweetening the deal
9. Commitment trap
10. Low-balling
11. Bait-and-switch
12. Scarcity
13. Anticipatory regret
14. Door-in-face – ask for a large favor, retreat and ask for a much smaller favor
15. Foot-in-the-door – ask a small request than ask for a larger request

Defensive and Offensive Tactics for Resisting Influence

Defensive – learn how to detect propaganda

1. Play devil’s advocate
2. Generate questions to ask

Offensive – steps that will identify common propaganda forms and stop them at their source

1. Know the ways of persuasion and know that you personally may be the victim of propaganda
 - o Distinguish source credibility
 - o Realize your level of personal vulnerability
2. Monitor your emotions
 - o If you’re having an emotional response to a communication, ask yourself why
 - o Look for things that induce false emotions of fear, guilt, reciprocity
3. Explore the motivation and credibility of the source: what does the source have to gain and is it an overly manufactured image?
4. Think rationally about any proposal or issue: What is the issue? Arguments for and against?

Defensive and Offensive Tactics for Resisting Influence (continued)

5. Attempt to understand the full range of options before making a decision; relate to your values.
6. If you hear something repeatedly, ask why it is being repeated.
7. If the deal looks too good to be true, it probably is such as free gifts and time-sensitive offers.
8. Develop counterarguments to propaganda and compare performance with advertising.
9. Support efforts to prevent vulnerable groups against exploitative persuasion.
10. Avoid being dependent on a single source of information.
11. Separate news from entertainment (FS note: The 'news' often consists of entertainment 'news'.)
12. Use 'communication style' as one criteria in making decisions and judgments.
13. Increase your personal involvement, knowledge, and awareness in important issues; take some time to find out more on your own.

Positive Social Influence and Civic Virtue

While most psychological research is focused on the negative aspects of social influence, principles of social influence can be used for good, to enhance basic social and political values. Making sensible adjustments and achievable objectives can help us reach goals that improve on our lives and those near us. Moral behavior can be cultivated by rewarding positive behavior. Government, education, and social institutions can be re-designed to facilitate critical thinking and responsible conduct. The following highlights some ideas that we can bring into our own lives and those of our children.

1. Supporting critical thinking abilities. Asking Why? How does this relate to my values? Resist living on mindless "auto-pilot" and instead reflect on details of the immediate situation; think before acting!
2. Rewarding moral behavior: Social recognition for good deeds; acknowledge bravery.
3. Encouraging respect and appreciation for diversity and human variability reduces biases and discrimination.
4. Not allowing stereotyping and dehumanization of other people.
5. Changing social conditions that make people feel anonymous; support conditions that encourage people to feel valuable, special and worthy.
6. Encouraging admission of mistakes, accepting error in judgments – to reduce justification for continuing wrong, immoral behavior and motivation to minimize dissonance.
7. Promoting personal responsibility and accountability of one's actions. Blaming others is a disguise for one's own role in the consequences of actions.
8. Supporting independence over group conformity; recognize when conformity to the group norm is counter-productive and when independence should take precedence despite possible rejection.
9. Reducing poverty, inequities, and entitlements of the privileged.
10. Never sacrificing freedom for promised security.
11. Discouraging even small transgressions: cheating, gossiping, lying, teasing, bullying.

Dr. Z's Hints About Resisting Unwanted Influences On You

1. Let go of illusions of "personal invulnerability". If it can happen to them, it can happen to you.
2. Be modest in self-estimates – it's better to perceive yourself as vulnerable and take precautions.
3. Engage in life as fully as possible, yet be prepared to disengage and think critically when necessary.
4. Be aware of Cialdini's contexts and principles of compliance; look to the relevant context being manipulated on you and pull back.
5. Be ready to say the three most difficult phrases in the world: *"I was wrong"*, *"I made a mistake"*, and *"I've changed my mind."* Dissonance and consistency go limp in the face of self-honesty.
6. Separate your ego from your actions; maintain a sense of positive self-esteem, that is independent from the occasional failure and your stupid actions at times (Laugh at yourself once a day.)
7. Separate the messenger from message in your mind, be aware of mental fatigue, wanting simple answers or short cuts, and giving in to non-verbal tricks. There are no free lunches and no quick paths to anything worthwhile – sloth and greed breed gullibility.
8. Insist on a second opinion; think about opportunities, contracts, proposals and requests for commitments away from the situation; never immediately sign on the dotted line.

9. Develop mental and intuition systems that acknowledge your vague feelings of something wrong.
10. Try playing devil's advocate; be the deviant in a positive way! Assess the reactions against you when the influence agent says he/she is only doing this for your good.
11. In all authority confrontations: be polite, individuate yourself, describe the problem objectively, do not get emotional, state clearly the remedy sought, and the positive consequences expected.
12. Never allow yourself to be cut off emotionally from your familiar and trusted reference groups of family, friends, neighbors, co-workers – do not accept putdowns against them.
13. Remember all ideologies are abstractions used for particular political, religious, social, economic purposes – always relate these to your values and question if the means justify the ends.
14. Think hard before putting abstract principles before real people in following others' advice to act in specific ways.
15. Trust your intuition and gut feelings. When you sense you are becoming a target of influence, put up your counter-arguing mentality and dig down for sources of resistance.
16. Rules are abstractions for controlling behavior and eliciting compliance and conformity - consider when, where and why we have rules. Ask: who made the rule? What purpose does it serve? Who maintains it? Does it make sense in this specific situation? What happens if it is violated?
17. When trying to figure out reasons for unusual behavior - yours or others - start by considering possible situational forces and variables vs. judging the behavior as "character".
18. Imagine Dr. Z as your conscience, your personal Jiminy Cricket (from Pinocchio) sitting on your shoulder and saying be cool, be confident, be collected - to avoid becoming a Jack Ass.

A Ten-Step Program to Build Resistance and Resilience

Here is my 10-step program toward resisting the impact of undesirable social influences, and at the same time promoting personal resilience and civic virtue. It uses ideas that cut across various influence strategies and provides simple, effective modes of dealing with them. The key to resistance lies in development of the three S's-- **Self-Awareness, Situational Sensitivity, and Street Smarts**. You will see how they are central to many of these general strategies of resistance.

"I made a mistake!"

Let's start out by encouraging admission of our mistakes, first to ourselves then to others. Accept the dictum that to err is human. You have made an error in judgment; your decision was wrong. You had every reason to believe it was right when you made it, but now you know you were wrong. Say the six Magic words: "I'm sorry"; "I apologize"; "Forgive me." Say to yourself that you will learn from your mistakes; grow better from them. Don't continue to put your money, time, and resources into bad investments. Move on. Doing so openly reduces the need to justify or rationalize our mistakes, and thereby to continue to give support to bad or immoral actions.

Consider how many years the Vietnam War continued long after officials knew that the war could not be won. How many thousands of lives were lost, when acknowledging failure and error could have saved them? It is more than a political decision to 'save face' - it is a moral imperative to do the right thing.

"I am mindful."

In many settings smart people do dumb things because they fail to attend to key features in the words or actions of influence agents and fail to notice obvious situational clues. Too often we function on automatic pilot, using outworn scripts that have worked for us in the past, never stopping to evaluate whether they are appropriate in the here and now. We need to be reminded not to live our

lives on automatic pilot, but always to take a Zen moment to reflect on the meaning of the immediate situation, to think before acting. For the best result add "critical thinking" to mindfulness in your resistance. Ask for evidence to support assertions; demand that ideologies be sufficiently elaborated to allow you to separate rhetoric from substance. Imagine scenarios of future consequences of current practices. Reject simple solutions as quick fixes for complex personal or social problems. Support critical thinking and become vigilant about deceptive ads, biased claims, and distorted perspectives. Become wiser and warier knowledge consumers.

"I am responsible."

Taking responsibility for one's decisions and actions puts the actor in the driver's seat, for better or for worse. Allowing others to determine our actions or opinions makes them powerful back-seat drivers, and makes the car move recklessly ahead without a responsible driver. We become more resistant to undesirable social influence by always maintaining a sense of personal responsibility and by being willing to be held accountable for our actions. Always imagine a future time when today's deed will be on trial and the judge and jury will not accept your pleas of 'only following orders', or 'everyone else was doing it'.

"I am Me, the best I can be."

Do not allow others to deindividuate you, to put you into a category, in a box, a slot, to turn you into an object. Assert your individuality; politely state your name and your credentials, loud and clear. Insist on the same behavior in others. Make eye contact (remove all eye-concealing sun glasses), and offer information about yourself that reinforces your unique identity. Find common ground with dominant others and use it to enhance similarities. Anonymity and secrecy conceals wrongdoing and undermines the human connection. It can become the breeding ground that generates dehumanization. Go a step beyond self-individuation. Work to change whatever social conditions make people feel anonymous. Instead, support practices that make others feel special, so that they too have a sense of personal value and self worth. Never allow or practice negative stereotyping—words and labels can be destructive.

"I respect just authority; I question unjust authority."

In every situation, work to distinguish between those in authority who, because of their expertise, wisdom, seniority, or special status, deserve respect, and those unjust authority figures who demand our obedience without having any substance. Many who assume the mantle of authority are pseudo-leaders, false prophets, confidence men and women, self-promoters, who should not be respected, but rather openly exposed to critical evaluation. We must play more active roles in critical differentiation. We should be polite and courteous when such a stance is justified, yet be wise by resisting those authorities that do not deserve respect. Doing so, will reduce mindless obedience to self-proclaimed authorities whose priorities are not in our best interests.

"I will balance my Time Perspective."

We can be led to do things that are not within our values when we allow ourselves to become trapped in an expanded present moment. By developing a balanced time perspective in which past, present and future can be called into action depending on the situation and task at hand, you are in a better position to act responsibly and wisely. Situational power is weakened when past and future combine to contain the excesses of the present.

"I can oppose unjust Systems."

Individuals falter in the face of the intensity of some systems and resistance may involve physically removing one's self from a situation in which all information and reward/ punishments are controlled. It may involve challenging the "groupthink" mentality, and being able to document all allegations of wrongdoing. Systems have enormous power to resist change and withstand even righteous assault. Here is one place where individual acts of heroism to challenge unjust systems, and their bad barrel makers, are best taken by soliciting others to join one's cause.

"I will not sacrifice personal or civic freedoms for the illusion of security."

The need for security is a powerful determinant of human behavior. We can be manipulated into engaging in actions that are alien to us when faced with alleged threats to our security or the promise of security from danger. More often than not, influence peddlers gain power over us by offering the Faustian contract: You will be safe from harm if you will just surrender some of your freedom, either personal or civic, to that authority. Reject that deal. Never sacrifice basic personal freedoms for the promise of security because the sacrifices are real and immediate and the security is a distant illusion.

"I want group acceptance, but value independence."

The power of the desire for acceptance will make some people do almost anything to be accepted, and go to even further extremes to avoid rejection by The Group. We are indeed social animals, and usually our social connections benefit us and help us to achieve important goals that we could not achieve alone. However, there are times when conformity to a group norm is counter-productive to the social good. It is imperative to determine when to follow the norm and when to reject it. Ultimately, we live within our own minds, in solitary splendor, and therefore we must be willing and ready to declare our independence regardless of the social rejection it may elicit. Pressure to be a "team player," to sacrifice personal morality for the good of the team, are nearly irresistible. We must step back, get outside opinions, and find new groups that will support our independence and promote our values. There will always be another, different, better group for us.

"I will be more Frame Vigilant."

The way issues are framed influence us without our being conscious of them, and they shape our orientation toward the ideas or issues they promote. We desire things that are framed as being "scarce," even when they are plentiful. We are averse to things that are framed as potential losses, and prefer what is presented to us as a gain, even when the ratio of positive to negative prognoses is the same. We don't want a 40% chance of losing X over Y, but do want the 60% chance of gaining Y over X. Linguist George Lakoff clearly shows in his writings that it is crucial to be aware of frame power and to be vigilant to offset its insidious influence on our emotions, thoughts, and votes.

This 10-step program is really only a starter kit toward building resistance and resilience against undesirable influences and illegitimate attempts at persuasion. It takes your awareness and sensitivity to such influence settings, and a willingness to think for yourself, as you practice being independent and as autonomous as is possible.

Your Name
Milwaukee, WI
Your email
111-222-3333

**EXAMPLE of a
Letter of Explanation**

Re: Letter of Explanation

Insert Date Here.

Dear Sir or Madam,

The things I value most are honesty, integrity and directness. Therefore, in anticipation of the criminal background check, you will find that in October of 2006 I was convicted of the offense of Armed Robbery - Use of Force. I served 24 months in prison for my crime. Upon release in 2008, I unfortunately, returned to the same negative influences and the same circle of negative associations and as a result, I re-offended in 2009. The charge was again, Armed Robbery this time as a Party to a Crime. I know that what I did was wrong. It was a result of poor decision making on my part and it hurt a lot of people. I've learned a great lesson and won't repeat those past mistakes.

While incarcerated, I completed my HSED through the Warren Young School. In addition, after a period of careful self-examination, I began working on ME. I successfully completed coursework in **Walking the Line - the Vow to Succeed Program, Cognitive Intervention Phases I and II, and Re-Entry bridge to Success programs**. I then continued my education, gaining **certifications in Telecommunications Technologies as a Network Cabling Specialist in Copper Based Systems**. Since my release I have done some full time work as laborer in a tannery and volunteered my time at my 11 year old son's school. However, I am looking forward to getting back to work full-time in the field of Telecommunications as an installer so I may further demonstrate the changes in my life and be a responsible member of society.

I can understand why you may be hesitant to hire someone with my background. However, I am eligible for **The Fidelity Bonding Program which can insure you for up to \$25,000** against any act of dishonesty on my part. Additionally, when you hire me, you will be eligible for **Work Opportunity Tax Credits to save you up to \$9,000 this year**. I will be happy to provide you more information about those programs during our interview. Lastly, I recently successfully completed the **Pipeline to Employment Training Program for Former Offenders** sponsored by the **State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development** and I can provide a letter of recommendation from them at your request.

I am eager to pursue this or other opportunities with your company because I am confident my skills and experiences will dovetail with the needs of your business.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name here

Created by Maurice Sprewer Employment & Training Specialist / Reentry Coordinator
DWD / Job Service 4201 N. 27th Street Suite 602 Milwaukee, WI 53216

Find A Job

Finding employment is one of the top priorities of most people in society. Finding employment after incarceration is not only pivotal for reentry success, it can also be a requirement for parole or a halfway house.

It is important to find satisfaction in our jobs, but sometimes we must temper our wishes with our needs.

When we have to take a job that we are not excited about now, we can leverage the feelings of dissatisfaction to push us toward whatever it is that we need to do to find satisfaction. These things may include: submitting applications for jobs that we really want but may not be available now, or trying to work in an organization that has a similar philosophy to our own so we can move within the organization to a job that is more fulfilling, or perhaps we need to get the education required for certain positions, or maybe what we really want is to start our own business but need to work a 'day job' until our idea provides enough income for us to thrive.

Knowing there are many avenues to employment, Fair Shake offers several ways for you to engage within our website.

Remember: most jobs get filled without ever being listed on a website!

When searching for employment, remember to consider what it is you want to do. What type of business would you like to work in, and in which positions do you think you would do well? What kind of jobs might you enjoy doing? Keep your eyes on the prize! Even if you must work in a job you don't care for now, remember that you are building character, patience, tolerance and REFERENCES. The image to the right is what our "Get A Job" page looks like today. This page, like all pages on the Fair Shake website, is constantly evolving. Please let us know what you think!


Fair Shake Employment Pages

Find a Job

Find a Job (or Start Your Own Business)

Job Search Engines


All search engines available online only



job-applications.com

#1 Independent Online Job Application Website


We offer links to online application pages and printable job application forms from our comprehensive database. We feature information on 1,500 popular companies in major industries such as fast food, retail, grocery stores, hotels and restaurants. Each company listed has a page which includes company history, service offered and common job opportunities. <https://www.job-applications.com/>



WayUp

<https://www.wayup.com/>


We feel strongly that opportunity belongs to all, and that an individual should never be limited by their economic status, race, sexual orientation, gender, who you know, where you went to school, or where you're from.



Glassdoor

<https://www.glassdoor.com/>


Glassdoor is one of the fastest growing jobs and recruiting sites. It holds a growing database of millions of company reviews, CEO approval ratings, salary reports, interview reviews and questions, benefits reviews, office photos and more. No other site allows you to see which employers are hiring, what it's really like to work or interview there according to employees, and how much you could earn.



Jobs for Felons Hub

<http://jobsforfelonshub.com/>


A resource website created by a few folks who have personally watched their loved ones struggle to get a job due to having a felony. They share their free reentry employment guide here. Check out their website or their Facebook page for more information: <http://jobsforfelonshub.com/start-here/> or Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jobsforfelonshub>



Successful Release


We have personally contacted each company for information regarding jobs for felons. <https://successfulrelease.com/jobs-for-felons/>

Guide to Finding a Job Through Networking <https://successfulrelease.com/who-hires-felons-where-to-network-to-find-jobs-for-felons/>




Formerly Incarcerated College Graduate Network

<https://www.ficgn.org/job-leads> Discover career-related jobs that welcome formerly incarcerated applicants and see the value in your lived experience.




Jobline

Toll-Free Number: 1-800-414-6748 If you are looking for employment, Jobline is a free public service available on the telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. New jobs are listed on the system each day, and jobs that are filled are removed. All that is required is a touch-tone telephone to establish your personalized job-search profile. The system is designed for you to use each day during your job search.



USA Jobs

An official website of the United States government <https://www.usajobs.gov/>




O*Net

Occupation Search! <https://www.onetonline.org>

All of these websites have thousands of jobs available at different employability levels:


Indeed.com Simplyhired.com Monster.com Linkedup.com

Non-profit Job Search Engines:



Idealist


www.idealists.org Jobs, Internships and Volunteer Opportunities (that can sometimes turn in to jobs...)



Jobs That Help

<https://www.jobsthathelp.com/>


WISCONSIN JOB SEEKERS! Looking for a meaningful career that makes a positive difference in your community? Whether you are an experienced professional or an enthusiastic newcomer, you have come to the right place!



Encore


www.encore.org

Jobs for people 50+ yrs of age



Philanthropy News Digest

Philanthropy News Digest: all levels of non-profit jobs. <http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/jobs>



GIGS: Single or multiple day opportunities

For an interesting temp option, you can check out the Craigslist in your area under 'Gigs'. You'll find opportunities that include moving furniture, doing yard work for a few hours, car dismantling, CDL temporary jobs, staff for weekend events, handyman, cleaning, carpentry, welding, electrical, plumbing, painting, brand ambassadors (reps) and much more. Many of these gigs have opportunities that can turn into jobs.

Keep the author's intent in mind when searching on Craig's list. Beware that some listings are quite sketchy...

<https://newyork.craigslist.org/>

Gary's Job Board: Truck Drivers wanted!

Gary can find you a better truck driving job, with or without a CDL.

Website: <http://www.garysjobboard.com/>

More information about trucking / driving jobs:

<https://www.fairshake.net/employment-trucking-driving-jobs/>

Prepare For Work!

www.fairshake.net/prepare-for-work/

- Resume Writing Ideas
- Letter of Explanation
- Prepare For Your Interview
- ... and much more!

Employer Support

Give employers tools and information to help them hire you.

Share this document with your potential employers to help them hire you.


Bonding, WOTC, and EEOC filers

- You are bondable
- Federal Bonding Filer
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit Filer
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Background Checks
- More on Background Checks: What Applicants Need to Know
- Formerly Incarcerated Individuals' Job Restrictions (US and Wisconsin) Created by the WI-DDC

US Department of Labor CareerOneStop

Formerly Incarcerated Reemployment

<http://www.careeronestop.org/ExOffender/index.aspx>



Watch The Video!

1-877-348-0502 TTY: 1-877-348-0501

Career OneStop Locations:

Alabama Louisiana Ohio

Start Your Own Business

It's not easy, but for the creative, courageous and tenacious, it's often the right thing to do. Here are a few documents to help you get started.

- From the Small Business Administration
- Business Plan Template

Prepare For Work

There are many ways to approach employment. Some people 'know somebody', sometimes we get lucky and meet our new boss or coworkers where we volunteer or through a recreational activity...but most of us will write resumes, find available jobs online or through an employment agency, fill out applications and then endure one or many job interviews.

Thanks to the generosity of several resume' writing professionals and job readiness coaches, we've assembled what we've found to support you as you build your resume', your interview skills, and your confidence!


While the information here addresses several of the concerns of job seekers, we want to encourage you to also consider topics from the "Free School" section of this book, the website or the software, to support you through the inevitable challenges that will occur as you create desirable outcomes.

Please remember: many employers want to hear more about how you built yourself up while you were incarcerated than they do about your past. Keep the conversation positive!

They want to know that you care. That you will be a good listener and team member, if you can embrace the company culture, learn, follow through and get things done. They want to know that you are interested and motivated.

Prepare for Work

Everyone prepares for work in a different way. Fair Shake offers many tools for you to use in the way that you choose to prepare for temporary jobs or long-term careers.



O*Net
Occupation Search! <https://www.onetonline.org>

The Resume Writing Academy

www.resumewritingacademy.com

Resume Writing This document generously shared with Fair Shake by The Resume Writing Academy thanks to: Wendy Enelow, MRW, CCM, CPRW, JCTC and Louise Kursmark, MRW, CCM, CPRW, JCTC

- Resume Examples
- Top Tips & Techniques for Writing Best-in-Class Resumes
- Free 78-minute resume writing audio webcast with printable handouts.
- Best Resumes and Letters for Ex-Offenders

A resume guide that addresses special employment issues facing ex-offenders.

Raw Resume

<http://www.rawresume.com/write-resume-definitive-guide>

How to Write a Great Resume: The Definitive Guide This guide will take you from start to finish through all the aspects of a great resume and help you transform your current one into an interview-winning resume. Written for beginner and intermediate job seekers. Print or read The Complete Guide to A Winning Resume - Cheat Sheet to get started. Here I am - Resume Writing That Gets Noticed. The Complete Guide to a Winning Resume Cheat-Sheet

Discussing Your History in the Interview

- Discussing Criminal History in the Interview

Other Employment Support

Jails to Jobs

http://www.jailstojobs.org/html/help_with_new_entry.html

Jails to Jobs is an organization that gives ex-offenders the tools they need to find employment. On this website you'll find a step-by-step plan to follow as you carry out your job search.

Livecareer.com

Livecareer.com offers great tools and resources for exploring careers, whether you're searching for a new job or considering a career change. - See more at:

<https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/career-exploration>

how2become.com

How2become.com offers a resource guide that provides detailed insight into how to answer certain questions, body language and more.

<https://www.how2become.com/resources/interview-skills/>

Fair Shake Employment Documents

Available Offline and Online

- Employment Tips
- Resume Guide
- Interview Tips
- Interview Questions for You to Ask
- Sample Interview Questions
- Computer and Internet Tips
- Letter of Explanation
- Functional Resume Example
- Accomplishments and Skills Worksheet
- Employer Support
- Resume Examples
- Favorite Verbs for Your Resume
- Sample Employment Application
- Cover Letter | Thank You Letter
- Self Employment

Employer Support!

Share this document with your potential employers to help them hire you.

Bonding, WOTC, and EEOC fliers

- You are bondable | Federal Bonding Flier
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit Flier
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Background Checks
- More on Background Checks: What Applicants Need to Know
- Formerly Incarcerated Individuals' Job Restrictions (US and Wisconsin) Created by the WI-DOG

Start Your Own Business

It's not easy, but for the creative, courageous and tenacious, it's often the right thing to do. Here are a few documents to help you get started.

- From the Small Business Administration
- Small Business Administration: Start A Business!
- From the Consumer Information Center: Planning and Goal Setting for A Small Business
- Minding Your Own Business
- How to Write a Business Plan
- From the Fair Shake Reentry Packet
- Self Employment

US Department of Labor Career Onestop

Formerly Incarcerated Reemployment

<http://www.careeronestop.org/ExOffenderIndex.aspx>

careeronestop

Watch The Video!

1-877-348-0502 TTY: 1-877-348-0501

Career Onestop - Locations:

Alabama	Louisiana	Ohio
Alaska	Maine	Oklahoma
Arizona	Maryland	Oregon
Arkansas	Massachusetts	Pennsylvania
California	Michigan	Rhode Island
Colorado	Minnesota	South Carolina
Connecticut	Mississippi	South Dakota
Delaware	Missouri	Tennessee
Florida	Montana	Texas
Georgia	Nevada	Vermont
Hawaii	New Hampshire	Virginia
Idaho	New Jersey	Washington
Illinois	New Mexico	West Virginia
Indiana	New York	Wisconsin
Iowa	North Carolina	Wyoming
Kansas	North Dakota	
Kentucky		

Career Onestop

Put together a successful job search with resources on resumes, interviewing, networking and finding job openings.

