

# REENTRY PACKET

Your Customized Guide to Support your Successful Transition



National Web-based Reentry Resource Center

[www.fairshake.net](http://www.fairshake.net)

This Reentry Packet has been customized for: Williams 77989-097

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# The Fair Shake Ownership Manual

Fair Shake is the 'unprogram'.

We will never tell you what you need or what you should do.

Every person is different, so Fair Shake offers a lot of information for you to peruse and choose!

Getting a fair shake is difficult. We must advocate for ourselves despite the fact that we have not had a proper education to understand ourselves...much less to own our future. But everyone deserves a fair shake at life, so we must learn how to get it. Have you thought about what you might need to get a fair shake? I think about this a lot, and I'd like to explore this idea with you!

First, we can ask ourselves to define the term. What does it mean to get a fair shake? In this publication we consider beliefs, values, feelings, relationships, boundaries, intention, persuasion, agency, and freedom, for starters. We can think about forces (expectations, status quo, legal and social) that direct us, support us and limit us, we can think about how we are educated, roles we play, parenting, money management, time management, and employment options. What else should we consider?

At Fair Shake, we believe that when you own yourself, you own your future. There is no "program" for you to build your best life! Your strengths, your skills, your knowledge, gifts, characteristics and capabilities can develop and expand along with your intentions, beliefs and commitments. Instead of telling you what to think, how to behave, or what you 'should' do, Fair Shake offers ideas to ponder, questions to consider, and ways to understand your thinking and your feelings to build your mental, emotional, physical, relational and community strength. You are the captain of your ship!

There is no specific order to this book or to the Fair Shake software / website. Feel free to pick an intriguing idea to consider. Read, reflect, question, critique, compare this information with other texts, discuss the ideas with others, and then explore some more! Your unique interests will guide you. Like any good Do-It-Yourself center, hardware store or library, we just want to "help you help yourself".

Everything at this do-it-yourself center is FREE. We want to be clear that this means it's free for you to utilize and free for you to share; please let your outside supporters know that it's free for them to use as well!. The software is free for prisons and jails to provide resources and development support to you. Please feel free to share this information with the library, education department or reentry center.

Fair Shake is also committed to your freedom, for instance, the freedom to search through our information without being tracked, nudged, directed or counted, and without us mining your preferences or sharing your information. Search freely and anonymously with just your curiosity, interests, and self-determination to guide you.

We can't tell you "What works". No one can. If they try to tell you, they are lying. There is no 'magic pill' that works for everyone. In fact, we've been chasing the elusive key to what works for 50 years and, despite the billions invested 'evidence-based' claims, the recidivism has only increased. The most recent report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics showed it at a whopping 83%\*! "Evidence" rhetoric is a 'red herring' (intentionally misleading) because the 'evidence' which is 'observed' is not you!

Only you know what works for you; it's your unique blend, comprised of belief in yourself, your opportunities, your commitments, your capabilities, your problem-solving skills, your intentions and your determination. The secret to what works is inside each of us. It IS us. It includes feeling respected and understanding our value. It is having the autonomy to make - and act upon - our choices. We build ourselves, we can build our communities, and a powerful, safe and engaging future. The future we all deserve. A fair shake for ourselves and our children.

Get lost in discovery and open doors to new possibilities!

## So how do we prepare for the future? What skills will be important for success?

While it is valuable to prepare for the future through skills building and education, it is equally, if not more, important to prepare for an unpredictable future. If we prepare for change, we can reduce the mental, physical and emotional strain that comes with it. When we don't know what to expect, or what is coming next, there are skills that can help us be better learners, to be flexible, and to collaborate, so we can be ready for opportunities, challenges, and even disappointments. Here are a few ideas to build skills for an unpredictable future:

Boundaries	Courage	Humility	Resilience
BS Detect-ability	Creativity	Humor	Patience
Care	Curiosity	Lifelong Learning	Problem-Solving skills
Commitment	Determination	Listening Skills	Questioning Skills
Confidence	Flexibility	Ownership	Tenacity
Cooperation	Heath (Swellness)	Relationship Skills	Willingness to Learn

None of these qualities are taught in school, yet they are crucial concepts for success and satisfaction. They are needed at work, at home, when using technology and apps, and for building safety and joy in our communities. They will help us make sense of the world, they will help us to trust our capabilities and courage, and they will help us read situations and make good decisions.