<https://www.careeronestop.org/JobSearch/job-search.aspx>

Everything in this section available Online Only

- America's Service Locator** connects individuals to employment and training opportunities available at local American Job Centers. www.ServiceLocator.org
- America's Career InfoNet** occupation and industry information, salary data and career exploration assistance. www.CareerInfoNet.org
- mySkills myFuture** helps career changers find new occupations to explore. www.mySkillsmyFuture.org
- Veterans ReEmployment** is a one-stop website for employment, training, and financial help after military service. www.CareerOneStop.org/ReEmployment/Veterans

About The Fair Shake Personal Web Page

Personal Web Page Example

- Members differentiate themselves from other applicants!
- Members share information easily. No need to carry documents; they are stored in their account.
- Shows dedication to reentry success and provides a place to demonstrate interest in taking a proactive approach by sharing skills, character traits, and intentions.
- Employers and property managers can get to know members comfortably, reducing likelihood of auto-dismissal based on felony history.
- Fair Shake Member Card provides member information, url and password to the member's page.
- Member Web Page password is changeable! Access only given to current password holders.
- Fair Shake can verify references, even for volunteer work. Check out our example Personal Web Page | Personal Web Page Flyer | Fair Shake Brochure

Also available to Fair Shake members is a free email account, data storage and tutorials to learn to use electronic tools.

National Resources and Information

Advice from a Senior U.S. Probation Officer Workforce Development Coordinator

<http://community.ncdo.gov/forums/p/46711/85165>

- Federal Bureau of Prisons Employment Information Handbook
- Background Checks - EEOC

Veterans Employment Assistance: The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was established to meet the needs of veterans during their period of transition into civilian life by offering job-search assistance and related services. The guide books below were created specifically to support you by applying

Dealing With Rejection

When we put ourselves in a position to be vulnerable to another person's opinion, we risk rejection.

Sometimes the risk is very small. Example: I tell a joke but my audience doesn't laugh. They look at me like I am speaking a language they don't understand. What does this mean? Do they reject my joke? Do they reject me? Maybe they don't share my sense of humor. Maybe they don't understand the joke. Maybe it's just not a good joke or maybe I need to learn how to deliver jokes. There are so many variables!

When I'm standing there in the silence, however, I find it hard to think of anything but "I'm not funny." or "I failed." I may even internalize these words and start to feel pretty rotten, as if I am incapable or unappealing. I told the joke to have fun and win approval; instead I feel deflated and rejected.

When I take a much larger risk, such as applying for a job, an apartment or a loan - where I've invested so much more of myself (time, information, hope, dedication) - the stakes are much higher. I may become discouraged when I hear 'we've chosen another applicant', 'we've rented the apartment to another person', or just plain 'no'. Again, it's hard for me to not internalize it. But just as in the case of the joke, there may be many variables that I am not considering. At this crucial time, I must remember to believe in myself and continue to pursue my goal.

It is hard to stay positive when we internalize rejection, and yet that is exactly what we need to do to persevere toward what we want. When we feel defeated, we would be wise to remember that we have taken many risks in the past and we have been successful. We must risk failure and rejection to feel the power of success. It is both scary and exhilarating!

Consider using these tools to keep your perspective as favorable as possible:

- First, remember you are important! Do not let rejection from any person or group lead you to believe you are not important, valuable, creative and necessary to the well-being of everyone.
- Be open to the possibility of rejection or criticism as the push you need to improve your approach, consider making other changes. Find ways to be positive. Positivity is magnetic!
- Consider the source. If you are doing what you believe is the right and best thing for you, keep doing it. It's okay to be rejected by people or groups that we do not wish to be a part of. Perhaps it's not a good fit and our view is clouded by a fog of unrealistic hopefulness. Try to remember to not take feedback or rejection personally.
- Keep focused on the big picture! Don't let minor set backs keep you from achieving your goals.
- Persevere! Keep doing what you are doing. Remember that you are the pilot of your goal, challenge, or position and you will not let rejection hold you back.
- Believe in yourself! If you don't believe in yourself, how can you expect others to believe in you? There are so many things that are special and incredible about you; don't forget what they are!
- This is an opportunity to build resilience. Getting through difficult challenges makes you stronger and more capable for your next challenges. Summon your fighting spirit that says "I will not quit"!
- Find your gratitude. Be grateful for the opportunity. Be grateful for allowing yourself to FEEL. Be grateful for the freedom to create your life, even though it may be very challenging. Be grateful for your critics. If it wasn't for them, we would not learn about ourselves.

PHILOSOPHY:

Let's explore

BELIEF



Belief is at the foundation of our thinking, our feeling, and every aspect of our daily existence. This document will not directly address religion, but much of the content applies to religious beliefs as well. We all believe!

BELIEF is how we steer our ship:

- It influences what we acknowledge, perceive, hear, pay attention to, discover, attribute.
- It guides our values: how we invest in ourselves, how we value and treat others, how we see the value of things (money, cars, etc.), of information (education, news sources).
- It guides our emotions, which guide our thinking and our behaviors. For example: if we are afraid of dogs, we might shake and sweat, and even run away from a sleepy dog.
- It guides our feelings of self-worth, efficacy, and what we are capable of - all of which affect how we see our options, opportunities and potential.
- It can give us strength or make us weak. Belief has brought believers through amazing hardships!
- Belief guides our ability to trust; trust that we can do things, that we are important contributors to civilization, etc., and also how we trust others, and how we can grow our trust in relationships.
- Belief also guides how we make sense of things; our justifications and our logic.
- We tend to believe that others see the world the way we see the world, which is one of the reasons we can't believe that they have different solutions to problems.

***"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't -
you're right."***

- Henry Ford



LENSES TO SEE THE WORLD: Our beliefs 'tint' the lenses we've created to see the world...and to see ourselves. Each of us has a variety of lenses to use, depending on our feelings and the situation. Each of us can decide which lens to use in any situation, but most of the time we simply react, using whatever lens is triggered by our subconscious. We believe our assumptions, and even assume that others see the same things that we see. This is why it is vitally important to ask others how they see a situation! We hope that others will be generous when they view us. Perhaps we could also use our curious, or our 'rose-colored', lenses with them as well.

Tom Asacker, author of *Your Brain on Story*, describes how our beliefs are formed:

"Everyone has been conditioned to think in certain, scripted ways. What you see today as 'you', wasn't consciously crafted by you. It's a product of unquestioned learning and unconscious assimilation - including limiting beliefs which were woven into you by others, especially by people you trusted. Those 'knots of beliefs' are everywhere and most of the time you fail to notice how they affect your emotions and your decisions, and how important they are to maintaining your story. Like our favorite sweaters, our identities are very precious to us."

But we can outgrow beliefs that were given to us. When we reflect on how we became who we are today, we might find beliefs that are inconsistent with who we have become. We can let these beliefs go, and we can adopt new ones. Tom Asacker recommends: *"If you want to change your perspective, change your behavior - and your behavior will change your mind."*

See it to believe it? Not so fast! Here are some common, age-old phrases to ponder:

We see things as we are, not as they are.

Don't believe everything you see.

The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

Don't believe everything you think.

BELIEF IN YOURSELF: also known as Self-Efficacy *Affirmation: "I can do this!"*
Your "Agency" is your sense of power to determine - and to drive your life toward - your destiny.

Signs of Self-Determination, Self-Efficacy and Agency:

- You feel like you can handle problems if you are willing to work hard
- You feel confident that you can achieve your goals.
- You feel like you can manage unexpected events when they arise.
- You are able to bounce back fairly quickly after stressful events.
- You feel like you can come up with options when you are facing a problem.
- You keep trying even when things seem difficult.
- You stay calm even in the face of chaos.
- You perform well, even under pressure.
- You can focus on your progress, chipping away, rather than getting overwhelmed by all you still have to do.

Do you need to build your feelings of Self-Efficacy? Here are some things to try:

- + Celebrate your achievements! Reflect on the hurdles you surmounted and how much more you know.
- + Observe others. See how they progress and then see if you can do the same, or in your own style.
- + Have positive affirmations ready when you start something new. Develop a 'positivity bias'.
- + Pay attention to your thoughts, your emotions, and your cues from your body.

"Our belief in our ability to succeed plays a role in how we think, how we act, and how we feel about our place in the world." - Albert Bandura



Bridging Our Beliefs

Have you ever talked with someone who believes things that don't make sense to you? Our mind creates stories to make sense of what we know when new information comes in. It also creates shortcuts to connect

information, save energy and reduce confusion. The mind will create bridges between beliefs that might not clearly connect. Some of these bridges are helpful, some are not good for us or for others. Some of these bridges are called 'magical thinking'. We make 'sense', or meaning, based on our beliefs and the way we connect them.

We also believe in others. We trust them to guide our sensemaking abilities. The level of trust we give them will contribute to the arch of assumptions that connects our beliefs. For instance, if we believe in one type of news source over another, the news source that we trust becomes part of the foundation of our assumptions; the things we believe to be true.

Questioning claims, statements, experts and evidence is not an attack. It is healthy. Questions support critical thinking, wisdom, reflection, dialog and discovery toward the truth.

Obedience is not belief.

Skepticism: Curiosity or questioning of beliefs. It is very important for us to consider building a healthy level of skepticism since our information channels are being flooded with 'fake', and misleading information.

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. - Albert Einstein

The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones. - John Maynard Keynes

She believed in nothing. Only her skepticism kept her from being an atheist. - Jean-Paul Sartre

The repetition of affirmations leads to belief. Once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen. - Muhammad Ali

POSSIBILITARIAN BELIEFS: important to build the future

Self-Determination + Self-Efficacy + Self-Reflection + Intention + Opportunity + Agency + Respect

Questions are crucial! Everyone is valuable and important! Yes, We Can! Where there's a will, there's a way.

No super-hero is coming to save us. Together, we can be the superhero we have been hoping for!

Fair Shake's

MYTH-BUSTERS



Myth: FALSE DICHOTOMIES – The idea that you must choose between two options: Yes or No. Good or Bad. Right or Wrong. Candidate A or B. Rise or Fall. With Us or Against Us. Science vs Religion. Rational vs. Emotional. Individual vs. Group. and one that I've heard a lot in my life: "That's a man's (sport, job, perspective); it's not for women". (a form of yes or no) Whenever you need to make a choice, see if you can find 4, 5, or even 10 options!



Myth: WE STOP LEARNING – If I had never touched a flame before I turned 58 years old, I would learn to never touch one in the future if I touched one today. We acquire information constantly and we organize it into meaning. We may even care enough to find out how what we learned relates to what we already know and believe. One thing school failed to teach us is how to learn, and how to discern what we learn. The 'information sources' today are louder, strangely influential, and grossly incomplete. To get the full picture, we have to dig for information and ask good questions, while also trying to avoid getting overwhelmed or trapped. We must keep learning, and as we learn, we can learn to live together better! We do not have to accept limitations or acceptable levels of suffering. We are NOT STUCK. We can learn...and then change...whatever we want. "There is no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening." - Marshall McLuhan (author of The Medium is the Message)



Myth: MERITOCRACY - The more you learn the more you earn', 'you can make it if you try', 'pull yourself up', etc. Many ways to reinforce the idea that the people who have the money and the stuff are successful because they earned what they have, they got all their money through hard work and a shrewd (including a 100% respectful, environmentally-sound and firearms-free!) investment strategy. If only. Investing is almost never in line with our humanity values...yet it is always in our best interest to invest in humanity. Meritocracy is justified stratification; people above others for their achievements. Michael Sandel said: "We've slid into the assumption that the money people make is the measure of their contribution to the common good." I wonder how the merit idea would work if we increase accolades and 'status' based on care about others?



Myth: INCARCERATION PAYS A 'DEBT TO SOCIETY' - Why do we keep repeating this? Members of society believe that incarceration and the judicial system costs them money; they do not feel that they have been paid in any way. How could they? The only debt that has been paid is the one requested and required by a heartless and hungry punitive system. Society has little faith that 'the system' is providing the information necessary to reengage successfully. Together, we can change this. The 'justice system' is the only group getting paid.



Myth: WE ARE FRAGILE - The "Helping" Industry relies on us being weak. ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) scores may describe some aspects of people, but they in no way represent who we are. Many of us with high ACE scores have also become even more than resilient, we are now anti-fragile because of our challenges. This means that the adverse conditions made us stronger than we would have been without them.



Myth: TV NEWS INFORMS YOU OF WHAT IS GOING ON All you get from any single news source is what they want you to see and believe. What they show us is what their sponsors want them to show us. Sponsors demand support, so the advertisements determine the 'news' you'll see on TV. Social Media cannot be counted on to inform us of anything but an opinion. To get more pieces of the whole story, we must consider information offered by many news sources.



Myth: WE NEED AUTHORITY AND MONEY TO 'FIX' OUR CHALLENGES - Why would we ask the institutions, and the people who are complicit in maintaining them, to fix the problems they created? Winona LaDuke says: "You shouldn't let your dealer tell you what you need." Are we frustrated enough yet to work on the solutions together? We've been trained to believe these myths:

- Experts and 'science' have the solutions to our challenges; they will provide the relief for our suffering. Q: What if they are the cause of our suffering?
- Money will fix our problems. Does money build trust, cooperation and feelings of confidence? We have gifts to share with each other. Our focus on money continues to take away our power. Money does not give us power. Feelings of agency, support and capability give us power!



Myth: INDIVIDUALISM – Individualism is said to be a “fundamental American principle” so is authoritarianism, lying, stealing, false superiority and also the myth of the 'self-made' person and "united we stand".

INTERDEPENDENCE, on the other hand, is a fundamental planetary principle. We can easily see our impact on the environment and on each other because of our insatiable pursuit of more stuff; a belief created to fill the hole created by 'individualism'. The Rev. Desmond Tutu reminded us that "the solitary individual" is a contradiction in terms.



Myth: "FREE-MARKET CAPITALISM" - You'll find that file between Easter Bunny and Santa Clause. The game is rigged. Capitalism offers some opportunity, but 'the market' does not **respond to our needs**. Instead, it manufactures our desires and externalizes unhealthy costs.



Myth: NOTHING WORKS: Roger Martinson wrote, "the represent array of correctional treatments has no appreciable effect - positive or negative - on rates of recidivism of convicted offenders." In the magazine Public Interest (1974), he stated, "rehabilitative efforts that have been reported so far have no appreciable effect on recidivism." The way that I read this is: the ineffective 'programs' supplied by the prisons (or whomever else) did not impact the already low (compared to today) recidivism rate. He said that no single thing works because we are unique. We are not robots. One thing that always works is 100% pro-social: it's us working together!



EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION REDUCE RECIDIVISM Only YOU "reduce recidivism". You and nothing else. It is up to you to utilize education or employment opportunities to support your reentry success; YOU get full credit for how you apply your gifts. After all, employment and higher education did not keep Jeff Skilling, Bernie Madoff, Martha Stewart, Bill Cosby, Charles Kushner, or several elected representatives, out of prison.



CRIMINOGENIC NEEDS Incarcerated people have basic human needs; the same needs we all have. You are not different. This is yet another attempt to scientize othering.



Myth: EXPERTS KNOW WHAT'S BEST

Experts have agendas. Always consider who is paying the 'expert'. Non-profit status does not automatically indicate integrity. Professional 'fixers' are often poor listeners. Prisons, schools and hospitals tell us what we need, they rarely ask what we think or feel. How can they 'help' if they don't hear? We can learn to listen to ourselves and each other by asking questions. We can work, care, and grow together to build our capacity for complexity, cooperation, constructive learning, critical thinking, and agency! We are the 'experts' we've been waiting for.

Motivation Tips

From the Fair Shake Ownership Manual:

Self Motivation - While managers often try to find ways to motivate people from the outside, the best way to get things done is simply by wanting to do them. The more we align ourselves with our goals, values and interests, the more easily we can find the necessary motivation to carry out our tasks. Sometimes we have to keep our 'eyes on the prize' and work through things we really don't like – and sometimes we have to wait patiently - to get to the ultimate goal that we value the most.

"Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right." - Henry Ford

"He is able who thinks he is able." – The Buddha

Often people use - and many people want - **EXTRINSIC MOTIVATORS** (outside forces) to get us to do things we don't desire to do. Do we want to be lured by a Carrot? Do we prefer to be scared by a Stick? Bribe... or... threat? Encourage you to buy a gizmo with a coupon or make you worry that you will not be hip if you don't have the gizmo? Do you recognize these *extrinsic motivators*? You will find more examples of extrinsic motivators all around you once you start to take notice. Alas, extrinsic motivators work well to get us to do some things, but not everything.

We cannot always be pulled or pushed. Sometimes we just want to be interested in what we're doing!

The forces that can energize us through our most challenging and creative tasks are often our **INTRINSIC MOTIVATORS** (inside forces) that bring satisfaction when we do tasks we don't care for but can find meaning in. For example, hanging laundry may be your least favorite thing to do, but you need clean clothes. This mundane task can transform to something beautiful when it happens on a warm, sunny day in the early spring. Just knowing that a beautiful day of hanging laundry is possible makes it easier to hang laundry on less desirable days. Intrinsic motivators make the tough stuff tolerable and can even connect us to the rest of the people on the planet who are going through tough stuff. And also to the people who are enjoying the spring sun while hanging out their laundry.

When we have an inner goal, a desire to solve a puzzle, the wish to work out something by ourselves, we are often motivated with speed, stamina, determination and creativity! Often our values and beliefs provide the fuel for our intrinsic motivation motors.

Motivation Tips:

1. **Systematically and deliberately create success.** Decide what you want to do and what you will do when you get there. Now explore the steps you need to take to get you to where you want to be. Remember to anticipate the hurdles!

2. **Don't let your excuses get in the way.** You will come up with every excuse in the book to not move forward. You will even believe many of your excuses are legitimate. When you believe your excuses you can become stuck. Are you a victim or are you a creative thinker who can solve a problem?

3. **Change habits and behaviors that lead you to procrastinate.** Are you doing things that are holding you back? Schedule time to do nothing and other than that time, stay on track with your goals.
4. **Several small jobs done over short periods of time are more manageable than one large task.** Instead of focusing on the difficulty of the large task, break it into smaller jobs and create a timeline for finishing them.
5. **Try tackling the more undesirable tasks early** so that you can pursue more pleasant activities later in the day.
6. **Exercise self-discipline.** Say 'no' when you need to...to yourself and to others. Keep your "eyes on the prize!"
7. **Overcome procrastination and block out human and media obstacles.** Sometimes we have to just get started, even when we don't feel like we're ready, or even up for the task. Often just the ACT of getting started is enough to get engaged and encouraged. Refuse to let others divert you from your path! Procrastination is a self-defeating behavior that develops - in part - due to the fear of failure and paradoxically, the fear of success!
8. **Reward yourself.** Your self-motivation will increase enormously if you give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done. It feels great to accomplish tasks!
9. **Have fun!** Learning to enjoy yourself keeps you enthusiastic and motivated and helps you keep stress to a minimum. After all, good vibes create more good vibes!
10. **Imagine what the rewards will be when you finally reach your destination** and keep that thought foremost in your mind. You can also imagine the bad consequences (pain, frustration, the feeling of defeat) that may occur if you don't, if you prefer to look at it that way. Carrot or stick?
11. **Tell someone about your goals.** Show them or mark stages on a calendar to emphasize and visualize your goal. Check in with them periodically to tell them of your progress.
12. **Review your habits; do you see yourself accomplishing your goals?** You must change the habits that lead you to procrastinate in the first place. Lose, shorten or refuse to participate in demotivating habits during inappropriate times of the day (watching TV, disengaging from your goals) and replace them with habits that lead to engaging in and control of your life.
13. **Find your true interest.** If you dislike certain tasks, just look at them in the big picture...they are character building steps on the path of getting you to your greater goal.
14. **Make lists of the smaller jobs then tick off the work that you have completed.** Prepare a list of the things you have to do. Prioritize the list and then start ticking off tasks as they are completed. If you do this right, you may become motivated to complete them all!

MORAL GUIDES



Although, one of our most fundamental values is freedom, it is a moral that we never discuss. Instead of discussions, arguments or debates, nations, cultures, religions, families, individuals and even the media, turn to stories to pass on moral "guides". We have the "E Pluribus Unum" story, the "rugged individual" story, the "good neighbor" story, the "melting pot" story, and many more.

Our lack of moral courage is affecting us greatly, which I address on another page, so I'm excited to explore morals – an important part of philosophy, both culturally and individually - here in the Fair Shake Free School.

Let's begin our study with those who were here before everyone else: the native peoples. Miigwetch (thank you) for sharing this timeless wisdom!

A GIFT FROM THE ANISHINAABEG

Seven Grandfathers (and Seven Rascals) Principles for Living Well

Many people native to the Great Lakes region understand this teaching as what is needed for a community to survive. According to the authors at the Ojibwe.net website "Each Grandfather Teaching is a gift the Anishinaabeg carry, a potential tool for living a good life. Our understanding is that as we use these gifts our experience of living improves. Using these gifts in our lives is an ongoing challenge for each of us, requiring attention, discipline and perseverance."

The 7 Grandfathers are Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Humility, Generosity
The 7 Rascals are Greed, Revenge, Inferiority, Negative Attitude, Fear, Jealousy, Resentment

Nibwaakawin - Wisdom. Sound judgment, ability to teach others what you have learned or experienced. Use good sense and form a good attitude and course of action.

Zaagidiwin - Love. Strong affection for another forming out of kinship or personal ties; attachments based on devotion, admiration, tenderness, unselfish loyalty, concern. Feel and give absolute kindness for all things around you.

Minwaadendamowin - Respect. Showing regards for the value of persons or things through courteous consideration and appreciation, to be upright with a good giving heart. Don't hurt anything or anyone on the outside or the inside.

Aakodewewin - Bravery. The personal inner strength to face difficulties, obstacles and challenges. Have courage and a strong heart to make positive choices.

Debwewin - Truth. Sincerity in action, character, and utterance. Learn truth, honor truth, no truth, see truth.

Dibaadendiziwin - Humility. A measurement or reflection of your own self-worth. To be humble, to be human.

Miigwe'aadiziwin - Generosity. Sharing your ability, time, and extra or non-necessary things. Standing together / Responding to needs

THE STORY OF THE TWO WOLVES

A young girl told her grandmother that she was having a hard time. She said, "I can feel a fight going on inside me, Grandmother. It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – she is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego."

Her grandmother listened, and nodded gently.

"The other wolf is good", the young girl continued. "She is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith."

Her grandmother looked deeply into her eyes and said, "I know it's hard, granddaughter. The same fight is going on inside me....and in every other person, too."

The young girl reflected on what her grandmother said. Then she looked up and asked, "Grandmother, which wolf will win?"

Her grandmother replied softly, "The one you feed."

Fair Shake is DIY: Build Your Own Operating Principles

Operating principles, which are based on our values, articulate our personal philosophy and help us maintain the clear boundaries necessary to own our life and, hence, own our future. They change over time, developing as we develop. You are under no obligation to accept operating principles 'should-ed' on you by others ("You should try to fit in!", "You should get married.", etc.) . Sue's current Operating Principles are listed below to provide an example. You already have operating principles! To reflect on them, and further develop your list, write down hundreds of ideas, then group similar ideas together. Pare those down to a list that you can remember and commit to.

1. I value living an integrated life. UBUNTU! I am because we are.
2. I strive to develop meaningful relationships.
3. I foster personal growth.
4. I move intentionally and carefully toward my desired outcomes.
5. I listen actively and empathetically when others talk.
6. I own my actions, reactions, responses, decisions, opinions and attitudes.
7. I take a long-term perspective and consider future impact when making decisions.
8. I move away from my comfort zone into growth opportunities. I increase my capacity.
9. I reflect critically and generously; I remember my past as I accept my 'now' and create my future.
10. I do not 'should' on people; I offer options and stay available for questions or support.
11. I respect others' time and opinions.
12. I value honesty. I am courageous and invite others to be courageous, too.
13. I do not avoid confrontation; I say what needs to be said with care and respect.
14. I take care of the body and the mind that take care of me.
15. Words are possibilities, actions are commitments.
16. I strive to be authentic and to support other's authenticity. We all have unique contributions.
17. Learning is available everywhere and all of the time. Wisdom is not found in books; it is built through relationships, conversations, reflections and experiences.
18. Every one and every thing has value, even when I don't understand what it is.
19. Emotional, relational, time and other types of wealth are considered when I determine value.
20. I become stronger from adversity. I utilize my challenges to build inner strength which I can apply to my determination, to humanity, and to the future.

Consider making your Operating Principles a "living document" that grows and changes as you do.

PRE-RELEASE INVENTORY

Additional items to add to your list!

1. List the gifts that you bring with you!

- Include your courage, determination and authenticity.
- Your ability to listen well and offer the greatest gift a person can give: your attention.
- The special tools and skills you've developed to share with employers, coworkers, customers and clients.
- Expanded knowledge, compassion and commitment to those who are close to you.
- The unique perspective, and pro-social community-building skills that you have to construct the future with others!



2. Prepare for tough times. Write down book titles, articles, names of friends and family, and community resources you can turn to when things are tough; or when you feel down or vulnerable. When it's difficult to reach out to people; books may be a good place to start.

3. Check for "Over-Confidence". It's crucial to be confident...but foolish to be over-confident! Here are a couple of ideas to locate and address possible points of overconfidence:

- + Play "Devil's Advocate". Be critical and pessimistic. If possible, solicit the help of a friend or a young person. (In general, the young are better at this than adults.)
- + Resist comparing yourself to others. Everyone does things differently!
- + Listen to, and address, concerns or criticisms from others. This doesn't mean you need to argue with them or change course. Just check to see if you are fully considering their perspective.
- + Mix modesty and humility with enthusiasm.

4. Remember: you've got a lot of choices ahead! There's always more than one option, and almost always more than two. Try to find at least 4 options from which you can build or blend options to create your best opportunities!

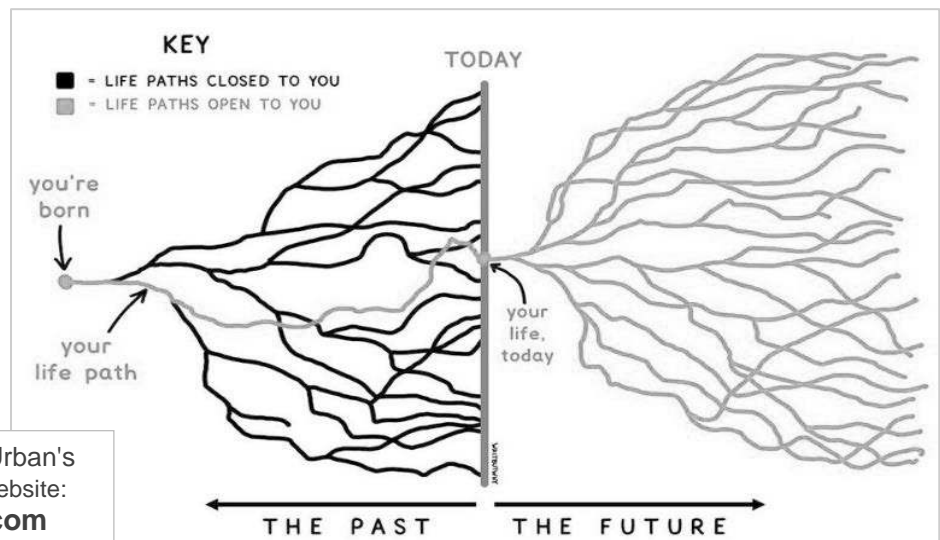


Image from Tim Urban's
Wait But Why website:
waitbutwhy.com

AGENCY and ACTION

What can we do,
with what we have,
where we are,
right now ?

*** We can get ready for change; ready to build what comes next; ready for the unknown! We can read, write, plan, draw, and think – as a strategic problem solver and community building collaborator.

*** We can stay flexible...mentally and physically...so that whatever comes, we will be ready and able to adjust and contribute.

*** We can reflect, and deepen our understanding and compassion.

*** We can consider the things that we would most love to give our deep attention to and consider how our unique gifts could bring strength to the areas we are most passionate about.

*** We can gather tools and build skills that we will need such as attending to issues with anxiety, depression, loneliness, self-doubt; or deepening skills we already have and which are so hard to find such as listening and caring.

*** We could learn something important for community building, so we can share it with any community we join.

*** Feel free to reach out to Fair Shake to see if we can connect you with a group of people who are working in the area where you would like to invest your efforts: outreach@fairshake.net.

Wishing you all the best through your transitions to come! Your success is important to me...and to our future together. **Ubuntu!**

Managing Anger

Flying off the handle sometimes causes hammers and humans to lose their heads...as well as their effectiveness. ~ William Arthur Ward



Everyone gets angry.

We are all familiar with anger; we see it demonstrated frequently. We see angry people in TV shows and movies; we hear angry politicians and radio hosts. Sometimes we experience anger with others around us, and we also experience anger in ourselves.

People sometimes try to use anger to solve problems or to relieve stress...but that often creates more problems, more stress and even more anger.

We can't eliminate anger, but we can manage it. We can make it a useful tool instead of one that demolishes relationships and other things.

Anger is often glorified as a key to unlock hidden strength and passion. Anger *feels* powerful.

Power alone is not good or bad. We need to feel powerful to feel capable. Feeling powerful is an important element of our American cultural self-image. But power alone...without caring emotions such as reflection, kindness, and humility...can cloud our perception of situations, others, and ourselves.

When we feel painful emotions such as sorrow, or hurt, because we've been rejected, disrespected, offended, forgotten, etc., we can find ourselves feeling like we have a loss of power. To try to reduce our discomfort, sometimes we respond with a powerful emotion like anger.

It's hard for us to feel pain! We are 'wired' to go toward pleasure and away from pain. Anger feels like it stops pain - at least momentarily.

The process of dealing with painful emotions is very hard and requires a great deal of strength and self-control. We become more powerful, capable and intuitive as we develop deeper problem-solving skills and tools for life's constantly challenging situations. Used positively, anger can help us realize deeper feelings about things so we can construct ways to avoid anger in the future.

Processing anger-energy through 'venting' (to ourselves; not others!) can be beneficial for focusing on and clarifying a problem. If we can be critical and clear about what is going wrong, we can then drive ourselves to go deeper to get the picture of what it would look like to go 'right', and then we can make changes to turn the situation around. Once we deeply reflect on the situation, other people's points of view (if applicable), and our deeper feelings, then we can see what we can do to make things better. We can then show others how we'd like to be treated!

Many of us experience a great deal of discomfort when we disagree with others. Many of us were not taught the value of listening or engaging in friendly arguments or debates. We say we believe that another person's opinion can be as valid and 'right' as our own, but do we mean it? For *every* person? Believe it or not, it's possible for people with opposing view points to work together to create the best possible solutions!

Anger needs to be expressed, yet aggressive displays of anger can result in violent eruptions that further hurt us socially, mentally, and physically. We need to find ways to process our emotions effectively. An out-of-control outburst could cost us a job. Or worse.

A hammer is a great symbol for anger because hammers can demolish....and they can build!

When we feel our anger building we need to stop and recognize triggers that can seize control of our power.

When you feel anger building, try to remember to:

- Take a breath (or many!)
- Identify
 - o your TRIGGER (what upset you? And then look again...was it something deeper?)
 - o your FEELING (how do you feel about what is upsetting you?)
 - o your REASON (why does it bother you and what is the best way to resolve this?)

Then ask yourself some questions about how and when you get angry. Questions like:

- Do I always get angry about this issue?
- Could I have seen this coming?
- Could I have avoided feeling angry by taking a different approach to this situation?
- What is my goal here? What do I hope to achieve?

Blaming others for our anger or frustration seems like an easy way to solve our problem: we want to say that someone or something “did this to me”. But blaming leaves us powerless and ineffective! How can we expect a situation to improve - in the way we would like to see it improve - if we put the task on someone else?

Did you know that no one else can *make* us feel angry? We choose to respond with blame and/or anger...and we can choose a different response. We are FREE to improve our relationships and live without rage when we decide to deal with our feelings in effective and purposeful ways.

Consider deeply what makes you angry and why. DIG for the answer that will transform anger!

Here are a few examples:

Why do I feel angry when others try to tell me what to do?

- Do I feel disrespected? As if they think I haven't thought about something carefully?

Why do I feel angry when it feels like others don't listen to or acknowledge me?

- Do I believe they think that my opinion is not valid or important?

Why do I feel angry when others are not respectful of an agreement we made?

- Do I feel like they think I am less important than they are?

Why do I feel angry when I stub my toe?

- Am I embarrassed because I missed something right in front of me?

Why do I feel angry when other drivers make travel difficult?

- Do I feel they are selfish, dangerous, disrespectful, and not paying attention?

Can you find the solutions you are looking for in your answers?

Be aware of your temper: your 'anger energy'.

Here are some ideas to help you keep your temper under control:

- **Try the Thermometer Technique** - Imagine your temper is red mercury in a large thermometer. When you're HOT, don't react! Wait until you are 'cool' to respond.
- **Count to 10, or 100!** – Count...and think of a time when you were calm and relaxed....to take your mind out of the immediate situation. Counting is an anger management tip that has worked for centuries! The Roman poet Horace (65 - 8 BCE) said, "When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, one hundred."
- **Inhale deeply** - Can you breathe so deeply that you get clean air deep down into your belly? Walk outdoors if possible! Your brain and your body work better with fresh air and plenty of water. Be sure to communicate with anyone you might be in a confrontation with that you are not leaving the problem; you're just clearing your head.
- **Exercise!** - Daily exercise allows you to work out stress. When you have less stress, you will feel angry less often. Regular exercise, including yoga and meditation, help you stay centered and keep things in perspective.
- **Vent** - Finding a safe spot to articulate your feelings...and maybe even yell (I find this particularly effective when I hammer my finger) can relieve enough stress to see the problem - and the solution - more clearly. Do not 'blow off steam' when anyone is nearby. Instead, go to the basement alone, or ride your bike and talk to the wind, or even stomp on a few aluminum cans to relieve frustration.

Our best way of dealing with anger is to find ways to make it useful. A powerful example is when someone uses the energy from anger to find the courage they need to protect someone who is being harmed!

Be Careful - When anger turns into poison: Sometimes we think that being angry and bitter all the time means we are smart, savvy and aware of the ways in which people and the media want to persuade us; as if it shows we are 'on to them'. Soon we are cynical, crabby people and, although people may think we are smart, they also think we are 'haters' and don't want to hang out with us. It's hard to have fun with angry people.

Sue's Anger Story

I live in a small town. We see our neighbors out and about and everyone knows I frequently ride my bike on the nearby bike trail. My dentist has an office just across the street from our bike trail and sees me on it all the time. He also likes to exercise outdoors; he runs.

One day I went to see my dentist for a routine check up. I enjoy talking with the staff when I'm there. When he checks my teeth we often 'catch up' for a minute, too.

After one of these friendly little chats, my dentist stood up and told me that his white coat identifies him as a health authority and said: "in the interest of health I have to tell you that I think you should wear a helmet".

I told him that I consider wearing a helmet sometimes, but most of the time I am comfortable - and prefer riding – without one.

I wish our discussion would have stopped right there.

Instead, he continued by saying "It's not like you're going to find a date out there." *WHAT?* I sat there, stunned, and thought: *Did you just say that? To a paying customer??? Is that sexist, or just stupid?*

Apparently he did not think that was enough because he went on to say: "My wife just broke her pelvis riding her bike. Of course, the helmet did not protect her, but if she would have hit her head it would have." *REALLY???* Well, now I was outraged!!! I yelled at him in my mind: *Your wife's injury has NOTHING to do with wearing a helmet! You don't even know what kind of a rider I am! You don't know that I have fallen a lot and I know HOW to fall!*

Out loud I said "I know that you think you are showing me that you care..." but in my mind I thought: *but I will never sacrifice my ability, confidence or strength to pander to your controlling and unjustified fears.*

Even though I was piping mad, I held my tongue and went out for a bike ride. I talked sternly to myself - out loud - in to the wind. I may have cussed. I talked and talked ...to him...to me...to really work through my frustrations to understand WHY I was so angry and upset.

It all came flooding in: I was disrespected! I was treated like I was stupid! Like somehow being a dentist makes him a 'health authority' over me? Like I've never considered wearing a helmet before. Looking for a date? Really? He did not ask what I thought, he just told what he thought and expected me to comply.

So...what did I do? Well, it took me until my next appointment to decide.

I considered going in and talking with him. I also considered sending a letter stating that I was so offended that I will no longer be a patient. I considered making a point to have a talk with him the next time I go in for a check up. And then I considered saying nothing and just letting it go.

But wait! That answer was clearly *not* an option. I realized I needed to tell him that I want to be respected.

I mean, if I really want to resolve my anger - to eliminate this frustration of disrespect - well, then I must talk with him; to help him realize how to understand that 'caring' can feel an awful lot like 'controlling'. How could he know if he didn't hear my point of view? I realized he needed to hear how thin and lame his arguments were so he could see things differently, *and* respect that I am also a health authority...of me! I have been healthy for nearly all of my 50 years. So I resolved to discuss this with him during my next appointment.

I have also realized that the *KA-BAM* burst of 'anger energy' from my frustration would be best reserved for bike rides, walks and other forms of physical release.

I've been working on using my "angry energy" appropriately for most of my life. Every year my new year's goals are 'be kinder and more patient'. I will not need another resolution; I still have a long way to go. This is big, tough, complicated work!

The first step to managing your anger is to decide that your anger will no longer be used for demolition; that your feelings of anger will only be used to construct new, better alternatives to challenges! Then you're ready to fully utilize the many great anger management resources available to you.

I wonder if my dentist would have told me I needed a helmet if I rode to his office on a Harley.

Handling Frustration

Dealing with frustration

Life is full of frustrations. From the minor irritations of losing your car keys to the major anxieties of continued failure towards a goal, frustration is not a pleasant emotion in any magnitude. Because of the unpleasantness of this emotion, people will often avoid anything that might lead to it. Unfortunately, many of the things we truly want to experience such as triumph, joy, victory and purpose require a great deal of frustration. Being able to manage frustration allows us to remain happy and positive even in trying circumstances.

In order to successfully manage frustration, you need to first understand what causes it. Frustration is simply caused whenever the results you are experiencing do not seem to fit the effort and action you are applying. Usually frustration is caused by a narrow focus on a problem that isn't resolving itself as you had hoped. This is a very simple concept, but it is an important step to solving frustrating problems.

Frustration is Energy Consuming

Our energy as human beings is our primary currency we use to do anything. Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energies all fuel discipline, creativity, courage and motivation. Anthony Robbins includes energy as the first key to success in any area of life. Stress in excessive doses is a negative emotional state that weakens the immune system and raises blood pressure as the direct result from a lack of energy. When we run out of energy we become useless.

Frustrating problems are incredibly energy consuming. Because these problems consume our energy in such great quantities, we need to be extremely careful that we don't try to keep running with an empty energy reserve. When this happens we burnout and require a long time to recover. The initial reaction of most people is to work harder when they encounter frustration. Although the intention to work harder makes sense, it often results in trying to spend more energy than we have available.

Why are frustrating problems more energy consuming than normal tasks? The answer to this is relatively simple. Because your action is not producing the results you expect, your brain naturally goes into full gear, rapidly consuming mental energy to solve the problem at hand. In this time it is very easy to run out of energy. When your energy stores are depleted this is when you become irritable, tired, stressed and sometimes even angry.

To get a little perspective on your issue, try broadening your focus from your current problem outwards. Try thinking about how the problem looks when you view it from a few weeks, a year, or ten years from now or compared to your lifetime?

Go outside and look up at the sky. Viewing the incredible expanse of space and time will ultimately make your problems look very small indeed.

Getting perspective when you are frustrated isn't a particularly difficult practice; the difficulty is in remembering to do it. It will be difficult to do this at first, but after diligent practice it will become a habit and happen automatically.

Nobody likes to feel frustrated. Unfortunately, frustrations are part of life. Learn to manage your frustrations so they don't leave you stressed, burned-out or depressed. Take breaks from your frustrations to recover your mental and creative energies. Reward your actions, not just your results and remember to gain a little perspective when you begin to feel overwhelmed. Don't let your frustrations prevent you from setting goals and living your life to the maximum.

Thank you Scott Young! Find more about this information here:
<http://www.scotthyoung.com/blog/2006/06/10/dealing-with-frustration/>

"Champion of Change" Sue Kastensen is On a Mission to Help People Succeed After Release

by [JD MacBean](#) | May 2, 2021 | [Life After Prison](#)

<https://livedreamblog.org/2021/05/02/champion-of-change-sue-kastensen-is-on-a-mission-to-help-offenders-succeed-after-release/>



LtD: Sue, first thank-you for taking the time to speak to us at the Livin' the Dream Prison Blog and thank-you for Fair Shake. I want to start by asking you to explain your personal journey and what you learned from it?

At 57, my personal journey is long, and I am mid-stream in my learning! A few characteristics stand out, however, and also a few events:

- I never stopped asking why...or why not
- I have never allowed myself to be limited by what someone else said.
- Thanks to Billie Jean King, I knew I could be whatever I wanted to be.

A few major events:

* I was kicked out of my parent's home at age 12. For the next 5 years I was deemed an 'uncontrollable child' and sent to group homes, foster homes, jails, and a reform school 200 miles from home. Ran away a lot. On Christmas eve, 1979 (age 16), I hitchhiked to a hospital in GA, bent over in pain, to get appendix removed.

* In my small WI town of 2000, I built a popular, national hemp-based personal care company in 1993. In 1999, an employee asked if I'd hire her friend who was coming back from prison soon. I did...and the seed was planted for Fair Shake.

* In 2005, I sold that business, received my bachelor's degree (age 42) in 2007, and started Fair Shake in 2009. In 2016, I was recognized by the Obama White House as a Champion of Change and in 2019 I received a Master's in Education. Next, I plan to add a Free School to Fair Shake.

LtD: Where did the idea for Fair Shake come from and what were

your first steps to creating Fair Shake?

I decided on that name because I kept hearing that all people wanted was a fair shake. As a kid who had spent several formative years 'in the system', I knew what that meant and how that felt. That was all I wanted, too.

I also knew that to get a fair shake people would need a way to differentiate themselves from the media portrayal of a person who has committed a crime. The only way to do that is to demonstrate volition, skills, intention, commitment and one's unique characteristics. But first, people had to find the things they need to exist! So, first I created a huge national [Resource Directory](#), next I built the stakeholder pages, and the last, but not least-important, came the page that holds the [Choose Your Perspective](#) documents.

LtD: What are the features of the Fair Shake website and software? How does each help the Returning Citizen?

Fair Shake is like a huge reentry Do-It-Yourself building center. I've pulled together resources, information, tutorials and lots of links to offer to people to use in the way that makes sense to them. Everyone's successful reentry project is different, so – like a hardware store – there is a lot of diverse information!

The website and software are identical, except – of course – that the software is offline, meaning it functions without the internet. There are several benefits to using the software prior to release:

* The individual can learn to find things in the website. Fair Shake is huge! They can explore the 'website' on their own time and in their own way. Then,

when the person gains access to the internet, they will know where to go to click on links to the resources and information that is most relevant to them.

* Some people have never used a computer or the internet, or maybe they have just been away from them for a long time. Learning how to navigate the website through our simulation will be beneficial to navigating all websites...without pop-ups, advertisements or other 'shiny' distractions. Also, we created a tutorial for learners to gain computer and internet knowledge regardless of their previous experience; one which does not require them to start at the beginning unless they want to. We offer email tutorials, as well.

* Progressive institutions can send people home with their digital property! Documents, spreadsheets and images can be uploaded into a personal account which can then be accessed online after release. Resume's, reflections and other writings can then be accessed from any computer!

LtD: Fair Shake must be a ton of work. How do you keep it going, and more importantly, how do you fund it?

It is a ton of work. I don't understand why large organizations with many staff members don't accomplish more, when I am doing all this by myself. But then again, I don't waste time at the water cooler, or arguing with people about the best way to do things...

Fair Shake is 100% community supported, funded only by donors who believe that what I've pulled together, to freely share, has value. Most of Fair

Shake's donors are incarcerated, where they earn around 13 cents per hour. Since the donations have yet to start really rolling in, Fair Shake's HQ is in my home.

LtD: Lets discuss re-entry more broadly. You've called mass incarceration a "Wicked Problem", a term coined by Horst Rittel. First, tell our readers what a "Wicked Problem" is and then please explain why re-entry is a wicked problem.

The way I used the term, it means that a problem has many dimensions, it is complex to solve, it contains many moving parts, and relies on a large number of stakeholders who do not work in concert.

A proper response to this question would require a book-length examination, but I will offer a few examples of the dimensions of the problem:

Television pretends to inform us but it mostly just numbs us, conditions us, and leaves us feeling overwhelmed and unable to think deeply about crime, justice, or the power and responsibility of citizens in a democracy.

Schools crush our full humanity (which includes others; not just ourselves). It conditions us to only care about ourselves and our individual goals; it also embeds the idea that we must see others as competitors for jobs, and that jobs provide the key to a life worth living. I believe this is at the root of our crisis of care today.

The 'justice system' is focused on 'othering' people based on the idea that the incarcerated possess "criminogenic needs", which are different from the deep human needs we all share. They 'manage' people through behaviorism instead of personal development. By failing to offer people resources and personal development information before release (job training is grossly insufficient for human development), they guarantee that many people will come back. We can see ample evidence for their "evidence-based" approach in the 83% recidivism rate*.

We've been lulled into thinking that government grants and philanthropy

have 'got this' so we don't need to think or take action. But we've been hearing that same story for so very many years...

This is just the tip of what I see of the "wicked problem" iceberg. There are many more dimensions to explore.

LtD: In your experience, what is the biggest hurdle men and women face as they leave prison? Are their unique challenges for each gender? How does Fair Shake help?

The biggest problem that I see is that prisons do not offer the incarcerated the skills that we all need to face the world each day: confidence about the gifts that we have to offer to our communities and to employers, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, the ability to use a computer efficiently and wisely to find information without getting pulled into the vortex of distraction, and a deep understanding of our needs - and the way we satisfy them - to foster both autonomy and interdependence.

Limiting stories create a huge hurdle. We know that stories can bolster us and help us feel confident, but they can also be used to justify fear, self-doubt and inaction. For example, even though I constantly share stories about employment opportunities all around the country, and employers who are looking toward prisons to find their future employees, I must constantly address the old claims that employers won't hire people who have been released from prison.

I believe there are far fewer employers in that category today. Employers want references, however, so a person may have to work in a setting that is not their ideal position until they can demonstrate that they are tenacious, convivial, caring and dependable. People can move to a more desirable position once they have a reference for 6 – 12 months of work.

Since I'm a kid from the system, and a female and a mother, I can see that women have an extra-tough hurdle to surmount to fully engage their powerful self-determination. I'm shocked and saddened that we have slid back from the liberation that was growing from the 60's to the early 80's. Media in every form wants to convince us that

we must focus first on how attractive we are; and second, our duty to others (children, men, elders). Very rarely are we provided with images or support for being agents of our destiny and success. In prison, for instance, we are mainly offered employment training opportunities for the occupations that women have traditionally held for the past 100 years, rather than giving us the opportunity to earn much higher wages in occupations such as construction, welding, or coding.

LtD: Many of the resources provided by Fair Shake appear to address Re-entry as a process. For example, you recommend re-reading the Working Through Depression information a few weeks after release and the Educate Yourself! resources six-months later. Is re-entry a process? Does thinking of it this way help Returning Citizens succeed?

I've been fortunate to stay in touch with quite a few people after release. Most, if not all, have said that it was much different than they expected, and that they were over-confident (a bias that afflicts most of us!) about their ability to address gnawing issues. Even after a year or two of relative freedom, they were still learning about themselves and their true needs and goals.

This is true for all of us. When we move to a different state or city, we are often unable to anticipate the psychological and emotional challenges that will face as we settle in to the new environment. The challenges are exponentially exacerbated for the person coming from an environment of such complete deprivation to one with an overload of information, misinformation, fake information...and overwhelming possibility.

One of my new friends, who was released from prison just over 2 years ago, shared his "process" in the most recent edition of the Fair Shake [newsletter](#) (sent to 3500+ incarcerated subscribers each month). He felt it was important to reach back and remind the readers to take care of themselves, or they would be faced with challenges they have not prepared for.

LtD: The information you provide in the Fair Shake Reentry Packet is very comprehensive and extensive in many different categories - including tips on watching TV, for example! Why are these topics so important for Returning Citizens to understand?

Where can we learn to watch TV defensively? It has such a huge influence on society, yet we are most often passive recipients of its pervasive and controlling messaging. Anxiety and depression are increasing! We can refuse to see ourselves as inadequate. We can question the media with its constant promotion of drugs, fear mongering and consumerism.

Besides critically thinking about the impact television has on us, what school teaches about all of the other influences that have shaped us - and the status quo? Where do we turn to foster self-determination in ourselves and our youth? Why are we taught to turn to authority for answers, rather than how construct knowledge with others? Who helps us to bravely set boundaries, or consider the biases that play havoc with our thinking?

I feel it is my duty to not only offer physical resources but also emotional and psychological resources! We have a right to ask questions, to reflect, and to think for ourselves. These documents form the foundation of the Free School I'm building: a free and open study center where people can explore the education that we were denied in our formative years.

LtD: Proponents of the term "Prison Industrial Complex" see the system as one that intentionally sets Returning Citizens up to fail in order to maintain a revolving door of imprisonment. What is your opinion on this? Are felons set-up to fail? Why or why not?

We are all set up to fail each other, starting with public school. Since we are starved of the opportunity to learn about ourselves as persons in the world, we are stripped of fundamental inclinations toward care, creativity, cooperation and critical thinking. The result is that we fail to care about one another - which is against our nature.

Many of my other responses provide examples of how prisons fail to prepare people for release.