"The only constant is change." - Heraclitus (approx. 500 BC)

The world will continue to change. That does not mean that we must change in the way that it's changing; only that we must accept the change and determine how we wish to respond to it.

Our projections and our assumptions often get in the way of our ability to see clearly: to listen, to learn and expand our perspective...which then expands our opportunities. Now is a great time to reflect on biases, projections, assumptions, and our vulnerability to BS and persuasion. We can build this 'reflective muscle' to prepare for change, and to defend ourselves against the barrage of fake news, the deep challenges of emotional appeals and to navigate the psychological games found in all forms of media (social and otherwise), several professions and even in relationships.

We always have a choice. We can either keep doing what we're doing, or we can do something else.

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." - Viktor Frankl

You might be asking yourself "Who is she to say anything about reentry or life after institutionalization?"

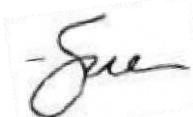
A valid and important question! To be frank, I'm "an older white lady from flyover country" and to be clear, I am also a person who was put in jail at age 12. And at ages 13, 14 and 15. And sent to a reform school far from home. In fact, I have 6+ years' experience 'in the system'; from age 12 until I aged-out at 18: jail, foster homes, group homes and reform school (+ time 'on the run'). I know how it feels to be hundreds of miles away from everyone and everything I knew; to lose friends, lose trust and to not have the care or love of family. I know what it's like to feel controlled, undervalued, and unable to grow into my authentic self. I know what it's like to long for a fair shake at life.

Getting a fair shake is complex! But we are capable, and we can handle this. We can own our values and our decisions and build a life that reflects our intentions.

I hope you will let me know what you think of this book. It will grow and improve with YOUR input. Yes, it's true; I listen! We never stop learning, and I'm eager to learn from and with you.

To our successful transitions!

Sue Kastensen



Fair Shake Founder and Director

\* 2018 Recidivism Update, 9 years after release: 83% Recidivism = 17% Reentry Success.  
<https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/2018-update-prisoner-recidivism-9-year-follow-period-2005-2014>

# EMOTIONS: THE BASICS

By: Tony Schirtzinger - [www.helpyourselftherapy.com](http://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

TYPE OF STROKES	THE ATTENTION COMES FROM:	EXAMPLE:
Conditional Positive	People who like something you did.	"I like how you did that."
Conditional Negative	People who do not like something you did.	"I don't like that about you."
Unconditional Positive	People who like the whole you.	"I love you!"
Unconditional Negative	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>
<i>SADNESS</i>	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.
<i>ANGER / MAD</i>	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.
<i>FEAR / SCARED</i>	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!
<i>EXCITEMENT</i>	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!
<i>JOY</i>	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!***

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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](http://www.HelpYourselfTherapy.com)



## 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!





## FREE BOOKS PROGRAMS!

This list was created on 9/23/21. If you find that some of the programs are no longer available, would you please let me know? Thanks! ~ sue Fair Shake, PO Box 63, Westby, WI 54667

### California

Pages and Time  
PO Box #66583  
Los Angeles, CA 90066  
Serves: Libraries at  
Wasco/Delano State Prisons  
and Chino Women's Prison

Prison Library Project  
586 West First Street  
Claremont, CA 91711  
Serves: All US states  
Except: MA

### Connecticut

Connecticut Prison Book  
Connection  
P.O. Box 946  
Rocky Hill, CT 06067-0946  
Serves all states

### District of Columbia

DC Books to Prisons Project  
PO Box 34190  
Washington, DC 20043  
Serves: state and federal  
prisoners in 34 states, and  
federal prisoners in Arizona.  
With the exception of DC  
residents in federal prisons,  
Except: CT, FL, IL, MA, ME,  
MI, NH, NJ, NY, OR, PA, RI,  
VT, WA, or WI.