I want to remind readers here to keep their scope very wide: the prison industrial complex does not stand alone. It is as pernicious and pervasive - and deeply connected to - the medical industrial complex, the education industrial complex, the military industrial complex (Eisenhower coined this term in 1961) and even the charitable industrial complex, which has been created to give us the illusion that society's shortcomings are being tended to by caring souls; rather than "foundations" and grants that may be bent on making sure things stay the same.

These writings will help you see the controlling power behind philanthropic funding and government grants: [The Revolution Will Not Be Funded](#) written by INCITE!, [Winners Take All](#) by Anand Giridharadas, and Peter Buffet's article [The Charitable Industrial Complex](#). Philanthropists, and the science that supports their perspective, circumnavigate democracy, create a comforting illusion, and continue to generate "solutions" that perpetually fail to solve problems.

I don't want to disparage non-profits! Many, like Fair Shake, are committed to a mission to reduce suffering and improve lives.

The industrial complexes, however, are about control: control of the people, control of the economy, and control of the future.

LtD: What industries or companies seem more open or willing to hire felons in your observation?

I believe the field of employment is wide open. Many of the newsletter readers are interested in trucking, entrepreneurship and building maintenance. I learned that more than a few thought they would like to share their gifts in the non-profit sector. I think this is a great idea, so I added a non-profit employment search engine link to the Fair Shake [Find A Job](#) page.

One of the most interesting aspects of Fair Shake is that it can be responsive to the interests of those who are preparing for release and those who

have made the transition. Real-time data!

LtD: What should current prisoners do, right now, to prepare for release and success upon re-entry?

Learn to recognize the conditioning that we've all been subjected to throughout our lives and decide, with intention, which beliefs are still serving you, and which ones you can let go.

In addition to your regular studies and job training and preparation, consider perusing user-friendly books on functional philosophy, psychology, sociology, citizenship and physical and mental wellness.

If you are interested in higher education, start your studies now! You can test out of many courses for just \$90 by utilizing the [CLEP](#) test, and you will likely even qualify to get your [Freshman Year Free](#).

Finally, read while you can, because taking the time to read a book will become very difficult once you get busy ~

LtD: Do prisons provide appropriate rehabilitative programs and/or job skill training for inmates?

It is impossible to answer a question about "appropriate rehabilitative programs" with a yes or no response since we have nearly 2000 prisons in the US and they function like independent communities.

I believe all institutions offer some sort of job skill training that can be considered appropriate, but I would doubt they are universally adequate.

LtD: What could prisons do better? Or, put differently, how should prisons help prepare inmates for our current economy?

I hope you don't mind if I skip this question. I've written, and scratched and rewritten responses and I have so many problems with 'the current economy', which I believe is in the process of pivoting anyway, that I don't think I could provide a response that is anything but confusing. (side note: I was deeply involved in Fair Trade for a decade, so my view of 'the economy' includes high regard for the workers

and deep thinking about extraction and externalizing costs...including pollution, toxins, etc.)

LtD: Has COVID affected the employment opportunities for Returning Citizens over the last 14-months?

Yes. It has been more difficult to get documents, in-person training and hands-on support, but - from what I've heard - jobs have been relatively easy to obtain.

LtD: You believe in, and promote, the concept of Ubuntu. Please define that concept for us and explain how and why you've adopted it in your life.

Desmond Tutu sums it up so well when he says "the solitary individual is a contradiction in terms".

Ubuntu, roughly translated, means: I am who I am because of who we all are. We learned how to be a person through other persons, and the culture and the environment in which we have lived. We are interdependent, and authenticity is of paramount importance because, as Desmond Tutu also says "I need you to be all that you can be, so that I can be all that I can be."

One of our deep human needs is belonging. We have a powerful, innate desire to give to our community, and we have many gifts to give! But we are taught to focus on our needs, and to address our problems as individuals, rather than within a community.

I learned about Ubuntu because I was frustrated (and still am!) by how we are controlled by Microsoft, et al. My son told me to try the Ubuntu operating system (which I now use), but when I

searched the term, I found the philosophy instead. I felt like I struck gold! I realized it is how I see the world, and how Fair Shake was created and continues to develop.

LtD: What about Fair Shake makes you the most proud? What are you still working to improve? Most proud: (I live in the midwest; this is very difficult to say out loud)

That my efforts are recognized and valued by the stakeholder groups I have tried to reach out to. Below please find a powerful, unsolicited 'performance review'; one I take very seriously. I see the acknowledgement and accolade not only as a compliment, but also as a fortunate responsibility.

I received this unsolicited comment just last week: Please know how much I remain grateful for all that you do. Despite the recent cold blast, I am given tremendous warmth from the hope and passion you exhibit. During moments of adversity, I will reread your newsletters and your encouraging words.

Working to improve: I'm always working my listening skills, widening my scope, my metaphors, and my understanding. The website and software are constantly being improved upon, and I'm writing new personal development documents in the hopes to improve the new Reentry Ownership Manual, as well!

LtD: What is the best advice you can offer a soon-to-be-released person? Hold on to your values, and try to not worry too much about unsettled feelings; they will settle in time. Breathe. Take an inventory of your gifts, your skills, your unique qualities. Think of ways you will share them with

those around you. Feel your confidence, and try to remember that feeling when you need to tap into it. Believe in yourself. Remember that Fair Shake is here, and I am here. Feel free to reach out if and when you need support. Congratulate yourself for getting through what could be the most difficult time in your life!

LtD: If Fair Shake is not available in an inmate's specific prison, how can they bring the software or information into the prison?

They may find an interested person in education, reentry and even in the library. Case managers have brought Fair Shake in, too! Let them know I will be happy to send a copy of the Reentry Ownership Manual and a DVD. The best way to reach me is sue@fairshake.net. Other options are in development, too. We're creating a 'secure' website, that acts like the software but is accessed through the chrome books now in circulation. We're also working with a tablet supplier. Fair Shake will remain free through all access points.

LtD: I always end these interviews by giving our guest an opportunity to address any area I may have missed or share information or ideas important to you. What would you like to leave our audience with today?

We've allowed our imaginations to be limited by external influences. We do not need models to build a powerful and satisfying future; we need gumption, determination and curiosity! We need to learn to listen, and we need to support one another. We must shatter the old models that no longer work. We have to make it up as we go; and to do this we will need to learn to trust ourselves and one another.

Rosie The Riveter said "We Can Do It!"

Candidate Barack Obama said "Yes We Can."

Sue Kastensen says "What Are We Waiting For? Let's Go!"

* Alper, M., Durose, M. R., & Markman, J. (2018, May 23). 2018 update on prisoner recidivism: A 9-Year follow-up period (2005–2014). Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/18upr9yfup0514.pdf>

Write Your Business Plan!

This text is from the Small Business Administration website:

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan>

Traditional business plan format: When you write your business plan, you don't have to stick to the exact business plan outline, but it would be wise to use the sections that make the most sense for your business and your needs. Traditional business plans use some combination of these nine sections.

Executive summary: Briefly tell the reader what your company does and why it will be successful. Include your mission statement, your product or service, and basic information about your leadership team, employees, market and location. Include a brief financial summary and plans for growth, especially if you plan to ask for financing.

Company description: This is where you will share detailed information about your company. Be specific. Describe the problems your business solves. Describe the consumers, organizations, and businesses your company plans to serve. Explain your competitive advantages. Are there experts on your team? Have you found the perfect location for your store? Why are you so passionate about the product or service to see the project through to become a solvent business? This is the place to extol your strengths.

Market analysis You'll need a good understanding of your industry, what is in store for the future, and your target market. Competitive research will show you what other businesses are doing and what their strengths are. In your market research, look for trends and themes. What do your competitors do? Why does, or doesn't it work? Can you do it better?

Organization and management: Describe how your company will be structured, who will run it and how it will be managed. What is the legal structure of your business? A C corporation, S corporation, B corporation, a non-profit corporation? Will you have a partnership? If not, will you simply be a sole proprietor or possibly a limited liability company (LLC)? Consider all options before you file with the IRS or state regulators.

Use an organizational chart to lay out who's in charge of what. Describe the qualities each team member will bring to contribute to the success of your venture. Consider including resumes of key team members.

Service or product line: Describe what you sell or what service you offer. Explain how the product or

service benefits your customers and what the product lifecycle looks like. Share your plans for owning your intellectual property, like trademark, copyright or patent filings. If you're doing research and development for your service or product, explain it in detail.

Marketing and sales: There's no single way to approach a marketing strategy. Your strategy should include the reception for your audience and your advertising outlets. It should also include flexibility should your product, service or messaging need to change slightly. How will you attract and retain customers? Where and how will you sell your products or services? Be clear! You'll need to refer to this section later when you share your financial projections.

You'll refer to this section later when you make financial projections, so make sure to thoroughly describe your complete marketing and sales strategies.

Funding request: Your goal here is to clearly explain your funding needs for the next 5 years. How much will you need? What will you use it for? Demonstrate how your profits will keep your business fluid while you're able to pay off a loan. Or would you prefer to take on investors? Give a detailed description of how you'll use your funds. Specify if you need funds to buy equipment, materials, cover payroll or other specific bills. Include your strategy for paying off debt or selling the business.

Financial projections: Here you want to convince the reader that your business plan is stable, will remain solvent and will be a financial success. List the collateral you will put up against a loan. Provide a prospective financial outlook for the next five years. Include forecasted income statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements, and capital expenditure budgets. For the first year, be very specific. Use monthly projections if possible. Make sure to clearly explain your projections, and match them to your funding requests. This is a great place to use graphs and charts to tell the financial story of your business.

Appendix: Use your appendix to provide supporting documents or other materials were specially requested. Common items to include are credit histories, resumes, product pictures, letters of reference, licenses, permits, patents, legal documents, advertisements from competitors, trade news about your product, materials, or services, any contracts you may have now or which are on the table.

Tips for Writing a Business Plan



What is a business plan and why do I need one?

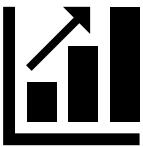
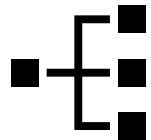
A business plan describes the strategy that the creators of an organization plan to follow as they build a new business...for instance, what steps will you take to start the business, and then what steps will you take to grow the business? The plan includes a description of the products or services that will be offered by the business, the customers, location, competitors, anticipated expenses, profit margin, plan to bring in employees, licensing or other special requirements and details specific to each industry, such as product shelf life and or cost of training staff. It should be written as a 3-to-5-year plan that includes short term and long-term goals. A business plan includes the mission statement and the vision for the organization. Use them to guide your structure and strategy. Business owners who need funding from another source to start the business – whether loans, grants or investors – will need a business plan to convince the grantors, lenders or investors that the business is a good investment.

A BUSINESS PLAN IS USUALLY REQUIRED TO OBTAIN FUNDING OR ATTRACT BUSINESS PARTNERS.

Is a business plan good for anything besides applying for funding?

Certainly. A business plan will guide you through the beginnings of your business. It will serve as a guide to get started, a measuring tool to keep you on track and a tool box notice problems and address them when they arise.

A business plan helps you monitor your cash flow, time and production rate to help you capture all of the aspect of creating your goods or services. It can be helpful in securing employees so you can attract a team that clearly sees and embraces your vision. It also provides a vision for potential partners or complementary business relationships, which can grow your business, or improve the environment for your business category.



If you can, incorporate graphs, charts, and visual displays of research, statistics and projections. They help readers stay engaged and visual descriptions appeal to different learning styles. They can also provide quick references.

Be prepared to make changes as the business develops!

Business Plan Basics:

- 1. Executive summary**
- 2. Company description**
- 3. Market analysis**
- 4. Organization and management**
- 5. Describe your services or products**
- 6. Marketing and sales goals**
- 7. Request funding**
- 8. Financial projections**
- 9. Appendix**



Culture Shock!

Most of the information Fair Shake shares is for everyone to read, because everyone plays an important role is creating opportunities for success after incarceration. This document has been created to increase generosity and understanding between the people who are coming home from prison and the people who have not experienced prison. Whether family, co-workers, neighbors, or friends, it's important to try to think about how hard it must be to 'hit the ground running' after living in such a stark and controlled environment, while gadgets, lingo, and trends are mutating quickly and constantly.

In many aspects, life in prison functions in opposite ways to life outside of prison.

Although we cannot grasp what prison culture is like, if we can imagine living for several years on a confined piece of land surrounded by fences while living, working and eating in cement buildings, we begin to scratch the surface of a very different daily life. Inside prisons (and outside of administrator's offices) we find few, if any, potted plants, curtains, pictures on the walls, or carpets on the floors to provide a little comfort and absorb sound. Sleeping quarters are often very small, sometimes made smaller by the addition of a toilet, a sink and possibly another person. Other sleeping spaces can include large dormitories filled with dozens of bunk

beds and little or no privacy or quiet. People in prison do things in large groups frequently, like dining and going to work, while everyone in prison is living within their own unique story, too, which may include difficult news from the doctor, a lawyer, or family and friends, at any time. Oftentimes people must bear their hard news alone.

Prisons have unique cultures, which can vary a great deal: over the years, within one institution, between institutions, and amidst the types of institutions (federal / state; or security levels). Not only do the people change, but also the philosophy and directive of "corrections".

We all become acculturated or "institutionalized" to places where we spend a lot of time: where we work, go to school, our neighborhood, etc. When we return home after spending time in another culture, our own customs can feel a little strange. We can adjust to a wide variety of conditions over time and even assume new cultural norms without consciously deciding to do so. Just as we need time to adjust to a new neighborhood or job, people coming home need time, generosity and understanding to adjust, too.

We have power! We can build relationships, trust and understanding by reducing expectations and projections; and by increasing listening and care.

Consider just a small sample of cultural and lifestyle differences:

Persona

IN PRISON: Survival in some prisons may require a tough appearance. Gentleness and kindness may be perceived to be weak, leading to a person being taken advantage of mentally, physically, or both. Maintaining a stoic exterior, keeping thoughts to one's self can be useful in prison.

OUT OF PRISON: Friendliness, smiles, and engaging conversations can show others we are open to interaction. These sociable attributes are critical for success many jobs.

Trust

IN PRISON: Trust is hard to give and hard to gain. Concealment of emotions is important in many circumstances but it can make trust more difficult to attain.

OUT OF PRISON: One of our most treasured character traits is honesty. Trust is an important element in any relationship; whether with family, friends, or work-related. We work hard to build long- lasting relationships. It is within these deeper relationships that we can learn more about ourselves.

Choices

IN PRISON: In addition to having an established schedule in prison, incarcerated people have few choices about where to go, what to wear, what colors they would like to see on the walls, or what they would like to eat for breakfast.

OUT OF PRISON: We constantly make decisions. Life moves at a brisk pace with frequent changes. We're constantly adjusting our plans, and re-prioritizing our goals to accommodate others and still keep time for ourselves. Lots of choice!

Gizmos

IN PRISON: There are few gizmos. One gizmo is the music player. For twice the cost that unincarcerated people pay for a single song, an incarcerated person – who often earns about 1/100th of what they would earn outside of prison – can add a song to their MP3 player. Another gizmo is the 'public computer', which offers email and news within the institution. The most advanced gizmos are the tablets, which may or may not be free to the user. They offer email, music and movie services that generally come with a cost, and may include free services, too, such as books from Project Gutenberg, prison and education programming, or even Fair Shake's free software.

OUT OF PRISON: Gizmos, such as phones, tablets and laptops are ubiquitous. The devices demand attention which many of us eagerly provide. They offer non-stop distractions from 'real life' in the form of videos (many of which people make and post themselves), TV, social media, email, music and radio. Gizmos are also able to offer two-way communication through text, voice or video options.

Social Media

IN PRISON: People watching TV together, people reading the same article and then talking about it, and even teleconferencing visits with family or friends are pretty much the extent of social media.

OUT OF PRISON: Social media is on almost every gizmo, and the pressure to join facebook, twitter, instagram and linkedin is great.

Many of us claim social media is 'pro-social' and boosts our awareness of current events and their meaning, but it has been tied to anxiety, depression and suicide.

Quiet Time

IN PRISON: Prisons are noisy places. They offer few quiet places or opportunities for time alone. The buildings are made of concrete and offer few furnishings to reduce noise. When people get upset, they may become loud. Many incarcerated people keep earplugs with them at all times.

OUT OF PRISON: Life is very busy and we are constantly interacting; the gizmos make sure of that. We have to be strong and determined to carve out time to be alone...to reflect on our day, our perspective, and life, or to sit quietly and listen. Quiet time can be rejuvenating and reaffirming.

Care-giving

IN PRISON: Incarcerated people are not able to provide daily, in-person physical or emotional care for children, partners, parents, or pets.

OUT OF PRISON: Caring for others is constantly affirming, taxing, challenging, and invigorating! We need to be needed, and we feel good supporting those we care about. Caring for others enhances our health!

Humanness

IN PRISON: Incarcerated people may be referred to as "offender", inmate, or by their last name or ID number.

OUT OF PRISON: We can insist upon being treated with respect.

Physical Contact

IN PRISON: Affectionate touch is brief and has been limited to family and close friends when they visit. Since COVID began, many visits have been replaced with teleconferencing.

OUT OF PRISON: Handshakes, hugs, back-patting, and other signs of affection are welcome and encouraged among relatives, friends, teammates and colleagues.

Information

IN PRISON: Incarcerated people can access a limited amount of information through magazines, newspapers, television, radio, and letters. But a person can think, weigh options, and philosophize with others, and without a gizmo buzzing at them constantly.

OUT OF PRISON: We are overloaded with information, misinformation and disinformation, with very few tools to differentiate one from another and very little desire to hear things from outside of our bubble. Online, we have limitless reinforcements for our beliefs.

Patience

IN PRISON: Incarcerated people must ask for - and wait for - assistance, services, and professional help including doctor visits, rides to see specialists, meetings with administrators, phone calls, and daily meals.

OUT OF PRISON: We are impatient. We want 'urgent care' and we can get medical help immediately, if necessary. We arrange meetings according to our schedule and we can spontaneously do things.

Consider these similarities, too!

- In prison, people continue to love children, partners, parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, other relatives, friends, colleagues, clergy, advocates, etc.
- We all appreciate humor and many of us support our favorite sports people / teams
- We all feel sad, scared, excited, angry, caring, anxious, blue and vulnerable at times.
- We are all concerned about safety, security, and the future.
- We all need - and deserve - feelings of self-worth, agency, dignity and belonging.

Attention Budget Worksheet

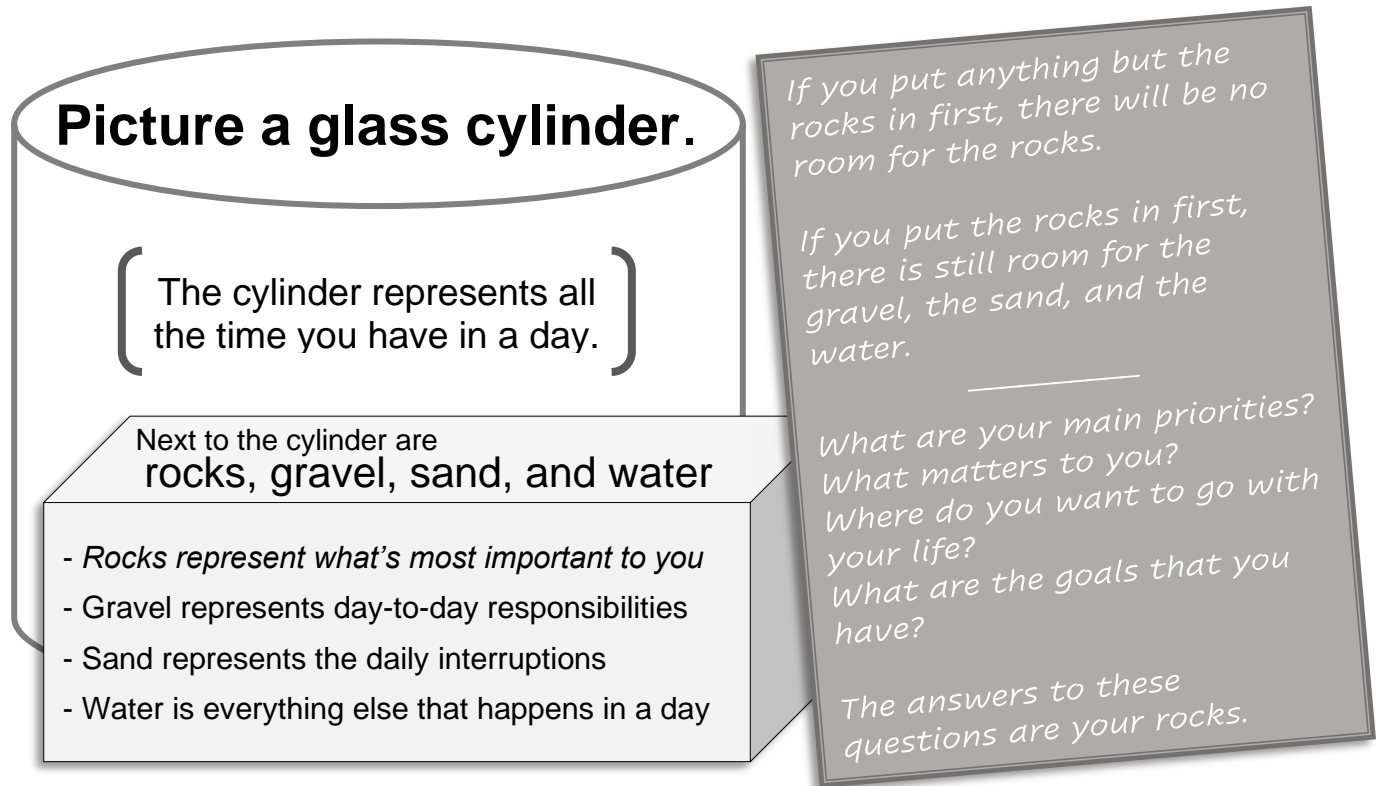
	Time Invested in	Planned	Actual Time Spent
Daily Work	Work		
	Travel time to and from everything		
	Other Travel...for errands, etc		
Food	Shopping (perhaps certain days per week?)		
	Meals – cooking		
	Meals – cleaning up		
	Meals – away from home		
Exercise	Walk, stretch		
	Aerobic – elevate your heartbeat!		
	Meditation / Yoga		
Thinking	Planning and Prioritizing		
	Evaluating (how effective was your plan?)		
	Reflecting		
	Meditation / Mindfulness		
	Reading		
Frequent Other Possibilities	Family (at home / visiting)		
	Friends		
	Hobbies		
	Classes and Homework (if in school)		
	Personal care: bathing, dressing, hair, teeth, etc.		
Media	Television, movies, YouTube®, electronic games		
	Social Media, Text		
Weekly	Weekly cleaning		
	Events with Family and Friends		
	Intentionally building your gift, yourself, your world		
	Travel time		
	Paying bills, balancing money		
	Services		
Monthly	Auto care		
	Volunteering		
Surprise Events			
	Totals:	Planned	Actual Time Spent
	Time alone: doing stuff		
	Time alone: thinking, reflecting, reading (books)		
	Quiet time with others		
	Active time with others		
	Time with Gizmos, Electronics and Screens		
	Time dedicated to living your life in the fullest sense.		
	Time connecting to your own life and all life.		

MANAGE YOUR PRECIOUS TIME!

ATTENTION BUDGET Deeply connected to your financial budget!

THIS IS THE FIRST DRAFT! I've included what this one mind of mine could think of; I'd love to hear from you to provide a more accurate range of options!

Steven Covey's great metaphor for managing our time; from his book First Things First:



The world demands your attention! Everyone tries constantly to get your attention. Set boundaries! Make your goals your priority! Slight changes to your path are like a compound-interest investment in your life!

Commit to goals as if they are appointments with your future self. YOU are important. Your goals are important. Goals are proactive, not reactive. Goals help us determine our "no" and our "yes" for investing our time.

All security experts agree: Trust no-one.

- Stay skeptical.
- Turn off cookies.
- Limit tracking as much as possible.
- Don't say anything stupid; don't use hate speech
- Thou shalt not overshare, or share data about friends.
- If the product is free, it means that you are the product.
- Limit your time on each platform (fb, twitter, instagram, et al.)
- Privacy is a myth. Assume if it's on the phone it'll be published.
- Don't live your life online. Take a walk, play a musical instrument, build furniture, live in the real world.

You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage – pleasantly, smilingly, non-apologetically – to say 'no' to other things. And the way to do that is by having a bigger 'yes' burning inside.

- Steven Covey

"Trying to be "safe" while using a "smart" phone is like trying to keep water out of a submarine with a screen door."

"If you join Facebook, you relinquish your privacy."

"When you receive an email from someone that wants to share their fortune with you, do not reply or click on the links!"

You can turn off media, social media, phone, text: YOU set the boundaries. No communication after 8 pm? Sundays? You choose your limit. With your time managed, you can invest time online...time digging for information, learning new things, listening to guided meditations, music and pontificators.

Working Through Depression

Depression *noun* Severe, typically prolonged, feelings of despondency and dejection, typically felt over a period of time and accompanied by feelings of hopelessness and inadequacy. (source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)

As Americans, it is common to feel like we are supposed to be happy. TIME magazine* recently announced “Americans are wired to be happy”, and reminded us that we made the pursuit of happiness “a central mandate of the national character” when we declared it a basic human right.

With so much emphasis placed on feeling good, it should come as no surprise that when we don’t feel happy, we may feel like something is wrong.

In fact, when we feel lonely, inadequate or disheartened as we search for meaning in our lives, our friends and family and even professionals often encourage us to strive to feel good again - as soon as possible - whether through distractions (shopping, media and superficial social connections, etc) or pain relievers (drugs, alcohol, food). It is rare to receive sympathy and support to simply *feel* our discomfort as we reflect, contemplate, grow, and become stronger and more capable through a natural and important process.

When we experience painful emotions we often feel alone. Sometimes we think we are the only person who feels this sad, hurt, alone or lost. However, people all over the world experience these difficult feelings.

Painful emotions are not bad; they are actually powerful guides to self-fulfillment.

- They help us clarify our values.
- They help us find meaning in our lives and see our unique perspective and qualities.
- They allow us to stop moving forward for a moment so we can reflect and think critically.
- They can motivate us through tough spots to more deliberately plot out our life course.
- They help us understand the suffering of others; and realize that we are not alone when we suffer.

All of our emotions - the pleasant ones *and* the difficult ones - are vital for our well-being!

We will most likely feel grief, loss, powerlessness, disrespected, compromised, inauthentic, abandoned, anxious, overwhelmed, unworthy, melancholy, or even a sense of hopelessness at some point in our lives, yet none of us will experience depression in the same way as anyone else. The good news is: we can work through most forms of depression without drugs. Everything we need is either already in our possession or can be found in the natural world around us.

There are many books, classes, groups, articles, and television shows on depression. The content of this brief document does not support or refute any existing information. Our sole intention here is to reinforce a positive and enabling perspective about growing through tough emotions rather than denying them through distractions or pain relievers. We grow in important ways through our human challenges.

Depression is related to our thinking; our perception of our memories, our fears, our failures, our hopes. It’s mostly a modern illness and has been growing consistently since the industrial age which, paradoxically, is celebrated for making our lives easier. According to Dr. Stephen Ilardi, author of *The Depression Cure*, indigenous cultures – who are dedicated to living in connection to their environment and to each other – do not experience depression.

When we feel sad, hopeless or depressed, we often feel like we don’t have a choice in how we experience these feelings....but we almost always do. We can’t eliminate depression by pretending we can ‘let it go’ without effort. We begin to rise out of it by looking at our situation through a different perspective. We can see different perspectives by considering philosophical, psychological and sociological concepts. This sounds rather ‘academic’, but we’ve been using techniques identified in these fields of study everyday since we were very young.

* TIME magazine: July 8, 2013

Below are just a few of these perspectives that we use everyday:

Pessimism vs Optimism: (inspired by Dr. Martin Seligman)

Optimism *noun* Hopefulness and confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something. (source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)

Pessimism *noun* A tendency to see the worst aspect of things or believe that the worst will happen; a lack of hope or confidence in the future. (source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)

Optimists believe that tough times are temporary, that hurdles build character and that most problems are surmountable. An optimistic perspective uses a Specific, External and Temporary lens (see below). We are optimists when we can see solutions, and also when we realize situations will change and beneficial opportunities will again present themselves.

Optimism is a tool with a certain clear set of benefits: it fights depression, it promotes achievement and produces better health. ~ Dr. Martin Seligman

Pessimists focus on what's wrong and what's difficult; they believe they are victims. They blame others for their situation. They believe that they are inadequate to fend off tough times, which are constantly threatening. A pessimistic perspective looks through a Permanent, Personal, and Pervasive (PPP) lens. We are pessimists when we believe we are incapable of doing whatever it is we need / want to do, when we blame outside forces for our situation or experience, when we want to give up, and when we believe we cannot create the life we want.

The difference between Optimistic (SET) vs. Pessimistic (PPP) perspectives:

Pervasiveness: Specific (*I'm great at fixing bikes.*) vs. Universal (*I can fix things.*)

Personal: External (*I have no luck.*) vs. Internal (*I have no talent.*)

Permanence: Temporary (*I am not good at this right now.*) vs. Permanent (*I am bad at this.*)

Hope: Hopeful (*I'll be able to fix this.*) vs. Hopeless (*It can't be fixed, I have to buy a new one.*)

Each perspective can be interpreted as a personal belief system, a self-fulfilling prophesy. Most of us are both pessimists *and* optimists, depending on the situation and our perception of our capabilities. Just as we can pick up good habits and let go of bad habits, so, too, can we learn to be optimistic and to drop pessimism.

And as with any habit, we can improve our ability and change our perspective over time by staying focused on meaning, values, and the long-term results.

To lift ourselves out of depression, and switch from a pessimistic to an optimistic perspective, we need to have faith.

Filters of Faith:

Faith *noun* Complete trust or confidence in someone or something (source: the Oxford (online) Dictionary)

We have faith when we believe in something even when we don't have proof.

Example: I have faith that I will get to the grocery store without getting into an accident.

Faith itself does not require belief in a particular religion; but belief in any religion requires *faith*!

To switch from a pessimistic perspective to an optimistic one, we need to have faith that optimism will help us reach our goal; and that pessimism is not how things really are. Remember *The Little Engine That Could?* "I think I can, I think I can." We are capable of doing very difficult things!

Can you believe

- that you have inherent worth, and that you are as important and valuable as everyone else?
- that your situation, problem or feeling is temporary?
- that a series of complex circumstances is what brought you to this point; not who you are?
- that all things change?...and that your situation is temporary and you will be able to get through it?
- that you have the power to change your attitude, your perception and your opportunities?

Dr. Stephen Ilardi, author of *The Depression Cure*, has been inspired by studying the resilience found in aboriginal groups who rarely suffer from depression. He suggests we integrate the following six elements into our lifestyle. Try the item that feels the most comfortable for you...and after a while add another. After a week or so, reflect on how you feel. Then add a 3rd and reflect on that experience, etc.

1. The Omega-3-Rich Diet: Sources of omega-3 essential fatty acids include fish, kidney and pinto beans, soybeans, canola and flaxseed oils, walnuts and vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, spinach, and salad greens.

2. Exercise: Dr. Stephen Ilardi says: *Even moderate physical activity - brisk walking three times a week - has been shown in two landmark studies to fight depression as effectively as Zoloft. Simply put: exercise changes the brain.* You can start with small increments of time. Make exercise one of your healthy habits!

3. Plenty of natural sunlight: Get outside, even when it's cloudy. Sunlight supports the creation of vitamin D, a necessary nutrient for mental health and strong bones.

4. Quality Sleep: Sun, fresh air, exercise, and fully engaging in life will help you get a good night's sleep.

5. Social Connections: One of our most basic human needs is belonging. Calls and letters with family and friends, participating in team sports and/or book clubs, volunteering and helping others all contribute to the feeling we belong and are cared about. Another basic need is independence. Remember to take thoughtful and creative time just for you, then you can share your thoughtful and creative self with others!

6. Participation in Meaningful Tasks: This leave little time for negative thoughts. Consider concepts in philosophy. Another basic human need is having a sense of purpose, self-worth, and meaning. We determine these by our thoughts; we demonstrate them through our actions.

Inspiration from great thinkers:

"Participating in meaningful tasks" has been a central theme to many philosophers, psychotherapists and other great thinkers, and has played an important role in of the process of reducing or transforming suffering for thousands of years.

Buddhism, a 2500 year old philosophy practiced like a religion, focuses on creating a meaningful life to alleviate suffering. By studying Buddhist ideas, we can learn to understand why we suffer. People can participate in any religion and still benefit from The Four Noble Truths:

First Noble Truth: To live is to experience physical and psychological suffering. We have to endure physical suffering like sickness, injury, tiredness, old age and eventually death; we have to endure psychological suffering like loneliness, frustration, fear, embarrassment, disappointment, anger, etc.

Second Noble Truth: All suffering is caused by craving. (Getting what you want does not guarantee happiness / satisfaction). Rather than constantly struggling to get what you want, try to modify your wanting. Wanting deprives us of contentment and happiness.

The Third Noble Truth: Suffering can be overcome and happiness attained.

The Fourth Noble Truth: This is the path leading to the overcoming of suffering. This path is called the Noble Eightfold Path and consists of Perfect Understanding, Perfect Thought, Perfect Speech, Perfect Action, Perfect Livelihood, Perfect Effort, Perfect Mindfulness, and Perfect Concentration.

It's easy to find out more about Buddhism. Hundreds of books are available.

Some Buddhist authors include: Thích Nhất Hạnh, Pema Chodron, the 14th Dalai Lama and Alan Watts

Friedrich Nietzsche, the late 19th century German Philosopher offers some bolstering quotes:

- *To live is to suffer; to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering.*
- *He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.*
- *That which does not kill us makes us stronger.*

Victor Frankl – Psychiatrist, neurologist, Holocaust survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning* has many empowering thoughts on this topic. Frankl observed that depression is a person's 'warning light' that something is wrong and needs to be worked through. He believed that each of us needs to identify a purpose in life to feel positively about (meaning), and then immersively imagine that outcome. According to Frankl, the way a prisoner imagined the future affected his longevity.

*The one thing you can't take away from me is the way I choose to respond to what you do to me.
The last of one's freedoms is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance.*

He believed that meaning can be found through:

- Creativity and self-expression
- Interacting authentically with others and with our environment
- Changing our attitude when we are faced with a situation or circumstance we cannot change

More recently, **Dr. Martin Seligman**, considered the father of the Positive Psychology movement, professor emeritus at Pennsylvania State University, and author of many books on improving one's quality of life, believes that meaning and character play an important role in creating a satisfying life. Seligman articulated an account of the good life, which consists of five elements called the PERMA model:

P: Positive Emotion

For us to experience well-being, we need positive emotion in our lives. Any positive emotion like peace, gratitude, satisfaction, pleasure, inspiration, hope, curiosity, or love falls into this category – and the message is that it's really important to enjoy yourself in the here and now, just as long as the other elements of PERMA are in place.

E: Engagement

When we're truly engaged in a situation, task, or project, we experience a state of flow: time seems to stop, we lose our sense of self, and we concentrate intensely on the present. This feels really good! The more we experience this type of engagement, the more likely we are to experience well-being.

R: Positive Relationships

As humans, we are "social beings," and good relationships are core to our well-being. Time and again, we see that people who have meaningful, positive relationships with others are happier than those who do not. Relationships really do matter!

M: Meaning

Meaning comes from serving a cause bigger than ourselves. Whether this is a specific deity or religion, or a cause that helps humanity in some way, we all need meaning in our lives to have a sense of well-being.

A: Accomplishment/Achievement

Many of us strive to better ourselves in some way, whether we're seeking to master a skill, achieve a valuable goal, or win in some competitive event. As such, accomplishment is another important thing that contributes to our ability to flourish.

Quotes by Dr. Seligman:

- *We're not prisoners of the past.*
- *Just as the good life is something beyond the pleasant life, the meaningful life is beyond the good life.*
- *We deprive our children, our charges, of persistence. What I am trying to say is that we need to fail, children need to fail, we need to feel sad, anxious and anguished. If we impulsively protect ourselves and our children, as the feel-good movement suggests, we deprive them of learning-persistence skills*
- *Self-esteem cannot be directly injected. It needs to result from doing well, from being warranted.*
- *Habits of thinking need not be forever. One of the most significant findings in psychology in the last twenty years is that individuals can choose the way they think.*

Positive self-talk you can try on to see if it fits: *Life is meaningful and engaging and human, even when it's hard. I will get through this, just like I've been able to get through so many other difficult things.*

We need: Food, air, water. These components will help to keep our bodies running, but our mind is a necessary part of our bodies and our mind is programmed with needs of its own.

We also need: To feel we are valuable. We need to be around others and to feel like we belong. At the same time, we need our independence! Being on our own helps us feel strong, capable, creative and unique.

Depression can happen when we don't believe we can change the course of our lives.

It can also happen when we feel we are incapable of doing things for ourselves.

Sometimes the source of suffering can come from our relationships to others. We may feel we don't fit in, or we are being used, or we feel like we are not valuable to others.

Sometimes we feel like all we need is a partner/lover/other intimate relationship to feel better about ourselves, but others cannot fill our inner void. Relationships can be supportive and beneficial; and they can also deplete our power and resources and challenge our self-worth. We must consider: *what must I give* and *what do I gain* by maintaining this relationship? Is it worth the cost? Am I valued, honored and respected? Can I offer the same? Remember:

- All relationships involve choices, compromises, and commitments (investments).
- We must weigh the degree to which we are willing to give up our authenticity and individuality to belong to a group or commit to an intimate relationship:
 - Do we raise the bar so high that no one is 'good enough' to be around us?
 - Do we drop the bar so low that we find we are involved with people who don't share our values, don't value us, or even abuse us or take us for granted?

Manufactured Desires

An especially tricky part to all of this is recognizing when marketers, TV personalities and even close family and friends try to influence our values, needs and desires to fit their motives or goals.

If we look deeper into our suffering we can find that some of the things we suffer from do not originate from our values, our needs or our desires, but are manufactured 'needs' as a result of the media's attempt to homogenize our fears and desires through news, TV shows, slick advertising and emotionally appealing marketing.

We are told we are inadequate, unsafe, unhealthy, and unattractive unless we purchase certain products, desire to look and think a certain way, or buy into fear. TV 'experts' are often just sales people wearing lab coats.

We take command of our lives when we raise our awareness and think critically about their intent. Do they really know what's best for us? When we know our core values, we can refer to them and hold them up to their attempts to influence our decisions. When we maintain control of our lives we feel strong, and when we feel strong, it is much harder to feel depressed and powerless. We are too busy driving our ship!

When we examine our core values, we realize that we know what's best for us. Our core values are necessary for healthy living; they help us make good decisions, gain confidence and fully engage our abilities.

Getting through...moment by moment...can be the hardest part. But we can do it!

Tips to encourage you during depression:

- Try to remember that how you are feeling is temporary and just your momentary perception, like a cloudy day seems to have no sun. The sun is there; we can have faith it will again brighten our day.
- Read uplifting and motivating books, articles, and Daily Motivators (www.greatday.com)
- Drink lots of water
- Start with small achievable goals and stay focused
- Talk with someone about your experience. Remember: you are not alone.
- Eat fruit, vegetables, and food high in Essential Fatty Acids
- Exercise outdoors! Get fresh air, sunlight and breathe deeply!
- Get involved in a meaningful, social activity such as volunteering to support your community.
- Have FAITH in yourself! You can conquer your depression and engage in life in a positive way!

Recommended reading:

Man's Search for Meaning.....Viktor Frankl PhD
"Learned Optimism" and "Flourish".....Martin Seligman, PhD
The Depression Cure.....Stephen Ilardi, PhD
Plato, not Prozac!.....Lou Marinoff, PhD
Books on Buddhism.....Thích Nhất Hạnh, Pema Chodron, Allan Watts
and many more

HOUSING

Like the Fair Shake [Find A Job](#) page, the Housing Search page lists search engines to find housing near you. In addition to the websites listed below, there is a lot more information in the [Resource Directory](#) and in Reentry Guides section below the Search Box.



Aunt Bertha

Aunt Bertha is a social care network that connects people and programs — making it easy for people to find social services in their communities. To do this, we've verified and added hundreds of thousands of programs covering every county in the US.



2-1-1

A phone number and a website! Not sure where to turn? We are here for you. **211 receives more requests for help with finding housing or shelter or paying utilities bills (over 4.4 million each year) than for any other issue.**

Homeless Shelters and Service Organizations:

National list of homeless shelters and other services homelessshelterdirectory.org/

Find the Housing Authority Near You!

A nearly-complete list. Some others are located on the Fair Shake website under State and Local Reentry Guides.

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts



Section 8: Frequently Asked Questions

What is Section 8 Housing?

The actual name of the program commonly known as “Section 8” is the Housing Choice Voucher Program, a federally funded program that subsidizes rent for eligible participants. It is designed to assist very low-income families or individuals. A housing subsidy is paid directly to the landlord on behalf of a participating family/individual.



How do I apply for Section 8 housing?

Contact your local [Public Housing Authority](#).

For further assistance, contact the Housing and Urban Development office nearest you.

Does my criminal record ban me from public housing?

There are only 2 convictions for which a PHA must prohibit admission:

- If any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program; and,
- If any household member has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for manufacturing or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing.



Attention Budget Worksheet

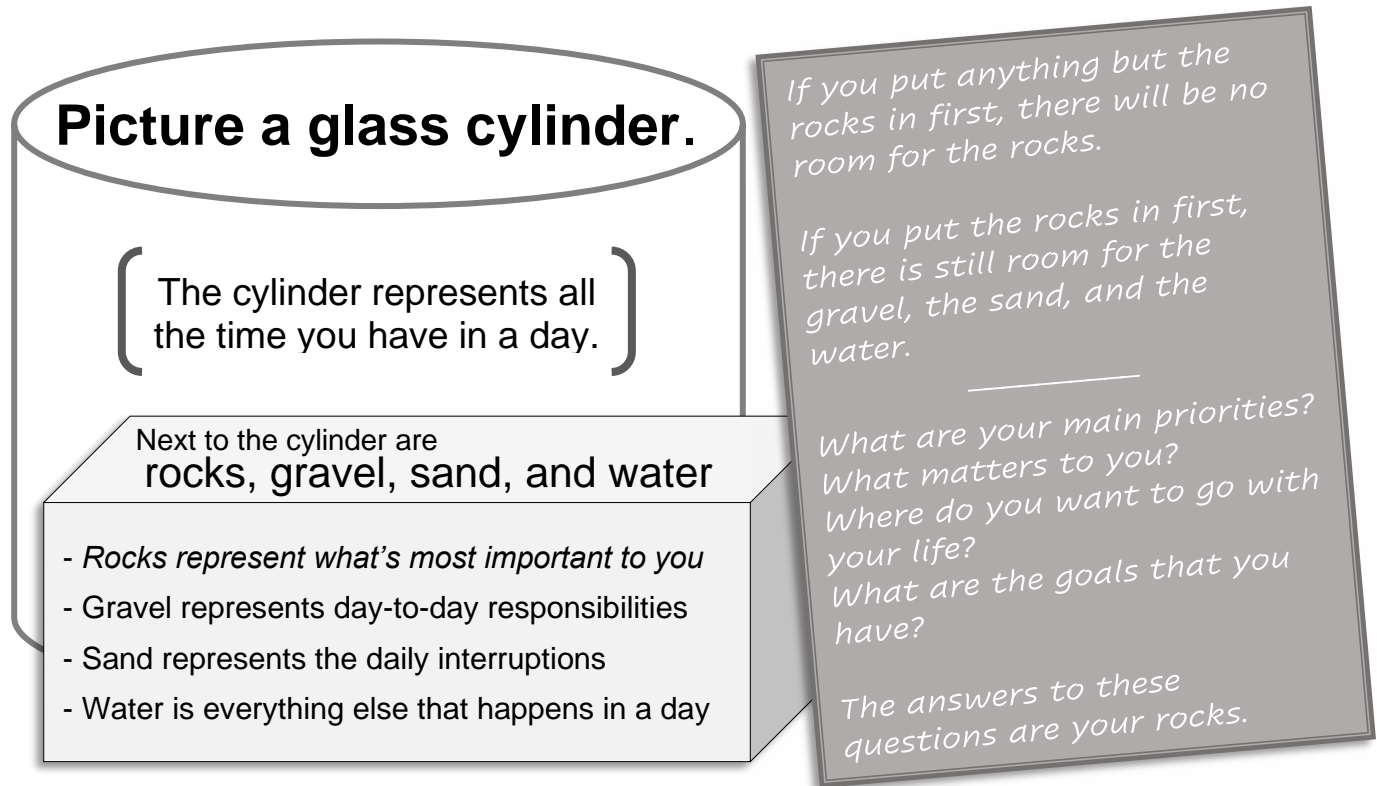
Time Invested in		Planned	Actual Time Spent
Daily Work	Work		
	Travel time to and from everything		
	Other Travel...for errands, etc		
Food	Shopping (perhaps certain days per week?)		
	Meals – cooking		
	Meals – cleaning up		
	Meals – away from home		
Exercise	Walk, stretch		
	Aerobic – elevate your heartbeat!		
	Meditation / Yoga		
Thinking	Planning and Prioritizing		
	Evaluating (how effective was your plan?)		
	Reflecting		
	Meditation / Mindfulness		
	Reading		
Frequent Other Possibilities	Family (at home / visiting)		
	Friends		
	Hobbies		
	Classes and Homework (if in school)		
	Personal care: bathing, dressing, hair, teeth, etc.		
Media	Television, movies, YouTube®, electronic games		
	Social Media, Text		
Weekly	Weekly cleaning		
	Events with Family and Friends		
	Intentionally building your gift, yourself, your world		
	Travel time		
	Paying bills, balancing money		
	Services		
Monthly	Auto care		
	Volunteering		
Surprise Events			
Totals:		Planned	Actual Time Spent
Time alone: doing stuff			
Time alone: thinking, reflecting, reading (books)			
Quiet time with others			
Active time with others			
Time with Gizmos, Electronics and Screens			
Time dedicated to living your life in the fullest sense.			
Time connecting to your own life and all life.			

MANAGE YOUR PRECIOUS TIME!

ATTENTION BUDGET Deeply connected to your financial budget!

THIS IS THE FIRST DRAFT! I've included what this one mind of mine could think of; I'd love to hear from you to provide a more accurate range of options!

Steven Covey's great metaphor for managing our time; from his book First Things First:



The world demands your attention! Everyone tries constantly to get your attention. Set boundaries! Make your goals your priority! Slight changes to your path are like a compound-interest investment in your life!

Commit to goals as if they are appointments with your future self. YOU are important. Your goals are important. Goals are proactive, not reactive. Goals help us determine our "no" and our "yes" for investing our time.

All security experts agree: Trust no-one.

- Stay skeptical.
- Turn off cookies.
- Limit tracking as much as possible.
- Don't say anything stupid; don't use hate speech
- Thou shalt not overshare, or share data about friends.
- If the product is free, it means that you are the product.
- Limit your time on each platform (fb, twitter, instagram, et al.)
- Privacy is a myth. Assume if it's on the phone it'll be published.
- Don't live your life online. Take a walk, play a musical instrument, build furniture, live in the real world.

You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage – pleasantly, smilingly, non-apologetically – to say 'no' to other things. And the way to do that is by having a bigger 'yes' burning inside.

- Steven Covey

"Trying to be "safe" while using a "smart" phone is like trying to keep water out of a submarine with a screen door."

"If you join Facebook, you relinquish your privacy."

"When you receive an email from someone that wants to share their fortune with you, do not reply or click on the links!"

You can turn off media, social media, phone, text: YOU set the boundaries. No communication after 8 pm? Sundays? You choose your limit. With your time managed, you can invest time online...time digging for information, learning new things, listening to guided meditations, music and pontificators.

Financial Budget Worksheet

Category	Item	Amount	Due Date
Home	Rent or House Payments		
	Property Tax		
	Insurance		
Other Home Expenses	Electric		
	Gas or Oil		
	Water and Sewer		
	Repairs		
	Maintenance and Fees		
Technology	Land-Line		
	Cellular		
	Cable / Satellite / Internet		
Transportation	Car Payment		
	Gas		
	Auto Insurance		
	Repairs / Maintenance		
	Other Transportation		
Health Insurance	Insurance		
	Monthly Medical Expenses		
Debt Payments: Loans, Credit Cards,			
Food	Groceries		
	Dining Out		
Family Expenses			
Other Expenses	2 nd car, loan or credit card?		
Surprise Expenses			
<u>MONTHLY SAVINGS:</u>	Total		
	Average Monthly Expense		
	Grand Total		

Annual Expenses	Subscriptions and Memberships		
	Vehicle Registration		
	Dental or Other Medical		
	Donations		
Total Annual Expenses			
Divide total by 12			
Result: Average Monthly Expense			

BUDGET SUCCESS by INTENTION: Break the Paycheck-to-Paycheck Cycle!!

Give Every Dollar A Job. Not just the necessities like bills and groceries. You also assign your money to going out, beers, fun stuff, travel – anything you spend your money on, it goes in the budget.

Embrace Your True Expenses. What are often overlooked are the once every year or once every few months spends. Better to save for an emergency fund right now than pay down credit cards or loans.

Roll With The Punches. Everyone overspends. Oh yes they do. Any budget should be flexible enough to deal with overspend

'Age Your Money': pay your bills with money that's been sitting in your bank account for two weeks.

Buy smarter. Cook: buy fresh and bulk foods and eat better! Work a second job. Make a budget. Be unwilling to accept credit card debt; pay cards in full each month or get rid of them. Be honest about your spending habits and adjust them honestly, too.

NATIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

America's Debt Help Organization: Debt.org
5750 Major Boulevard Suite 350
Orlando, FL 32819 <https://www.debt.org/>



Need Help Now? Call Us (877) 764-5798

Here's what they say about themselves: Debt.org is America's Debt Help Organization, serving the public with thorough, accurate and accessible information online about financial well-being. We strive to help people in all stages of life. The content on Debt.org is designed for anyone who desires a sound financial future, wants to get out of debt or wants to stay out of debt. Our goal is to be the only financial resource you need to deal with your debt.

Financial Literacy



Money Smart for Adults

<https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/adult.html>

14 Money Smart for Adults Training Modules

Money Smart para Adultos

<https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmartsp/adult.html>

14 módulos de capacitación de Money Smart para Adultos

Financial Education for Adults

Tools and Resources. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), is a government agency that makes sure banks, lenders, and other financial companies treat you fairly.

<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/educator-tools/adult-financial-education/tools-and-resources/>



Benefits after Incarceration: What You Need To Know

An individual released from incarceration may be eligible for Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability benefits Call to see if you qualify 1-800-772-1213

<https://www.ssa.gov/reentry/benefits.htm>



U.S. Government Services and Information <https://www.usa.gov/#tpcs>

Benefits, Grants, Loans; Consumer Issues, Disability Services, Education Health, Housing, Jobs, Military and Veterans, Taxes, Small Business, Voting and a LOT more.

EMOTIONS: THE BASICS

By: Tony Schirtzinger - www.helpyourselftherapy.com

What every eight-year-old should know, and most adults have never been taught, about the emotions that run our lives.

Basics #1

YOUR NEEDS AND WANTS

This topic explains what your feelings are, how to use them to help yourself, and how to overcome the ones that get in your way.

This information applies to every second of your life and every decision you will ever make.

Learning to apply the concepts in these few short pages can go a long way toward improving your life!

Keep these pages close at hand and use them regularly.

YOUR ENERGY AND YOUR FEELINGS

We get our physical energy from taking care of our bodies well – not perfectly, and not obsessively. We only need to eat, sleep, and exercise well enough in order for our feelings to give us all of the information we require about our needs and wants, and all the energy we'll need to address them.

Feelings are actually energy surges which tell us, very specifically, what we want or need.

When our feelings are strong enough to grab our attention, we can be certain that we'll have sufficient energy to handle things.

YOUR NEEDS

Needs are about survival. We would die if we didn't get what we need.

An adult needs the same things an infant needs. We need: food, air, space, exercise, temperature control (avoiding being too hot or too cold), and to eliminate waste efficiently.

We also need attention or "strokes" from each other. We don't need anything else!

YOUR NEED FOR ATTENTION OR "STROKES"

A "stroke" is a unit of recognition. When we receive a stroke, we are being noticed by someone.

Infants need strokes to survive. Adults want strokes so much that getting attention (just being recognized) is the strongest want we will ever experience in our lives.

FOUR KINDS OF STROKES

<i>TYPE OF STROKES</i>	<i>THE ATTENTION COMES FROM:</i>	<i>EXAMPLE:</i>
<i>Conditional Positive</i>	People who like something you did.	"I like how you did that."
<i>Conditional Negative</i>	People who do not like something you did.	"I don't like that about you."
<i>Unconditional Positive</i>	People who like the whole you.	"I love you!"
<i>Unconditional Negative</i>	People who do not like the whole you.	"You are worthless!"

Get good at understanding... and deeply absorbing... the first three.

And be sure to powerfully turn down and throw away all the "Unconditional Negative Strokes" you ever receive!

THE FIRST SIGN OF DISCOMFORT

Some people ignore their needs. They live in pain and may die from it. Most of us don't ignore our needs. We notice our need but then

we wait while the discomfort turns to pain.

Don't wait!

Get good at noticing the very first feeling of discomfort! Avoid emotional problems by taking care of your physical needs at the first sign of discomfort!

TRIGGERS FOR FEELINGS
Feelings are triggered by reality or fantasy. (It's always one or the other, never both.) **REALITY**

comes to us through our senses. If we can see it, hear it, taste it, smell it, or feel it on our skin, then it is real.

FANTASY is all mental activity – including thoughts, memories, dreams, ideas, etc. Fantasy doesn't come TO us, it comes FROM us – from our own brains.

If we only think it, it might be true or it might be false – but it is not real!

FEELINGS WE CREATE

Feelings that start in our brains rather than in our senses are unnecessary and optional, because they are not real. If we create painful feelings, we will need

to change how we think in order to feel better. If we create pleasurable feelings, that's great – as long as we remember we are only imagining.

Sometimes we create feelings which are so strong that they hide our real feelings from our senses. When we do this, we are out of touch with reality, and in real danger of making serious mistakes.

Basics #2:

YOUR NATURAL FEELINGS

THE NATURAL, REAL FEELINGS

Feelings that start in our senses are natural responses to the real world.

When we notice real anger, or sadness, or scare, we notice that something is wrong in our lives.

When we notice real joy or excitement, we notice that something is right in our lives. Natural feelings are always trustable. Learn what they are saying to you. Use them well.

TYPES OF FEELINGS

There are 5 natural and necessary feelings: EXCITED, SAD, MAD, GLAD, SCARED.

There are many other unnatural and unnecessary feelings – and all of them cause problems. Guilt, shame, and imagined fear are by far the most common and troublesome of these. ("The Basics #3" is about these.)

THREE HUGE QUESTIONS THAT AFFECT OUR FEELINGS

When any feeling starts, we are immediately faced with three huge questions, and we tend to automatically answer them in less than a second:

1) Will you admit to yourself what you are feeling? If you don't, you'll feel "out of touch" or "crazy" or uncentered.

2) Will you express the feeling either alone or with someone else? If you don't, you are giving up the chance for relief.

3) Will you take action to improve things? If you don't, you are giving up the chance to improve your future.

When we are having problems, we need to slow down this automatic process so that it takes longer than a second or two. This will allow us to think through each step instead of relying on old habits.

THE FIVE NATURAL FEELINGS

Use this information so you will always know what you want and feel.

<i>THE FEELING:</i>	<i>WHEN YOU FEEL IT:</i>	<i>WHAT TO DO FIRST:</i>	<i>WHAT TO DO NEXT:</i>
SADNESS	When you've LOST something, or when something important is MISSING from your life.	Feel it through thoroughly, to notice how important the loss was.	Work to replace what you've lost or what is missing.
ANGER / MAD	When there is a BLOCK between you and what you want.	Feel it through thoroughly, to notice how powerful you are.	Work toward getting past the block powerfully, wisely, and safely.
FEAR / SCARED	When your EXISTENCE is threatened.	Feel it immediately – in a second or less – and notice the danger.	Tune into your senses (what you see, hear, smell, taste or feel) and protect yourself!
EXCITEMENT	When you are ON YOUR WAY to something you want.	Feel it through thoroughly, to notice how good you feel about what's coming.	Enjoy it for the fun of it!
JOY	When You've GOT What You Want.	Feel it through thoroughly, so you notice how happy you are and how good you are at getting what you want.	Enjoy it for the fun of it!

HOW TO FIND EACH FEELING IN YOUR BODY	
1st	Remember a time when you felt each feeling very strongly.
2nd	Recall what was going on when you felt the feeling so strongly. Remember it in enough detail so that you actually start to feel the feeling again.
3rd	Notice where, in your body, you feel each emotion. (Find your "sad spot," your "angry spot," etc.)
4th	Describe what you feel in your body. Use adjectives like tight, weak, empty, heavy, light, etc.
5th	REMEMBER what you learn by doing this. Do this exercise over a few times if needed.

You will need this information to know who you are and what you want and to make every decision you will ever make.

Basics #3: UNNATURAL FEELINGS

ABOUT GUILT

Since guilt is not a natural, necessary emotion, it blocks and wastes our energy.

Guilt is a cover-up for which anger, which leaves us feeling sad.

We wonder: "Why am I so sluggish and irritable?"

On the surface we feel:
SAD or DEPRESSED

We've been telling ourselves things like:

"I shouldn't be angry. I should be understanding."

"That person didn't mean to hurt me."

"I'm too sensitive."

"I should just take the mistreatment."

"I don't deserve better."

Down deep we feel: ANGRY

Make A Conscious Choice:
Will I admit to myself that I'm angry or will I keep feeling guilty and be depressed?

BE PROUD OF YOUR
ANGER!

It's there to protect you.
Let it do its job!

ABOUT SHAME

Since shame is not a natural, necessary emotion, it blocks and wastes our energy.

Shame is a deep belief in our own worthlessness. It comes directly from being shamed as a child.

We wonder: "Why don't I seem to care what happens to me like other people do?"

On the surface we feel: VERY
SAD and "HOPELESS."

We've been telling ourselves things like:

"I'm no good. I just don't feel worthwhile."

"I wonder what's wrong with me, but most of the time I just don't care."

"I might as well have a drink (or a drug, or take a big risk)."

Down deep we feel:
MOSTLY SAD, BUT
FEARFUL & ANGRY TOO.

Make A Conscious Choice:
Will I keep believing those people who shamed me or will I treat myself well and be happier?

Know that anyone who shamed you was wrong!

ABOUT IMAGINED FEAR

Since imagined fear is not a natural, necessary emotion, it blocks and wastes our energy.

Imagined fear is a feeling we create to cover deeper feeling which bother us more.

We wonder: Why am I afraid?
Why do I always ask: What if?
Why don't I stop scaring myself?

On the surface we feel: FEAR

We've been telling ourselves:
I hate being afraid.
I wish I could do what other people do, and not be afraid.
I wish I'd stop thinking about every single bad thing that could happen.

Down deep we feel:
USUALLY SAD.
SOMETIMES SHAME

Make A Conscious Choice:
Will I always feel scared or will I face and overcome my deeper bad feelings?

Face what you feel that bothers you more!

You will get past the deeper feelings. But creating fear can last forever!

All other created feelings that feel bad.

It is possible to create any feeling – and any created feeling that feels bad will block and waste our energy.

All imagined feelings are habitual feelings we create to cover deeper, real feelings that bother us more.

We wonder:
Why do I keep feeling this same feeling all the time, even when I know it's not necessary?

On the surface we feel:
THE CREATED FEELING.

We've been telling ourselves:
I hate feeling this all the time. I wish I'd feel and do a wider range of things like other people do.
Why can't I stop making myself feel this way?

Down deep we feel:
Real feelings that seem too much to handle.

Make A Conscious Choice:
Will I keep feeling this way or will I face and overcome the deeper bad feelings?

You can overcome the deeper feelings alone or with help, but the habitual feeling you are creating could go on forever.

Face the feelings that bother you more!

Stop covering them with your "favorite" bad feeling!

These three topics contain the most important information I have for you.

I originally wrote "The Basics" around 1985. I refer to these concepts many times every day in my work with others and in dealing with my own dilemmas.

I sincerely hope you will keep this information readily available and use it frequently.

Use it whenever you feel stuck in bad feelings, when you want to feel more joy and excitement, and when you feel the healthy urge to look inward.

I WISH YOU THE RICHEST, HEALTHIEST, HAPPIEST LIFE YOU CAN ARRANGE!

Tony would like very much to hear your thoughts and experiences as you apply the information provided here. Please send your comments to Fair Shake, and I'll pass them on to Tony! I will then send his responses back to you, if you would like to hear what he thinks.

Fair Shake PO Box 63 Westby, WI 54667

Tony shares more great insights at www.HelpYourselfTherapy.com

Transition Tips

Reentry can be both exciting and frustrating! Our attitude toward release from prison is that it should be a simple matter of getting resettled, resuming routines, and reestablishing your relationships; but reality proves there is much more to it than that. Here is a list of tips to consider that can help you go through the transition process:

1. **Mentally prepare for the adjustment process.** Be prepared for anything... especially the most challenging things like rejection, depression, anger and disappointment. Also, be prepared for things to be NOT as you expect them to be.
2. **Give yourself permission to ease into the transition.** Allow yourself the space and time to acclimate to your new environment. Don't worry if it takes you a little while to get used to things again. You'll need time to reflect upon what is going on around you.
3. **Understand that the familiar will seem different.** You have changed; home has changed. You will see familiar people, places, and behaviors from new perspectives.
4. **Expect to do some 'cultural catching up'.** Clothes, trends, language, and more have changed!
5. **Reserve judgments.** Reserve all judgments of others, but especially negative judgments; just as you would like to have others reserve judgments of you. Resist the impulse to make snap decisions.
6. **Expect mood swings.** It is entirely possible for you to feel ecstatic one moment and completely defeated a short time later. It's okay; it is a part of the process.
7. **Allow sufficient time for reflection and self-analysis.** Your most valid and valuable analysis of an event is likely to take place after allowing time for reflection. Consider your core values and determine how you can live within them.
8. **Respond to inquiries thoughtfully and carefully.** Prepare to greet surprise questions with a calm, thoughtful approach. If you find yourself being overly defensive or aggressive, take a deep breath and relax.
9. **Seek support networks.** Don't isolate yourself! There are people who want to help you through your transition. You will find them if you look...
10. **Volunteer.** A great way to connect to community, build references and network with people and possibilities is to volunteer.

To prepare yourself for upcoming challenges, it is safe to expect the following:

- You will have to prove yourself (over and over and over).
- People will make many assumptions about who you are now.
- You will be different than when you left; your family and friends will be different, too!
- People will expect a lot from you.
- The way you'd hoped things would be will be different from the way they are.
- You will feel down or depressed after the initial return 'honeymoon' period. Please refer to our Culture Shock! page for further transition considerations.

Want to be mentally and physically healthy?

VOLUNTEER

for just 2 hours each week!

No matter what research, anecdotes, survey or data are most important to you, they all demonstrate that people who volunteer enjoy increased physical and mental health, a deeper sense of meaning, and a decrease in depression and/or anxiety levels. All of this is true regardless of the physical or mental state of the volunteer before they start volunteering.



It's FREE! YOU reap many health benefits!
It builds MEANING, CONNECTION, and VALUE!

I sometimes hear from people who 'want to tell their story to the youth to keep them from going to prison'. It's an interesting idea, but just 'telling' probably won't work. The youth today - just like when you were a youth - won't learn from old people's stories. But if an old person will listen to them? That might make a big difference, and once you build trust, you may be able to share your story after all. When you listen, you can gain trust, and then help them build the future. Listening helps people feel valued, which can increase their feelings of agency and power over their lives.

There are many ways, formally and informally, that you can commit to supporting others:

- Wherever you go, there are people who need attention; who need to be heard and honored.
- There are people who need to eat, need help shopping and help taking care of their home.
- There are people who need support, need to learn how to ask good questions, need to find their voice, need to learn to establish good boundaries, need to learn how to learn, and also to re-learn how to express themselves through art, movement, music, and imagination!

In a 2009 survey* of 4582 people, at an average of 2 hrs/wk., people said this about volunteering:

96%: feel happier (A way to relieve our suffering from unhappiness and depression!)

92%: enriches my sense of purpose in life

89%: improved my sense of well-being

78%: helps with recovery from loss and disappointment

77%: improves emotional health

73%: lowers my stress levels

68%: made me feel physically healthier

*http://cdn.volunteermatch.org/www/about/UnitedHealthcare_VolunteerMatch_Do_Good_Live_Well_Study.pdf

According to Post, volunteers have less trouble sleeping, less anxiety, less helplessness and hopelessness, better friendships and social networks and a sense of control over chronic conditions. Those who received help from others also benefit greatly from helping others!

You may want to starting your volunteerism with an established organization. Or you can certainly start your own thing. That's how Fair Shake got started!

It's a GREAT way to meet new people, to immerse yourself in a diverse group, to network in new circles, to demonstrate your character and commitment, to build community and faith in humanity!

NO DRUGS! NO SIDE EFFECTS! NO COST! NO OFFICE VISIT! NO DOCTORS!

EVERYONE VOLUNTEERS. YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU WILL MEET THERE!

You may find your next employer, property manager, babysitter, ride-share person or friend!

Ways to Volunteer: (this is just the beginning of a list for which there is no end...)

Food Pantry
Free Meals
Yard Work
Reading
Shopping

Clean Up Trash
Driving / Rides
Help with Taxes
Simply Spend Time
Hobbies

Arts and Crafts
Animal Rescue
Handy-person Repair
Snow Shoveling
Help with Moving

Community Volunteer Opportunities

* * 2 hrs/week delivers health benefits to you. Any amount of time delivers benefits to others. * *

Food Pantry * Habitat For Humanity * Lawn Mowing * Church or Community Groups
Direct Support * Child Care * Elder Support * Home/Yard Help * Shopping * Outdoor Activities

Web-based Connections to Volunteering



Volunteer Match volunteermatch.org (non-profit)
people, animals, environment

Volunteer Match is the largest network in the nonprofit world, with the most volunteers, nonprofits and opportunities to make a difference.

Buy Nothing Project

Buy Nothing Project buynothingproject.org (global network)
Help another person give and receive, share, lend, and express gratitude using technology through a worldwide gift economy network in which the true wealth is the web of connections formed between people!



Fair Shake fairshake.net (community-powered non-profit)
* Fair Shake is web/software based. We welcome tech volunteers!
* Help others find resources and information in our huge library!
* Help us build the FS resource directory by letting us know about resources that you recommend from your area! Mail information to Fair Shake PO Box 63, Westby, WI 54667 or email: sue@fairshake.net



Volunteer.gov (federal program)
America's Natural and Cultural Resources Volunteer Portal built and maintained by the Federal Interagency Team on Volunteerism (FITV)



Engage engage.pointsoflight.org (project of Pres. George H.W. Bush)
Search our database for volunteer opportunities inside and outside of the home that meet critical needs. The world is waiting for you to shine your light.



Just Serve justserve.org/projects (provided by Mormons)
A website where the volunteer needs of organizations may be posted and volunteers may search for places to serve in the community.

Educate Yourself!

The Internet can be used as a powerful tool for growth; you can teach and learn many things by yourself! Education serves many purposes, among them: to help us understand things and also to understand ourselves, to help us make connections and decisions, to show others we are capable; to name but a few.

Basic academic education is not the key to knowledge. Knowledge involves many facets to learning: academic, experience, learning about yourself and your values, listening, learning to live in society, and more. The key to knowledge works when we integrate all of the aspects to make decisions and set goals.

Fair Shake brings together many free, online self-directed education resources for you to engage in education!

Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family. ~ Kofi Annan

Traditional Education

Education Basics

Free support for learners through High School or GED

Higher Education

Free university level or professional development resources.

Non-Traditional

Life Skills

Tools for daily living, including finances, cooking, and creativity!

Employment Skills

Support from resume' building to professional development

Khan Academy: offers a library of over 3,500 videos which covers K-12 math, biology, chemistry, physics, the humanities, finance and history. Each video is approximately 10 minutes long. All materials and resources are free.



GCF Learn Free: Provides quality, innovative online learning opportunities to anyone who wants to be successful in both work and life. They believe there's freedom in the ability to learn what you want, when you want, regardless of your circumstances



Massachusetts Institute of Technology's free courses include materials from more than 2,000 courses, presenting virtually the entire curriculum of the Institute.



Coursera is an education platform that partners with top universities and organizations worldwide, to offer courses online for anyone to take, for free.



Academic Earth provides access to a world-class education and includes curated links to over 750 online courses and 8,500 individual online lectures, giving students of all ages unparalleled access to college courses they may otherwise never experience.



Codecademy is a great place to get started with programming! The lessons are very rewarding as your progress can encourage you with medals or allow you to post your progress on social media websites. The lessons are free; tests that offer certificates are available for purchase.



Acámica es el futuro de la educación superior en línea. A través de lo que llamamos microaprendizaje ramificado, ofrecemos cursos de calidad, accesibles, dinámicos e interactivos, que pueden ser tomados en cualquier lugar, en cualquier momento.



CLEP offers 33 Internet-Based Testing exams in five subject areas at over 1,800 college test centers, covering material taught in courses that you may generally take in your first two years of college. By passing a CLEP exam, you can earn 3 to 12 college credits. Exams cost \$80. There are text exams for you to use to prepare.



List of CLEP Exams: Match with OpenCourseWare Classes!

American Literature	Western Civilization I: Ancient Near East to 1648
Analyzing and Interpreting Literature	
College Composition and Modular English Literature	Western Civilization II: 1648 to the Present
Humanities Foreign Languages	Science and Mathematics
French Language (Levels 1 and 2)	Biology
German Language (Levels 1 and 2)	Calculus
Spanish Language (Levels 1 and 2)	Chemistry
History and Social Sciences	College Algebra
American Government	College Mathematics
Human Growth and Development	Natural Sciences
Intro to Educational Psychology	Pre-calculus
Introduction to Psychology	Business
Introduction to Sociology	Financial Accounting
Principles of Macroeconomics	Introductory Business Law
Principles of Microeconomics	Information Systems and Computer Applications
Social Sciences and History	Principles of Management
History of the United States I: Early Colonization to 1877	Principles of Marketing
History of the United States II: 1865 to the Present	



Fair Shake's Guide to TRUCKING OPPORUTNITIES!

American Trucking Associations

ATA Headquarters
950 North Glebe Road, Suite 210
Arlington, VA 22203-4181



<https://www.trucking.org/>

From their website: American Trucking Associations is the largest and most comprehensive national trade association for the trucking industry. ATA is an 86-year old federation with state trucking association affiliates in all 50 states. We represent every sector of the industry, from LTL to truckload, agriculture and livestock to auto haulers, and from large motor carriers to small mom-and-pop operations.



Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association

OOIDA HEADQUARTERS
1 NW OOIDA Dr.
Grain Valley, MO 64029
816-229-5791 800-444-5791

<https://www.ooida.com/>



The mission of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, Inc. is to serve owner-operators, small fleets and professional truckers; to work for a business climate where truckers are treated equally and fairly; to promote highway safety and responsibility among all highway users; and to promote a better business climate and efficiency for all truck operators. More than 150,000 members of OOIDA are men and women in all 50 states and Canada who collectively own and/or operate more than 240,000 individual heavy-duty trucks and small truck fleets. All OOIDA officers and directors are now, or have been, professional truckers, and are elected from the membership, by the membership. The 22-member board helps define OOIDA's position on all major trucking issues. They offer information and education in all areas of independent truck ownership and responsibility.



Gary's Job Board: www.garysjobboard.com
Truck Drivers wanted! Since 2004.

Gary can find you a better truck driving job, with or without a CDL.

Gary's Job Board was created to help Truck Drivers find Driving Jobs, and to help Dispatchers find Drivers. Gary's Job Board is 100% unaffiliated. We DO NOT recruit for any carriers. Our service will always be FREE to drivers because drivers' rock. Here's how garysjobboard.com works: (this is NOT a run-of-the-mill trucker job board. No one will call you, you have all the power).

- Complete your Driver Profile, it takes 2 minutes.
- Companies will see your first name, type of CDL, and experience level.
- They will not see your email address.
- You will receive a company invite by email and the email will come from our system.
- Check out what they are offering. Answer the email or not. You'll receive another invite down the road.



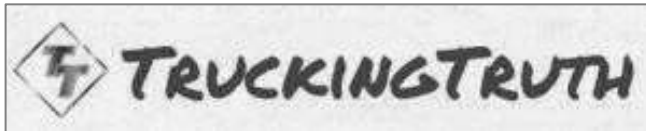
AllTrucking.com www.alltrucking.com
PO Box 26330,
Overland Park, KS, 66213

"Welcome to AllTrucking.com, your source for finding information to become a truck driver and find a trucking

career. Whether you are looking for your next truck driving job or want to learn how to earn your CDL, we have guides for you. We have even organized some of the more common questions that might be found on a CDL exam, and put them into a simple practice test! "

They have a library of guidebooks - from career support and paying for school to helping veterans – "we've got a resource to help anybody." Here are a few of our most frequently requested pages:

- How to Pay for Truck Driving School
- Truck Driving Jobs: Careers in Commercial Truck Driving
- Company-Paid CDL Training Programs: A Comprehensive Guide



Trucking Truth
www.truckingtruth.com

A Positive Yet Honest View Of The Trucking Industry With Friendly Advice From Experienced Drivers

Trucking Truth (TT) was created in 2007 to give new drivers a true picture of what a career as a truck driver is all about and a straightforward strategy for surviving that first year of their career. I wanted people to know that trucking can be an awesome career for the right person and it's totally doable if you work hard, keep a great attitude, and have a solid strategy in place.

A huge informational website that includes:

- Trucker's Forum
- Truck Driver's Career Guide
- Free CDL Practice test
- A list of companies that hire people with a criminal history.
- "The Road Home" podcast
- All things CDL
- Trucking Company Reviews
- Trucking Wiki...where you can find out FAQ's, physical health tests and issues, limitations and opportunities for drivers with a criminal history, driving with pets and much more.



Get Paid While Training For Your CDL?

Upon completion of your paid CDL training, you will sign an agreement to work for the company for a specified amount of time. This is how they recoup the time and money they've invested in your CDL training, which is a very fair deal for both sides.

If you quit working for the company before your obligation is complete, you will owe the company a prorated amount of money for the schooling. At some companies, your training will be free once your obligation is complete. Others may require you to make payments from your paycheck to cover the tuition for the schooling.