### Florida

Open Books Prison Book  
Project  
1040 N. Guillemard St.  
Pensacola, FL 32501  
Serves: FL only

### Illinois

Chicago Books to Women in  
Prison c/o RFUMC  
4511 N. Hermitage Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60640

Serves: women and trans  
people in the BOP and in these  
state prisons in AZ, CA, FL, IL,  
IN, KY, MS, OH

Haymarket Books  
P.O. Box 180165  
Chicago, IL 60618  
Serves: entire US. The only  
info they need is your full  
mailing address and a sense of  
what kind of books they are  
interested in reading.

Liberation Library  
@ In These Times  
2040 N Milwaukee Ave  
Chicago, IL 60647  
Serves youth Illinois youth  
prisons and select jails

Urbana-Champaign Books to  
Prisoners Project  
UC Books to Prisoners  
Box 515 Urbana IL 61803  
Serves: Illinois

### Indiana

Midwest Pages to Prisoners  
Project  
PO Box 1324  
Bloomington, IN 47402  
Serves: AR, IA, IN, KS, MN,  
MO, ND, NE, OK, and SD

### Kentucky

Louisville Books to Prisoners  
McQuixote Books & Coffee  
Attn: Louisville Books to  
Prisoners  
1512 Portland Ave #1  
Louisville, KY 40203  
Serves: KY and VA

### Louisiana

Louisiana Books 2 Prisoners  
3157 Gentilly Blvd. #141  
New Orleans, LA 70122  
Serves: AL, AR, LA.

### Massachusetts

Great Falls Books Through  
Bars  
PO Box 391  
Greenfield, MA 01302  
Services US, except MA

Prison Book Program  
c/o Lucy Parsons Bookstore  
1306 Hancock St, Suite 100  
Quincy, MA 02169  
Serves: All US states Except  
CA, IL, MI, MD, NV, and TX

### Minnesota

Women's Prison Book Project  
3751 17th Ave S  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
Serves: All US states  
Except: CT, FL, IL, IN, MA, MI,  
MS, OH, OR, and PA

### Mississippi

Big House Books  
PO Box 55586  
Jackson, MS 39296  
Serves: Mississippi only

### Missouri

Missouri Prison Books  
Program  
438 N. Skinker Blvd  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
Serves: MO

### New Jersey

Books Behind Bars  
PO BOX 2611  
Wildwood, New Jersey 08260  
Serves: NJ only

**New York**

NYC Books Through Bars  
c/o Bluestockings Bookstore  
116 Suffolk Street  
New York, NY 10002  
Serves: All US states  
Except: AL, FL, LA, MA, MI,  
MS, NC, OH, and PA, NY.

**North Carolina**

Asheville Prison Books  
Program  
67 N. Lexington  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Serves: NC, SC

Prison Books Collective  
PO Box 625  
Carrboro, NC 27510  
Serves: men in NC

Saxapahaw Prison Books  
347 S Main St  
Burlington, NC 27215  
Serves: GA and NC

Tranzmission Prison Project  
PO Box 1874  
Asheville, NC 28802  
Serves: LGBTQ nationwide

**Ohio**

Athens Books to Prisoners  
30 1st Street  
Athens, OH 45701  
Serves OH

**Oregon**

Rogue Liberation Library  
PO Box 524  
Ashland, OR 97520  
Serves: AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT,  
NV, NM, OK, OR, TX, UT, WA,  
WY and the BOP nationwide.

**Pennsylvania**

Book 'Em  
PO BOX 71357  
Pittsburgh PA 15213  
Serves: PA only  
Books Through Bars

4722 Baltimore Ave  
Philadelphia, PA 19143  
Serves: PA, NJ, NY, DE, MD,  
VA, and WV

**Rhode Island**

Providence Books Through  
Bars  
42 Lenox Ave  
Providence, RI 02907  
Serves: All US states  
Except: AL, AR, FL, IL, KY, LA,  
MA, ME, MS, NY, NC, OH, PA,  
SC, WA, WI

**Tennessee**

Tennessee Prison Books  
Project  
P.O. Box 22846  
901 Broadway  
Nashville, TN 80202  
Serves: TN only

**Texas**

Inside Books  
P.O. Box 301029  
Austin, Texas 78702  
Serves: TX only

**Vermont**

Vermont Books to Prisoners  
PO Box 234  
Plainfield, VT 05667  
Serves: New England states