TT offers a review of the companies that offer paid CDL training.

PHILOSOPHY:



(to) JUDGE v.

OED: To form an opinion or conclusion



"Nice job!"

"That's a great haircut."

"You're amazing!"

We love to hear comments like this, and all of these statements are judgments.

One of the funny things about the word 'judge' is that it is almost always judged unfairly. One look through internet search pages – using a wide variety of search words – provided fewer than 5% of the results to the word 'judge' in a positive light (and then only when I used 'good' in the search; most of those results were from law firms and business websites!).

Judging well, so that we make good decisions, is one of the most valuable and important functions our brains can perform. But where can we learn to discern?

When we judge, we designate value. We determine if a thing is 'good' or 'bad', 'heavy' or 'light', 'beautiful' or 'ugly', etc. Judgements are relative to a belief system. To improve our ability to judge, we must expand our experience, and also our knowledge of ourselves and humanity.

We must judge when food is too hot to give to a child. We must judge if we have enough fuel to reach our destination. We judge our culpability in an unfortunate event. (Often generously. Flip this page to find out about the Fundamental Attribution Error)

Like many popular words and phrases, the word 'judge' is often referred to negatively, and is based on a fear or a projection of our own beliefs.

By reflecting on the word, we can open our minds and hearts to it's full potential, confront and de-escalate uncomfortable situations, and enlarge our feelings of humanity. We can understand that values, and the judgements that are made because of them, are personal; and that the judgments of others are no threat to our own.

Through understanding, we can own our judgments, and offer generosity when we hope that others, too, will judge us kindly.

Job interviews are all about judgments; an applicant must gather enough information to determine if the job that is available is one that will be satisfying, while the employer must also judge if the applicant will be a good match for the job and the team.

We must judge for safety. We must judge for nutrition content, carcinogenic (cancer-causing) content, and alcohol content. We must learn to say 'no'...which is a judgment about our limitations. We can be understanding and forgiving, which may be what we will want from others, too.

We can decide how we wish to judge, and see an opportunity to educate others when we know we are being judged. We have a lot of power!

Things we judge: FAIR * GOOD * BEST * SAFE * ENOUGH * IMPORTANT * VALUE * RIGHT

BELIEFS, MORALITY, VALUES AND JUDGMENT

They determine our choices and, hence, our possibilities!

"Judge so that you can make the best decisions for yourself; some choices are better than others."

- Sheila Baranoski

"We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are."

- Anonymous

"Good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment." - Anonymous

Examples of judging in action:

Decide: Should I articulate my boundary about this? If so, should I be gentle, forceful, or generous?

Discern: Is this partial story really just fake news? Does red dye #40 make me hyperactive?

Determine: Do I have enough time? Do I have enough energy / fuel to go the distance?

Reflect...and double-check:

When I think someone is judging me negatively, I can I stop to ask myself:

Is it ME who is judging THEM? Am I projecting my fears? Am I reading too much into the situation?

What behavior do they demonstrate that causes me to believe they are judging me negatively?

Could it be that I'm just hungry, hot (or cold), anxious about something else, or in a bad mood?

Is this just the **Fundamental Attribution Error** rearing its ugly head again?

FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR: (a common bias!)

When we judge others differently than we judge ourselves.

- When 'good' things happen to us, we tend to believe we earned them or deserve them. When good things happen to others, we tend to believe they were lucky.

- When unfortunate things happen to us, we tend to blame others for our misfortune, or believe we had bad luck. But when bad things happen to others, we often attribute their difficulties to their character, as if they are careless or foolish.

		Who did it?	
		myself	someone else
Outcome	positive	personality	circumstances
	negative	circumstances	personality

BIASES ARE SNAP-JUDGMENTS BASED ON OUR HISTORY.

We can decide HOW to judge. We can be generous in spirit to others, as we often are for ourselves. Through our actions, we help the people that we love make better judgments.

Considerations to improve your judgment:

- Be aware of your biases and filters. Listen carefully and question assumptions, including yours.
- Question the quality of the information you receive. Consider topics through a variety of sources for a more complete picture. Get out of the 'confirmation bias' echo chamber.
- Reflect on your history with the topic: what you've learned through your life, and who the sources were that informed you. Were they biased? Is it time to let go of the filter of false beliefs? Look for ways to expand your experience!
- Consider what you feel and what you believe. Reflect on your values; your values drive decisions! Seek the input of a third party when you can.
- Can you see more options; esp. options that may not be offered?
- Can you consider others in a generous light: as people who are striving, and who are mostly good?
- Can you see how your behavior or comments could be misunderstood?
- Can you be flexible enough to change your perspective?

**"Replace
judgment
with
curiosity."**

- Lynn Nottage

Finally, here are a few helpful questions to ask before making an important judgement:

1. Do I tend to act on impulse and later regret it? If so, how can I slow down and weigh my options?
2. Is this unlike anything I've seen before? If so, what should I do to learn more before I decide?
3. Are the stakes high? If so, should I do more research and gather more perspectives from others?

When we improve our judging abilities, we can help others improve theirs, too!

All Fair Shake documents are written solely as 'primers' or jump-off points to stir curiosity and desire for further investigation.



PHILOSOPHY: our Human Operating System

"It's not fair!" "Good job." "Why can't I do that?" "You should eat more vegetables."

These statements, which seem to have nothing in common, are all based on beliefs, values, and judgement. These statements are all philosophical expressions.

According to the City University of New York's website, "philosophy is a combination of two Greek words, *philein sophia*, meaning lover of wisdom". Philosophy celebrates all kinds of thinking and provides a 'wholeness' about knowledge, recognizing that our beliefs about things are connected, and form the foundation of our epistemology or 'how we know what we know'.

Discussions about philosophy are often considered 'academic' or pointless, and are generally avoided yet, as demonstrated above, philosophy forms the foundation of the way we view the world and act in it. It also forms the foundation of how we believe people-in-society ought to act.

Philosophy covers: morals and ethics (which we all have, whether we articulate them or not). It also covers beliefs, values, and reasoning or logic; and the questioning of our assumptions about all of them - known as critical thinking.

Philosophy guides all learning, including what we determine is important to learn or whether we want to learn at all. Sadly, we are systematically denied a pursuit of the 'love of wisdom' in our basic mandatory school years. Rather than teaching us how to learn, or simply to love to learn, we are instead trained to accumulate and memorize facts, followed by dehumanizing testing to demonstrate retention. But memorizing is not understanding. It does not help us become caring or creative problem solvers. It does not help us listen or value each other's contributions to a collective community project. Aren't these skills at least as important as remembering how to multiply? (We can do that on a calculator anyway.) Testing kills our creativity...but we can revive it! We are never too old to learn, or to learn to love wisdom.

Socrates was a philosopher who loved to ask questions and to encourage others to ask questions. Socrates was not necessarily looking for answers. Instead, he often asked questions to understand how people think. Socratic questions, like the ones below, help us to understand each other:

- Why do you think that?
- What do you mean by that?
- Why is this question important?
- Could you put that another way?
- What do you think is the main issue here?
- Could you expand upon that point further?
- Why would someone make this assumption?
- Could you give me an example of what you mean?
- What assumptions can we make based on this question?
- Does this question lead to other important issues and questions?

As we will explore in the Moral Courage document, sometimes simply asking questions requires a great deal of courage. Although there is such a glut of information that it's difficult to make sense of it all, a lot of people are threatened when we ask questions...about the information, about beliefs or values and even about accepted norms, commonly called 'the status quo'.

But how can we learn if we don't ask questions? How can we grow if we don't question our own beliefs? How can we build a satisfying life if we don't determine what is valuable to us?

"The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life."
- Muhammad Ali

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY GOOD FOR?

Philosophy helps us:

- create meaning. Meaning guides our values, and values guide our lives.
- bolster our courage. People of all ages, all around the world, have endured and survived extremely difficult situations because of their beliefs.
- trust ourselves – our knowledge, our reasoning, and our beliefs! – and also to trust others, even when their beliefs are different from ours.
- understand identity: personal, group, national, global!
- recognize and address our desire to feel we have control over our lives, and help us grapple with our constant dual needs for autonomy and belonging
- interpret the world through different perspectives. We don't have to assume the perspectives, but understanding them can help us listen, understand, and 'walk a mile' in someone else's shoes

Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) www.moralfoundations.org

MFT was created by a group of social and cultural psychologists, including Jonathan Haidt, to understand why morality varies yet shows many similarities and recurrent themes. In brief, the theory proposes the concept of “intuitive ethics” used to construct cultural virtues, narratives, and institutions around the world. They consider these as universal moral foundations:

1) Care / harm:

This foundation is related to our long evolution as mammals with attachment systems and an ability to feel (and dislike) the pain of others. It underlies virtues of kindness, gentleness, and nurturance.

2) Fairness / cheating:

This foundation is related to the evolutionary process of reciprocal altruism. It generates ideas of justice, rights, and autonomy. [Note: In our original conception, Fairness included concerns about equality, which are more strongly endorsed by political liberals. However, as we reformulated the theory in 2011 based on new data, we emphasize proportionality, which is endorsed by everyone, but is more strongly endorsed by conservatives]

3) Loyalty / betrayal:

This foundation is related to our long history as tribal creatures able to form shifting coalitions. It underlies virtues of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the group. It is active anytime people feel that it's “one for all, and all for one.”

3) Authority / subversion:

This foundation was shaped by our long primate history of hierarchical social interactions. It underlies virtues of leadership and followership, including deference to legitimate authority and respect for traditions.

4) Sanctity / degradation:

This foundation was shaped by the psychology of disgust and contamination. It underlies religious notions of striving to live in an

elevated, less carnal, more noble way. It underlies the widespread idea that the body is a temple which can be desecrated by immoral activities and contaminants (an idea not unique to religious traditions).

5) Liberty / oppression:

This foundation is about the feelings of reactance and resentment people feel toward those who dominate them and restrict their liberty. Its intuitions are often in tension with those of the authority foundation. The hatred of bullies and dominators motivates people to come together, in solidarity, to oppose or take down the oppressor. We report some preliminary work on this potential foundation in this paper, on the psychology of libertarianism and liberty.

To explore more ideas in philosophy, check out the Morals in Brief, JUDGE, VALUE, and BOUNDARIES documents; or the reading list at the back of this book!

Maurice Sprewer

414.874.1657 (list the BEST contact number you have)

Maurice.sprewer@dwd.wisconsin.gov

(be sure that your email address is professional)

EXAMPLE of a FUNCTIONAL Resume'

Production Worker and General Laborer Committed to Safety and Quality

(personal branding statement - describes position and a quality that makes you great at it)

Summary of Skills: *(make sure the skills are relevant to the job you are applying for - usually found in the job description)*

- Sorting, grading, weighing, and inspecting products, verifying and adjusting product weight or measurement to meet specifications.
- Observing machine operations to ensure quality and conformity of filled or packaged products to standards.
- Monitoring the production line, watching for problems such as pile-ups, jams, or glue that isn't sticking properly.
- Attaching identification labels to finished packaged items, or cut stencils and stencil information on containers, such as lot numbers or shipping destinations.
- Stocking and sorting product for packaging or filling machine operation, and replenishing packaging supplies, such as wrapping paper, plastic sheet, boxes, cartons, glue, ink, or labels.
- Packaging the product in the form in which it will be sent out, for example, filling bags with flour from a chute or spout.
- Inspecting and removing defective products and packaging material.
- Starting machine by engaging controls.
- Removing finished packaged items from machine and separate rejected items.
- Counting and recording finished and rejected packaged items.
- Stopping or resetting machines when malfunctions occur, clearing machine jams, and reporting malfunctions to a supervisor.
- Removing products, machine attachments, or waste material from machines.
- Transferring finished products, raw materials, tools, or equipment between storage and work areas of plants and warehouses, by hand or using hand trucks.
- Packing and storing materials and products.
- Helping production workers by performing duties of lesser skill, such as supplying or holding materials or tools, or cleaning work areas and equipment.
- Counting finished products to determine if product orders are complete.
- Measuring amounts of products, lengths of extruded articles, or weights of filled containers to ensure conformance to specifications.
- Following procedures for the use of chemical cleaners and power equipment to prevent damage to floors and fixtures.
- Mixing water and detergents or acids in containers to prepare cleaning solutions, according to specifications.
- Loading and unloading items from machines, conveyors, and conveyances.
- Operate machinery used in the production process, or assist machine operators.
- Placing products in equipment or on work surfaces for further processing, inspecting, or wrapping.

Relevant Production and General Labor Experience

General Laborer (Position while incarcerated)

State of Wisconsin / Badger State Industries / FBOP *(whichever applies)*

year - year

City, State

Previous Relevant Employment

Previous Employer

year - year

City, State

Other Experience

Previous Relevant Employment

Previous Employer

year - year

City, State

Education

Relevant Education

(Relevant Degree / Diploma)

*Created by Maurice Sprewer Employment & Training Specialist / Reentry Coordinator
DWD / Job Service 4201 N. 27th Street Suite 602 Milwaukee, WI 53216*

Citizenship - Birth Certificate

http://www.idph.state.ia.us/apl/health_statistics.asp

Citizenship - Birth Certificate

The California Department of Public Health Vital Records (CDPH-VR) maintains birth, death, fetal death/still birth, marriage, and divorce records for California.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHSI/Pages/Vital-Records.aspx>

Citizenship - Birth Certificate

For more information regarding the ID project call 303.837.1321 or 303.837.1313.

This special project is designed to assist low-income, disabled, homeless and elderly citizens seeking documentation of their identity and citizenship in order to obtain health care, public benefits, housing, transportation, employment and secure other essential human rights. Project activities include: representation of individual clients needing assistance in complex cases; coordination of advocacy efforts including legislative, administrative and litigation approaches; technical assistance and community education involving identification issues; and management of a supplemental document fund for individuals and nonprofits to pay needed document fees.

<https://coloradoidproject.wordpress.com/>

Citizenship - Consumer Services

Product recalls, file a complaint, Consumer Connection magazine, verify a contractors license and more

<http://www.dca.ca.gov/>

Citizenship - Department of Motor Vehicles

Vehicle registration, drivers licensing information, manuals and resources

<http://www.iowadot.gov/mvd/index.htm>

Citizenship - Department of Motor Vehicles

<http://www.iowadot.gov/mvd/>

Citizenship - Department of Motor Vehicles

800 Lincoln Way

Ames, IA 50010

515-244-8725

Driver's license and ID

<https://iowadot.gov/mvd/driverslicense>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

<http://www.usattorneylegalservices.com/free-legal-aid-california.html>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) is a nonprofit law firm serving low-income residents of California's rural areas and small cities. Many locations around the state.

<https://crla.org/locations>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

11360 Bellaire Boulevard, Suite 910

Houston, TX 77072

(281) 530-6888

Citizenship - Birth Certificate

Get copies of vital records.

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/birthdeathmar/Pages/default.aspx>

Citizenship - Birth Certificate

Vital Records Section

4300 Cherry Creek Drive South

Denver, CO 80246

866-300-8540 or 866-694-0571 Option 2

<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/vitalrecords>

Citizenship - Consumer Services

Consumer Services!

http://www.iowa.gov/government/ag/protecting_consumers/index.html

Citizenship - Department of Motor Vehicles

Preparing for a drive or knowledge test? You have come to the right spot!

Handbooks are available in several languages:

American Sign Language (ASL) Video

Armenian

Chinese

English

Hindi

Punjabi

Spanish

Vietnamese

<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-handbooks/>

Citizenship - Department of Motor Vehicles

Get your state ID or Driver's License

<https://dmv.colorado.gov/drivers>

Citizenship - Department of Motor Vehicles

<http://dmv.ca.gov/>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

Find legal help and answers to questions you may have.

<http://lawhelpca.org/>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

Self-Help will help you find assistance and information, work better with an attorney, and represent yourself in some legal matters

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp.htm>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

615 California Avenue

Bakersfield, 93304

Bus: (661) 325-5943

Fax: (661) 325-4482

<http://gbia.org/>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

1212 Prairie Clutch City, TX 77002

713-220-9780

Our success is driven through our four core programs: The Beacon Day Center, Cathedral Clinic at The Beacon, Brigid's Hope at The Beacon, and Cathedral Justice Project at The Beacon. These four programs come together under one roof to provide meals, showers, laundry service, case management, medical and psychiatric care, pro bono legal services and pastoral care.

<http://www.chomhouston.org/>

<http://www.bpsos.org/mainsite/en/>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance

LSC Funded
2900 Louisiana St.
Houston, TX 77006
713-874-6570

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston provides a comprehensive network of social services aimed at promoting and facilitating self-sufficiency. We offer support and opportunities that empower people and communities to grow and thrive
<http://www.catholiccharities.org/>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

1001 Fannin, Ste. 1370
Clutch City, TX 77002
713-237-9429
<https://hlrs.org/>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

LSC Funded
1415 Fannin St.
Clutch City, TX 77002
713-652-0077

Lone Star Legal Aid is the fourth largest service provider of free legal aid in the United States.
<http://www.lonestarlegal.org/>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

Provides direct referrals; handles prison litigation conditions on a limited basis.

ACLU of Iowa
901 Insurance Exchange Bldg.
Des Moines, IA 50309-2316
Phone: (515) 243-3576
Fax: (515) 243-8506
<http://www.aclu-ia.org/>

Citizenship - Voting Rights

Information about registering to vote, upcoming elections, voting booth locations and more information

<http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/>

Citizenship - Voting Rights

ACLU Voting Rights and Restrictions

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/voting-rights/voter-registration/felony-disenfranchisement-laws-map?redirect=maps/map-state-criminal-disfranchisement-laws>

Clothing - Thrift Store

3915 Dacoma, Ste. A
Houston, TX 77092
(p) 713.957.3779
(f) 713.957.3774
houston@dressforsuccess.org
<http://www.dressforsuccess.org/affiliate.aspx?sisid=30&pageid=1>

Employment - Employment Services

Information about State Department of Labor resources may be of interest to potential

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

6300 Westpark Ste. 600
Houston, TX 77057
713-339-9015
<https://www.ymcahouston.org/ymca-international/>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

LSC Funded
712 Main Street, 27th Floor
Clutch City, TX 77002
713-228-0735

Houston Volunteer Lawyers is a non-profit service of the Houston Bar Association. We provide free legal aid to low-income individuals by connecting them with lawyers in the private bar who volunteer their time.

<http://www.makejusticehappen.org/>

Citizenship - Legal Assistance

832-767-3650
Amin Alehashem, attorney
Thomas Power, paralegal
Fax: 832.554.9981
2006 Wheeler
Houston, TX 77004

<http://www.texascivilrightsproject.org>

Citizenship - State Government

Official state government site provides information and links for virtually every aspect of the state, including business and agriculture, education, government, and much more.

<http://www.ca.gov/>

Citizenship - Voting Rights

ACLU Voting Rights and Restrictions

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/voting-rights/voter-registration/felony-disenfranchisement-laws-map?redirect=maps/map-state-criminal-disfranchisement-laws>

Clothing - Interview and Career Clothing

750 Sharpstown Center, 2nd floor
Houston, TX 77036
(713) 778-9959
careergearhouston6640@gmail.com
Contact: Donna Reasonover, Executive Director
<http://www.careergear.org/programs/job-readiness-program/>

Education - Continuing Education

P.O. Box 926274
Houston, TX 77292-6274
832-767-0928

At the Prison Entrepreneurship Program, we are servant leaders on a mission to transform inmates and executives by unlocking human potential through entrepreneurial passion, education and mentoring.

PEP clients are immersed in a proven program comprised of one-on-one training with executive volunteers, business plan mentoring with seasoned professionals and a highly competitive business plan competition.

employers looking for incentives to hire individuals with criminal histories and to service providers and individuals with criminal histories who are looking for assistance in finding employment.

Administrative Offices:

Iowa Workforce Development

1000 East Grand Avenue

Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209

Telephone: (515) 281-5387 or (800) JOB-IOWA

<http://www.iowaworkforce.org/files/contiwd.htm>

Employment - Employment Services

2478 E. Euclid Ave

Des Moines, IA 50317

Contact This Branch

Branch Hours

8am - 5pm Monday - Friday

Phone: (515) 254-9026

Fax: (515) 254-9038

<http://www.spartanstaffing.com>

Employment - Employment Services

3611 Stockdale Hwy, Suite F

Bakersfield CA 93309

Phone: 661-396-8341

<http://www.selectstaffing.com/SelectStaffing/main.cfm?nlvl1=1>

Employment - Employment Services

350 Glenborough Dr, Suite 130

Houston TX 77067

Phone: 281-877-0707

<http://www.selectstaffing.com/SelectStaffing/main.cfm?nlvl1=1>

Employment - Job Training

Unemployment, job searches and other job related support,

<http://www.edd.ca.gov/>

Employment - Job Training

Spectrum Resources

Phone: 515-288-1023

1700 Keosauqua Way

Des Moines, Iowa 50314

kabdarrashid.spectrum@yahoo.com

<http://spectrumresourcesdsm.org/home>

Employment - Licensing Information

Iowa Workforce Development contributes to the economic security of Iowas workers, businesses and communities through a comprehensive statewide system of employment services, education and regulation of health, safety and employment laws.

<http://www.iowaworkforce.org/>

Employment - Temporary Staffing Agency

12127 Jones Road

Houston, TX 77070

832-604-2255

<http://www.pridestaff.com>

Employment - Temporary Staffing Agency

2400 Augusta

Suite 103

Houston, TX 77057

<http://www.pep.org/>

Employment - Employment Services

4760 Oakland Street

Suite 200

Aurora, CO 80239

Branch Hours

7am - 5pm Monday - Friday

Phone: (303) 371-0749

<http://www.spartanstaffing.com>

Employment - Employment Services

14300 Northwest Freeway

Houston, TX 77040

Branch Hours

7:30am - 5pm Monday - Friday

Phone: (713) 895-9906

Fax: (713) 895-9931

<http://www.spartanstaffing.com>

Employment - Employment Services

13752 Northwest Fwy

Houston TX 77040

Phone: 713-627-8555

<http://www.selectstaffing.com/SelectStaffing/main.cfm?nlvl1=1>

Employment - Employment Services

800 Gessner

Houston, TX, 77024

713-463-5569

713-463-5871

<http://www.coworxstaffing.com/>

Employment - Job Training

2077 South Gessner, Ste. 109

Houston, TX 77063

<http://www.eastridgelightindustrial.com/>

Employment - Licensing Information

California Department of Tax and Fee

Administration (CDTFA)

Apply for Business License, Permit, or Account

General Information: 800-400-7115

<https://www.ca.gov/service/?item=apply-for-business-license>

Employment - Temporary Staffing Agency

2720 Calloway Drive

Suite D-1

Bakersfield, CA 93312-2641

661-387-6455

<http://www.manpower.com>

Employment - Temporary Staffing Agency

10001 Alameda Genoa Rd

Suite A

Houston, TX 77075

832.266.0921

<http://www.pridestaff.com>

Employment - Temporary Staffing Agency

902 W. Kimberly Rd Suite 55

Davenport, Iowa 52806

Phone: 563-323-6130

<http://www.qpsemployment.com>

Employment - Temporary Staffing Agency

140 South Montclair St, Suite A

713.953.1800
<http://www.pridestaff.com>

Employment - Temporary Staffing Agency

2415 Ingersoll Ave
Des Moines, IA 50312
Phone: (515) 266-6700
<http://www.qpsemployment.com>

Employment - Workforce Development

Labor services, unemployment, workers comp. and more
<http://www.iowaworkforce.org/>

Employment - Workforce Development

job seekers assistance, training and economic development services
<http://www.labor.ca.gov/>

Family - Child Support

Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRU) is responsible for assisting families to achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency by establishing and enforcing child and medical support orders and processing support payments. If you have questions, call your local CSRU office. Our local CSRU offices are open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. central time Monday - Friday, except state holidays. You can also call the child support automated information line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-888-229-9223 (toll free nationwide) for additional information.
<http://dhs.iowa.gov/>

Family - Family Services

All services can be found on the website.
<https://dhs.iowa.gov/node/5>

Food - Food Pantry

We represent 41 food banks throughout the state.
<https://www.cafoodbanks.org/our-members/>

Food - Food Pantry

Find local pantries, soup kitchens, food shelves, food banks and other food help.
<https://www.foodpantries.org/st/iowa>

Food - Free Meals

14145 Bridgeport Road
Houston, TX 77047

Food - Meals

205 15th Street
Des Moines, 50309
Ph: (515) 284-5719
Fax: (515) 883-1692
<http://www.centraliowashelter.org/>

Free - Free Phone

Assurance Wireless
P.O. Box 5040
Charleston, IL 61920-9907
1-888-321-5880
Assurance Wireless provides eligible consumers with free monthly data, unlimited texting, free monthly minutes plus a free Smartphone. Lifeline enrollment is available to individuals who qualify based on federal or state-specific eligibility criteria. Residents of homeless shelters, nursing homes

Bakersfield, California 93309
1-661-835-1400
<http://www.spherion.com>

Employment - Workforce Development

Iowa manufacturers are the driving force behind the states labor market. Fueled by heavy expansion in durable goods production, during the past decade, the number of Iowa manufacturing jobs grew by 3.4 percent and accounted for nearly three-fourths of the states employment increase. Today, more than 200,000 Iowans are employed by the 4,000 manufacturers throughout the state. Please visit the website for more information!
Iowa Economic Development Authority
200 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309 USA
Call: 1.515.725.3000
e-mail: info@iowa.gov
<http://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/>

Family - Child Care

901 Rose Lane
Houston, TX
281-447-6381
<http://www.assumptionhouston.com/>

Family - Family Services

Sliding scale fee or donations; no one turned away
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
9840 E. 17th Avenue
Aurora, 80010
(303) 341-9160 Administration Number
(303) 343-9890 24-Hour Hotline
<http://www.comitis.org/>

Food - Food Pantry

Bay Area Food Banks is a collaboration of 7 local food banks serving 11 northern California counties which serve over 840,000 Bay Area residents monthly. Through 1,575 food pantries, childrens programs, shelters, soup kitchens, residential programs, and other emergency food providers, Bay Area Food Banks distribute 170.8 million pounds of food each year. We serve anyone in need with dignity and compassion.
<https://bayareahunger.org/find-your-food-bank/>

Food - Food Pantry

A list of Food banks and food resources throughout CA and a list of volunteer opportunities.
<http://www.cafoodbanks.org/>
<https://www.cafoodbanks.org/>

Food - Food Pantry

If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 2-1-1 to speak with someone about services in your area (lines are open 24 hours a day). Food banks work with their local communities to ensure that everyone has access to healthful foods. They solicit, receive, store, and distribute fresh produce and pantry staples. They help people get connected to other essential benefits and serve as community hubs for volunteers. Our food banks operate with principles of client choice, dignity, respect, and appreciation for the diverse communities they serve.
<https://www.cafoodbanks.org/our-members/>

and temporary addresses may also be eligible.