**Virginia**

Books Behind Bars  
Friends of the Jefferson-  
Madison Library  
attn: Books Behind Bars  
1500 Gordon Ave.  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
Serves: VA only

**Washington**

Books to Prisoners  
92 Pike St. Box A  
Seattle, WA, 98101  
Serves: US, except CA + MA

**Lopez Books**

P.O. Box 327  
Lopez Island, WA 98261  
Serves: WA and AK only

**West Virginia**

Appalachian Prison Book  
Project  
PO Box 601  
Morgantown, WV 26507  
Serves: KY, MD, OH, TN, VA,  
WV

**Wisconsin**

LGBT Books to Prisoners  
1202 Williamson St.  
Madison, WI, WI 53703  
Serves: LGBTQ prisoners in all  
states Except TX

Wisconsin Books to Prisoners  
c/o Social Justice Center  
Incubator  
1202 Williamson St #1  
Madison, WI 53703  
Serves: WI only

**Free Magazine Subscriptions**

The Sun Magazine  
An award-winning, ad-free  
magazine of interviews,  
essays, fiction, poetry, and  
photography. They offer free  
subscriptions to incarcerated  
individuals. To request a free  
subscription, write to:

The Sun Customer Service  
P.O. Box 323  
Congers, NY 10920

The Militant  
A socialist newsweekly.  
Subscriptions for prisoners are:  
\$6 for six months. Prisoners  
without funds can get a free  
six-month subscription upon  
request. Write to:

The Militant  
306 W. 37th St. 13th Floor  
New York, NY 10018

## Sue's Suggested Reading List



These books and authors have powerfully influenced my perspective for many years. Many videos of the authors lecturing, or in interviews, are available on the internet for you to hear from them directly as well.

### **The Abundant Community:**

Awaking the Power of Families and Neighborhoods  
John McKnight, Peter Block 2010 Berrett-Koehler

### **The Age of Surveillance Capitalism:**

The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power  
Shoshanna Zuboff 2019 PublicAffairs

### **Amusing Ourselves to Death**

Neil Postman 1985 Penguin Books

### **Anti-Fragile:** Things That Gain from Disorder

Nassim Taleb 2014 Random House

### **Asking the Right Questions:**

A Guide to Critical Thinking  
M. Neil Browne & Stuart M. Keeley 2014 Pearson

### **Atomic Habits:** Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones

James Clear 2018 Avery

### **Better Together:** Restoring the American Community

Robert Putnam & Lewis M. Feldstein 2004  
Simon & Schuster

### **Black Prophetic Fire**

Cornel West, Christa Buschendorf 2015 Beacon

### **Business of Belief**

Tom Asacker 2013 CreateSpace

### **The Book of Forgiving**

The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World  
Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu 2015  
HarperOne

### **Calling Bullshit:**

The Art of Skepticism in a Data-Driven World  
Carl Bergstrom and Jevin West 2021 Random House

### **The Careless Society:** Community and Its Counterfeits

John McKnight 1996 Basic Books

### **Community:** The Structure of Belonging

Peter Block 2018 Berrett-Koehler

### **Cosmopolitanism:** Ethics in a World of Strangers

Kwame Appiah 2007 W. W. Norton and Co.

### **Creating Capabilities:**

The Human Development Approach  
Martha Nussbaum 2013 Belknap Press

### **The Dawn of Everything:** A New History of Humanity

David Graeber and David Wengrow 2021  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

### **Debt:** The first 5000 years

David Graeber 2014 Melville House

### **Democracy and Education:**

An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education  
John Dewey 1916 The Free Press

### **Democracy Matters:**

Winning the Fight Against Imperialism  
Cornel West 2005 Penguin

### **The Depression Cure:**

The 6-Step Program to Beat Depression Without Drugs  
Stephen S. Ilardi 2010 Da Capo Press

### **Developing Critical Thinkers:**

Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting  
Stephen D. Brookfield 1991 Jossey-Bass

### **Dignity for Deeply Forgetful People:**

How Caregivers Can Meet the Challenges of Alzheimer's Disease  
Stephen Post 2022 Johns Hopkins University

### **Don't Label Me**

Irshad Manji 2020 St. Martins Griffin

### **The Doors of Perception**

Aldous Huxley 1954 Harper Perennial

### **Dr. Seuss and Philosophy:**

Oh, The Things You Can Think!  
Edited by Jacob Held 2011 Rowman and Littlefield

### **Dumbing Us Down:** 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition

The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling  
John Taylor Gatto 2017 New Society

### **Empowering Public Wisdom:**

A Practical Vision of Citizen-Led Politics  
Tom Atlee 2012 Evolver



The **End of Education:** Redefining the Value of School  
Neil Postman 1996 Vintage  
**Escape From Freedom**  
Erich Fromm 1941 Henry Holt and Company

**The Ethics of Identity**  
Kwame Anthony Appiah 2007 Princeton University

The **Extended Mind:** The Power of Thinking Outside the Brain  
Annie Murphy Paul 2021 Mariner

**Everyday Ubuntu:**  
Living Better Together, the African Way  
Mungi Ngomane 2020 Harper

**The Evolving Self:**  
A Psychology for the Third Millennium  
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi 1994 Harper Perennial

**Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood**  
Jack Mezirow 1990 Jossey-Bass

**Freedom and Accountability at Work:**  
Applying Philosophic Insight to the Real World  
Peter Block and Peter Koestenbaum 2001 Pfeiffer

The **Globalization of Addiction:**  
A Study in Poverty of the Spirit  
Bruce K. Alexander 2010 Oxford University Press

**Happiness Hypothesis:**  
Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom  
Jonathan Haidt 2005 Basic Books

**Hearing the Other Side:**  
Deliberative Versus Participatory Democracy  
Diana C. Mutz 2002 Cambridge U. Press

**Humankind:** A Hopeful History  
Rutger Bregman 2021 Little, Brown & Co.

**Hypercapitalism:**  
The Modern Economy, Its Values, and How to Change Them  
Larry Gonick 2018 New Press (cartoon history)

**In My Father's House:**  
Africa in the Philosophy of Culture  
Kwame Anthony Appiah 1993 Oxford Univ. Press

**Influence, New and Expanded:** The Psychology of Persuasion  
With Unity, the newest principle for this edition  
Robert Cialdini 2021 Harper Business

**Learned Helplessness:**  
A Theory for the Age of Personal Control  
Peterson, Maier and Seligman 1993 Oxford

**Learning as Transformation:**  
Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress  
Jack Mezirow 2000 Jossey-Bass

**Learning for a Complex World**  
A Lifewide Concept of Learning, Education and Personal Development  
Norman Jackson 2011 AuthorHouse

**Learning to Be a Person in Society**  
Peter Jarvis 2009 Routledge

The **Lies That Bind:** Rethinking Identity  
Kwame Appiah 2019 Liveright Publishing

The **Lucifer Effect:**  
Understanding How Good People Turn Evil  
Philip Zimbardo 2007 Random House

**Man for Himself:**  
An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics  
Erich Fromm 1947 Henry Holt and Company

**Man's Search For Meaning**  
Victor Frankl 1946 Beacon Press

**Moral Courage**  
Rushworth M. Kidder 2006 Wm. Morrow

**No Contest:** The Case Against Competition  
Alfie Kohn 1986 Houghton Mifflin

**No Mud, No Lotus:** The Art of Transforming Suffering  
Thich Nhat Hanh 2014 Parallax

**On Personal Power:**  
Inner Strength and It's Revolutionary Impact  
Carl Rogers 1977 Delta Books

**Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis**  
Robert Putnam 2016 Simon & Schuster

**Out of Our Minds:** Learning to be Creative  
Ken Robinson 2001 Capstone Publishing

**The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less**  
Barry Schwartz 2004 Ecco

The **Phantom Tollbooth**  
Norman Juster & Jules Feiffer 1964 Bullseye Books

**Plato, Not Prozac!:**  
Applying Eternal Wisdom to Everyday Problems  
Lou Marionoff 1999 HarperCollins

**Practical Wisdom:**  
The Right Way to Do the Right Thing  
Barry Schwartz, Kenneth Sharpe 2010 Penguin

**The Psychology of Attitude Change and Social Influence**

Philip Zimbardo and Michael R. Leippe 1991  
McGraw-Hill

**Punished by Rewards: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes  
Alfie Kohn 2018 HarperOne

**Race Matters: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Cornel West 2017 Beacon

**The Revolution Will Not Be Funded:**

Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex  
INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence  
2017 Duke University Press