<https://www.assurancewireless.com/lifeline-services/what-lifeline>

Free - Free Stuff

We are a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving and getting stuff for free in their own Towns. It's all about reuse and keeping good stuff out of landfills. Membership is free.
<https://www.freecycle.org/>

Free - Free Stuff

Free stuff in your city. Please visit the website, look at the middle column once you're there, and under the FOR SALE header you will see a little link that says FREE. Follow that link and see all of the free stuff listed in your city! It is constantly being updated, so check back often.
<http://craigslist.org>

Health - Addiction Recovery

SMART Recovery is the leading self-empowering addiction recovery support group. Our participants

learn tools for addiction recovery based on the latest scientific research and participate in a world-wide community which includes free, self-empowering, science-based mutual help groups.

The SMART Recovery 4-Point Program helps people recover from all types of addiction and addictive behaviors, including: drug abuse, drug addiction, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, cocaine addiction, prescription drug abuse, sexual addiction, and problem addiction to other substances and activities. SMART Recovery sponsors face-to-face meetings around the world, and daily online meetings. In addition, our online message board and 24/7 chat room are excellent forums to learn about SMART Recovery and obtain addiction recovery support. If you're new to SMART Recovery, get started with our introduction on the website.
<http://www.smartrecovery.org/>

Health - Counseling Services

13693 E. Iliff Ave., Suite 112
Aurora, CO 80014
Phone: (303) 480-5130

This program is intended for clients who have a need for counseling services but lack the resources for full-priced psychotherapy. Counseling by People House interns is on a sliding scale basis at a suggested cost of \$20 to \$40 per hour depending on ability to pay. We request that clients choose the appropriate fee based on income and life circumstances. Affordable Counseling Program for Adults, Couples, Children and Families. Our low cost counseling is a great opportunity for personal growth and with the fee being on a sliding scale it allows therapy for those who might not otherwise be able to afford it.
<http://peoplehouse.org/services/>

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic

9840 E 17th Ave
Aurora, CO 80010

Food - Free Meals

Get or donate food.
<http://www.foodbankiowa.org/>

Free - Free Phone

Assurance Wireless
P.O. Box 5040
Charleston, IL 61920-9907
1-888-321-5880

Assurance Wireless provides eligible consumers with free monthly data, unlimited texting, free monthly minutes plus a free Smartphone. Lifeline enrollment is available to individuals who qualify based on federal or state-specific eligibility criteria. Residents of homeless shelters, nursing homes and temporary addresses may also be eligible.
<https://www.assurancewireless.com/lifeline-services/what-lifeline>

Free - Free Phone

Bureau of Health Statistics
Lucas State Office Building, 1st Floor
321 E. 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075

How to request a certified record by phone: Call VitalChek toll-free at (866) 809-0290 from 6:00 a.m. CST through 7:00 p.m. CST, Monday through Friday, except holidays.
<https://idph.iowa.gov/health-statistics/request-record>

Free - Free Stuff

We are a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving and getting stuff for free in their own Towns. It's all about reuse and keeping good stuff out of landfills. Membership is free.
<https://www.freecycle.org/>

Health - Addiction Recovery

SMART Recovery is the leading self-empowering addiction recovery support group. Our participants learn tools for addiction recovery based on the latest scientific research and participate in a world-wide community which includes free, self-empowering, science-based mutual help groups. The SMART Recovery 4-Point Program helps people recover from all types of addiction and addictive behaviors, including: drug abuse, drug addiction, substance abuse, alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, cocaine addiction, prescription drug abuse, sexual addiction, and problem addiction to other substances and activities. SMART Recovery sponsors face-to-face meetings around the world, and daily online meetings. In addition, our online message board and 24/7 chat room are excellent forums to learn about SMART Recovery and obtain addiction recovery support. If you're new to SMART Recovery, get started with our introduction on the website.
<http://www.smartrecovery.org/>

Health - Alcoholics Anonymous

Welcome to AA Iowa, a state-wide recovery resource devoted to supporting the men and women of Iowa. AA Iowa helps individuals struggling with alcoholism find the help they need on a local basis. Discover Iowa Alcoholics

303-343-9890
shelter for all
Food, Clothing, Shelter, Mental Help, and much
more.
<http://www.comitis.org/>

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic

750 Potomac Street L-23
Aurora, CO 80011
303-360-8111
<http://www.rmyclinics.org/>

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic with Dental

Listings that can help low-income and uninsured people connect with a clinic or community health center in their area. These clinics offer free and discounted rates for medical and dental care. Our county listings include contact information, a listing of services and any further remarks that may be pertinent to our users, such as free services provided, discounted services provided and clinic operating hours.
https://freeclinicdirectory.org/california_care.html

Health - Health Department

The Iowa Departments of Public Health (IDPH) and Human Services (DHS) are one step closer to becoming a single agency. All services can be found on the website.
<https://idph.iowa.gov/>

Health - Mental Health

2600 S. Parker Road, #330
Aurora, 80014
<https://www.arapahoehouse.org/>

Health - Reduced Cost Medication

Drug prices vary wildly between pharmacies. GoodRx finds the lowest prices and discounts. How?

Collect and compare prices for every FDA-approved prescription drug at more than 70,000 US pharmacies

Find free coupons to use at the pharmacy
Show the lowest price at each pharmacy near you
<https://www.goodrx.com/>

Money - Finances/Budgeting

800.388.2227
Free Credit Counseling! Our mission is to help all Americans gain control over their finances. For over 60 years, NFCC and its member agencies have helped people just like you pay off debt and grow in their financial capability. Our services help people overcome financial challenges at nearly every stage of life.
<https://www.nfcc.org/>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

Search for benefits in Education, Grants, Loans, Social Security, Housing and Utilities, Employment and Career Development, Financial Assistance and more.
<https://www.benefits.gov/categories>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

211 connects you with thousands of nonprofit and

Anonymous meetings per county or city, and take the next step to overcome alcohol addiction.
<https://alcoholicsanonymous.com/aa-meetings/iowa/>

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic

The largest network of free medical clinics in the state of Iowa, Free Clinics of Iowa is a donor-supported, not-for-profit organization, consisting of an administrative office and over 30 member free clinics
<http://www.freeclinicsofiowa.org/>

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic

700 Potomac St. A
Aurora CO 80011
303-360-3712
MCPN is a nonprofit organization whose vision is individuals empowered to live the lives they want through personalized, compassionate healthcare. Metro Community Provider Network (MCPN) prides itself in providing low cost healthcare right here in Colorado.
<http://mcpn.org/>

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic with Dental

Low-cost and Free Clinics in Southern California
All speak English and Spanish unless otherwise noted.
<http://www.harp.org/clinics.htm>

Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic with Dental

Listings that can help low-income and uninsured people connect with a clinic or community health center in their area. These clinics offer free and discounted rates for medical and dental care. Our county listings include contact information, a listing of services and any further remarks that may be pertinent to our users, such as free services provided, discounted services provided and clinic operating hours.
https://freeclinicdirectory.org/iowa_care.html

Health - Mental Health

Mental Health Services Division
<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/Pages/MentalHealthPrograms-Svcs.aspx>

Health - Reduced Cost Medication

Iowa Health and Wellness Plan: Beginning on January 1, 2014, Medicaid will provide health care coverage to adults age 19-64 with income up to and including 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. To learn more about Iowa Health and Wellness Plan view the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan plan comparison.
Medically Needy: If your income is too high for Medicaid but your medical costs are so high that it uses up most of your income. You may qualify for some payment help through the Medically Needy plan. If you qualify you are responsible for paying some of the costs of your medical expenses.
Medicare Assistance: If your income is low and you have a hard time paying Medicare premiums, Medicaid may be able to help pay the premiums.
Iowa.
Medicaid Enterprise
100 Army Post Road
Des Moines, Iowa 50315

government services in your area. If you want personal assistance call the three-digit number 211 or 877-947-2211. A friendly voice to talk with you 24/7/365.
<https://www.211colorado.org/>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

Our findhelp technology powers Americas leading social care network. Our network features more than 300,000 free and reduced-cost programs in all 50 U.S. states, territories, and Puerto Rico, powering social care systems for hundreds of customers nationwide.
<https://www.findhelp.org/find-social-services/iowa>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

211 connects you with thousands of nonprofit and government services in your area. If you want personal assistance call the three-digit number 211 or 877-947-2211. A friendly voice to talk with you 24/7/365.
<https://www.211iowa.org/>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

2-1-1 is a free and confidential service that helps you find the local resources they need. Were here for you
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

<https://www.211ca.org/>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

Our findhelp technology powers Americas leading social care network. Our network features more than 300,000 free and reduced-cost programs in all 50 U.S. states, territories, and Puerto Rico, powering social care systems for hundreds of customers nationwide.
<https://www.findhelp.org/find-social-services/colorado>

Shelter - Homeless Shelter

901 Rose Lane
Houston, TX 77037
281-447-6381
<http://www.assumptionhouston.com/>

Shelter - Housing and Community Development

2020 West El Camino Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95833
HCD helps to provide stable, safe homes affordable to veterans, seniors, young families, farm workers, people with disabilities, and individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

<http://www.hcd.ca.gov/>

Shelter - Low Income Housing

Find low income apartments in Colorado along with non profit organizations that help with low income housing along with HUD apartments, public housing apartments, public housing authorities,

Phone Number 515-256-4600
Operating Hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
<http://dhs.iowa.gov/ime/members/who-receives-medicaid>

Money - Finances/Budgeting

800.388.2227
Free Credit Counseling! Our mission is to help all Americans gain control over their finances. For over 60 years, NFCC and its member agencies have helped people just like you pay off debt and grow in their financial capability. Our services help people overcome financial challenges at nearly every stage of life.
<https://www.nfcc.org/>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

John@bridgestolife.org
P.O. Box 570895
Houston, Texas 77257-0895
713-463-7200
The mission of Bridges To Life is to connect communities to prisons in an effort to reduce the recidivism rate, reduce the number of crime victims, and enhance public safety.
<http://www.bridgestolife.org/>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

Our findhelp technology powers Americas leading social care network. Our network features more than 300,000 free and reduced-cost programs in all 50 U.S. states, territories, and Puerto Rico, powering social care systems for hundreds of customers nationwide.

<https://www.findhelp.org/find-social-services/california>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

3745 S Grand Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90007
213-741-2276
Help pay rent! Plus Clothes! Employment! Family Reunificationand they support everyone! Amity will help you WHEREVER you are going in the state.

<https://www.amityfdn.org/initiatives>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

Scroll down the page to find your state. Titles in the left column will lead you to resources available nationwide.
If you scroll down the page to find your state name, you can click on that for statewide resources.

<https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/index.html>

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

Provides education, employment, and support

and housing assistance agencies.
<https://www.lowincomehousing.us/CO.html>

Shelter - Shelters

205 15th Street
Des Moines, 50309
Ph: (515) 284-5719
Fax: (515) 883-1692
<http://www.centraliowashelter.org/>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

Homeless shelter and halfway house
1521 6th Avenue
Des Moines, IA
515-282-0549
Website: www.hansenhouseofhospitality.com

Shelter - Transitional Housing

1607 Airline Drive (mailing address)
Houston, TX 77009
713-861-3070

Shelter - Transitional Housing

8152 Wheatley Street
Houston, TX 77088
281.591.0082
We provide housing, counseling, job assistance,
basic computer training and substance abuse
counseling for our returning home
Ex-Offender population.
<http://www.abundancelivinginc.org/>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

Inside/Out, A Community Re-Entry Place
14221 E 4th Avenue, Suite 330,
Aurora CO 80011
720-207-5041 / M-F: 10am - 6pm
Serves single men and women. Provides
low-income shared housing for people coming out
of jail and prison. Cost is \$140 week/\$275 two
weeks/\$550 month. Offers help with getting ID
docs, applying for assistance, connecting to
resources, ministry, employment connections, and
support system community. Many of staff are
formerly incarcerated/recovering. Christian.
<http://insideoutministry.net/>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

Soul Repo Sober Living
3222 S. Norfolk Way,
Aurora CO 80014
720-951-2142 / M-F: 9am-9pm
For men. Sober living transitional housing with life
skills. 12-step home, geared toward career
development. Shared rooms. Call for info about
openings and cost.
<https://www.hornbucklefoundation.org/>

Volunteer - Volunteer Opportunities

Bridges To Life
PO Box 19039
Houston, Texas 77224-19039

Volunteer - Volunteer Opportunities

We make it easy for good people and good causes
to connect. We are a community that believes in
the power of volunteering to enrich our lives and
the world around us. Find locations to volunteer
near you!

services to people with criminal records; operates
transitional residential center.

Safer Foundation Iowa
1411 Brady Street
Davenport, IA 52802
Phone: (563) 322-7002
Fax: (563) 823-1855

Reentry Resource - Multiple Resources Available

9722 East 16th Avenue
Aurora, Colorado 80010
303-537-5838
Helping Formerly Incarcerated Men and Women
Transition to Lives of Success and Fulfillment
Monday through Thursday: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Fridays: Closed
Saturday: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm (mentoring)
<http://www.sccccolorado.org/>

Shelter - Energy Assistance

To apply for LIHEAP services and to inquire about
the type of assistance available in your area,
please use the search feature below to contact
your local LIHEAP agency for more information. If
you would prefer to speak to a live operator to
assist you in obtaining more information on where
to apply, please call our toll-free helpline at (866)
675-6623.
<https://www.csd.ca.gov/Pages/Assistance-PayingMyEnergyBills.aspx>

Shelter - Homeless Shelter

212 21st Street
Bakersfield, CA 93301
661-325-0863
<http://themissionkc.org/>

Shelter - Low Income Housing

Find low income apartments in California along
with non profit organizations that help with low
income housing along with HUD apartments, public
housing apartments, public housing authorities,
and housing assistance agencies.
<https://www.lowincomehousing.us/CA.html>

Shelter - Low Income Housing

Find low income apartments in Iowa along with
non profit organizations that help with low income
housing along with HUD apartments, public
housing apartments, public housing authorities,
and housing assistance agencies.
<https://www.lowincomehousing.us/IA.html>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

Transitional, sober housing provides supportive
housing along with drug and alcohol treatment for
selective locations.
<https://www.transitionalhousing.org/state/colorado>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

1607 Airline Drive
6517 N.Main (3/4 House-Men)
Houston, TX 77009
713-861-3070

Shelter - Transitional Housing

1-855-860-3119
Transitional, sober housing provides supportive

Virtual volunteer opportunities are also available - <https://www.volunteermatch.org/virtual-volunteering>

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/city/Bakersfield%2C+CA%2C+USA>

Volunteer - Volunteer Opportunities

We make it easy for good people and good causes to connect. We are a community that believes in the power of volunteering to enrich our lives and the world around us. Find locations to volunteer near you!

Virtual volunteer opportunities are also available - <https://www.volunteermatch.org/virtual-volunteering>

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/city/Aurora%2C+CO%2C+USA>

Volunteer - Volunteer Opportunities

We make it easy for good people and good causes to connect. We are a community that believes in the power of volunteering to enrich our lives and the world around us. Find locations to volunteer near you!

Virtual volunteer opportunities are also available - <https://www.volunteermatch.org/virtual-volunteering>

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/city/Houston%2C+TX%2C+USA>

housing along with drug and alcohol treatment for selective locations.

<https://www.transitionalhousing.org/state/colorado>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

1-855-860-3119

Transitional, sober housing provides supportive housing along with drug and alcohol treatment for selective locations

<https://www.transitionalhousing.org/state/iowa>

Shelter - Transitional Housing

Sobriety First Sober Living

call for locations in Aurora CO 303-437-0044 / call any time

Five houses for men and three houses for women. Provides affordable clean homes with structured environment for men and women. Strictly alcohol and drug free. Peer group recovery support for people who want to sustain sobriety.

<http://sobriety1st.com/>

Transportation - Public Transportation

Please visit the website for most information, or call the following phone number:

713-635-4000

1900 Main St.

Houston, TX 77002

<http://www.ridemetro.org/>

Volunteer - Volunteer Opportunities

We make it easy for good people and good causes to connect. We are a community that believes in the power of volunteering to enrich our lives and the world around us. Find locations to volunteer near you!

Virtual volunteer opportunities are also available - <https://www.volunteermatch.org/virtual-volunteering>

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Sample Interview Questions

The interview is your chance to show an employer your unique qualities and it is also the time you can ask more about the employer, the company culture and the job you are applying for. Before you interview be sure to find out all you can about the company so you understand who they are, and also so the interviewer knows you care.

Interviews can be stressful; the best way to manage that stress is to be prepared. If you are ready to answer the questions below you will be prepared for most of the questions that might come up.

There are many variables that make finding a job even more complicated if you have a criminal record. How much should you disclose and when should you disclose it? How do you explain your criminal record and still land a job? How do you address it during an interview? We explore these questions and more at the end of this document.

Possible Interview Questions: About the Job and the Company

- Why did you apply for this job?
- What experience, skills and characteristics do you possess to do the job?
- Why do you think you are the best person for this job?
- Why should we hire you?
- What have you learned about our company?
- How do you see your role in joining this or any company?
- Describe good customer service.
- Describe handling a challenge with a co-worker
- Are you willing to travel?
- Do you have any limitations that would inhibit you from doing this job?
- How long do you think you would like to be employed by this company?

Possible Interview Questions: About You

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are you passionate about?
- What is your greatest strength? What is your greatest weakness?
- What do you do when you're angry?
- If you know your supervisor is wrong about something, how would you handle it?
- Describe a difficult work situation and how you dealt with it.
- Describe your work style.
- How would you describe the pace at which you work?
- How do you handle stress and pressure?
- Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.
- What motivates you? Are you self-motivated?
- What are your salary expectations? (if it is not listed with the job posting)
- What types of decisions are difficult for you? What types are easy?
- If you could relive the last 10 years of your life, what would you do differently?
- If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?
- Do you prefer to work independently or with others?
- Tell me about your ideal work environment.
- How do you evaluate success?
- What are your career goals? How do you plan to achieve these goals?
- Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.
- Give an example of a goal you didn't meet and how you handled it.
- Give an example of how you set goals and achieve them.
- How do you handle a challenge?

Possible Interview Questions: Your Work History

- Tell me about ____ company listed on your resume.
- What were your duties, responsibilities, expectations...for the position and as an employee?
- What challenges did you face? How did you handle them?
- What did you like about this job? What did you dislike about this job?
- What was your biggest accomplishment at this job? At any job?
- What were your favorite and least favorite aspects about the people you worked with, including supervisors?
- What attributes to you like to see in a supervisor?
- What do you expect from a supervisor?
- Tell me a little about your favorite and least favorite supervisor.
- Why did you leave this job? (why did you quit or why were you fired?)
- Have you been in a position when you did not have enough work to do? What did you do with your time?
- Have you made a mistake? How did you handle it?
- Have you ever dealt with company policy you weren't in agreement with? How?
- Have you gone above and beyond the call of duty? If so, how?
- When you worked on multiple projects how did you prioritize?
- How did you handle meeting a tight deadline?
- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Tell me about a difficult situation with a co-worker? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about your experience working with a team.
- Have you motivated employees or co-workers? Tell me about it.
- Give me an example of when you did and when you didn't listen.
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a supervisor? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with another department? How?
- Have you handled a difficult situation with a client or vendor? How?

Possible Interview Questions: Incarceration

- Why were you incarcerated?
- What did you learn from that experience?
- Do you have challenges or limitations that could affect your work schedule?
- What have you been doing to prepare for employment since you came home?
- Were you employed or in school when you were incarcerated? If so, tell me about your work. Tell me about your education.

Illegal questions:

- What is your age?
- How many children do you have? Are you pregnant?
- How much do you weigh? How tall are you?
- Do you live with anyone? Who?
- Are you married or in a relationship?

Legal alternatives:

- Are you over 18 years old?
- Can you lift 60 pounds?
- Is there anything that might interfere with your work schedule?

Related to Your Criminal Record

An employer may not ask questions about a previous arrest or conviction. They may ask if you have been convicted of specific crimes if they are relevant to the position being applied for. An employer may not refuse employment to someone just because they have a criminal record.

Lisa Pollan, site coordinator at LIFT-DC, says they encourage formerly incarcerated clients to collect "evidence of rehabilitation." This evidence should prove to employers that the client has changed since their offense and is now a responsible member of society. Evidence of rehabilitation can include:

- letters of recommendation from employers or advocates
- proof of training program completion/certificates (including during incarceration)
- participation in a mentoring or support group

For Job Applications, LIFT-DC counsels clients to do the following:

- **Only answer what is asked:** If a question asks if you have been convicted of a felony, you can say no if you only have misdemeanors. If a question asks if you have been convicted of a felony in the last seven years, and you were convicted 10 years ago, answer no.
- **Answer truthfully:** A company may hire ex-offenders but have a policy of terminating anyone who lies on an application.
- **Demonstrate change:** If you answer a question about your record by writing, "Yes, but I got my GED while I was incarcerated," you show that you are educated, focused and want to make positive changes in your life. You can also attach a written explanation of your situation, and proof of your rehabilitation.

Check out LIFT-DC for more tips on interviewing! <http://www.liftcommunities.org/>

From the National Reentry Resource Center:

<http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/faqs/employment-and-education#Q8>

How should job-seekers respond to questions regarding past convictions?

- Acknowledge the previous mistakes in a concise and businesslike way
- mention any relevant skills or interests developed while in prison or prior to entering prison
- reinforce a commitment and an interest in the new job, by stating, for example, "I'm more mature now and my top priority is to work at [company] to use my abilities, focus on the work, and make a fresh start."

Applicants should be familiar with their criminal history to answer accurately specific questions on job applications and in interviews.

Race/Religion

An employer may not ask you about your religion but it may come up if they ask you what days/times you are available. An employer may not judge you for being a part of any race or religion but may decide not to hire you if you are unavailable for any crucial time for the position you are applying.

Interview Questions for You to Ask

In an interview both you and the employer are finding out about each other. Asking these questions will show general interest in the business, and the team you are applying to work with. These questions show you care about the position and how you might fit. Asking questions will also help you understand if you think the environment is suitable for you.

Please tell me important information I should consider about working with this company:

- On average, how long do people keep the position for which I am applying?
- What strengths and skills do you think I should have to best fill this position?
- What employee qualities are encouraged here?
- Is this a friendly environment or are people pretty serious?
- Would you tell me about the challenges I might find working here?
- Which companies, products or services are our competitors?
- Is there an opportunity for promotion from this position?
- How often will I be evaluated?
- What are the businesses strengths? What aspects need improvement?
- What will be expected of me in the first 3 months? 6 months? Year?
- Are we encouraged to participate in things outside of work, like a softball league?
- In what ways does the company recognize and honor work that has been done?
- Will I have an employment agreement?
- Will I work with alone or with a group?
- Who will I report to? What kind of person are they?
- Are we anticipating any major changes in the workplace?
- How many applicants do you have for this position?
- What training do you provide?
- Does the company provide or support higher education or advanced training for employees?
- Is there anything else I can provide you to help you make a decision?
- How soon can I expect to hear from you?

Not all of these questions would apply to any one position. These questions are just examples to either pick from or open your mind to asking questions that will help you make sure the job is acceptable for you!