**The Righteous Mind:**

Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion  
Jonathan Haidt 2012 Pantheon Books

**The School of Life: An Emotional Education**

Alain de Botton & Colleagues 2020 The School of Life

**Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies**

Ed. Albert Bandura 1995 Cambridge Univ. Press

**Set Boundaries, Find Peace:**

A Guide to Reclaiming Yourself  
Nedra Glover Tawwab 2021 TarcherPerigee

**The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck:**

A Counterintuitive Approach to Living a Good Life  
Mark Manson 2016 Harper

**A Theory of Justice**

John Rawls 1999 Belknap Press

**Thinking Fast and Slow**

Daniel Kahneman 2011 Farrar, Straus and Giroux

**Transcend: The New Science of Self-Actualization**

Scott Barry Kaufman 2021 TarcherPerigee

**Tyranny of Merit:**

What's Become of the Common Good?  
Michael Sandel 2020 Farrar, Straus and Giroux

**Ubuntu and Personhood**

Ed. James Ogude 2018 Africa World Press

**Ubuntu and the Reconstitution of Community**

James Ogude 2019 Indiana University Press

**The Upswing:**

How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again  
Robert Putnam 2020 Simon and Schuster

**Utopia of Rules:**

On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy  
David Graeber 2016 Melville House

**Weapons of Math Destruction:**

How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy  
Cathy O'Neil 2017 Crown

**What About Me?**

The Struggle for Identity in a Market-Based Society  
Paul Verhaeghe 2012 Scribe Publications

**What Does It Mean To Be Well- Educated?**

Essays on Standards, Grading & Other Follies  
Alfie Kohn 2004 Beacon Press

**What Doesn't Kill Us:**

The New Psychology of Posttraumatic Growth  
Stephen Joseph Ph.D. 2013 Basic Books

**Why Are We Yelling?**

The Art of Productive Disagreement  
Buster Benson 2019 Portfolio

**Why Good Things Happen to Good People:**

How to Live a Longer, Healthier, Happier Life by the Simple Act of Giving  
Stephen G. Post 2008 Broadway Books

**Winners Take All:**

The Elite Charade of Changing the World  
Anand Giridharadas 2019 Vintage Books

**The Wisdom of Insecurity:**

A Message for an Age of Anxiety  
Alan Watts 1951 Vintage Books

**You Call This A Democracy?**

Who Benefits, Who Pays And Who Really Decides?  
Paul Kivel 2004 Rowman and Littlefield

**Your Brain on Story:**

The Destructive Seduction of the Hero's Journey  
Tom Asacker 2020 Independently Published

**You're Not Listening:**

What You're Missing and Why It Matters  
Kate Murphy 2020 Celadon Books



# WHAT BOOKS DO YOU RECOMMEND?

(I hope you will share your recommendation with me!)

# 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).<sup>1</sup> 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 website<sup>2</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> 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 truck<sup>4</sup> 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."<sup>5</sup>

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

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

- <sup>1</sup> Walden III, Racine, Wisconsin: <https://www.rusd.org/district/walden-iii-middle-high-school>
- <sup>2</sup> Fair Shake website: <https://www.fairshake.net/>.
- <sup>3</sup> Fair Shake Reentry Packet: <https://www.fairshake.net/reentry-resources/reentry-packet/>.
- <sup>4</sup> 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/>).

- <sup>5</sup> 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](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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## 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 dowell? 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](http://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](http://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/](http://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](http://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](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-DOJ

**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/ExOffender/index.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
Hawaii	Nevada	Vermont
Idaho	New Hampshire	Virginia
Illinois	New Jersey	Washington
Indiana	New Mexico	West Virginia
Iowa	New York	Wisconsin
Kansas	North Carolina	Wyoming
Kentucky	North Dakota	

**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](http://www.ServiceLocator.org)
- America's Career InfoNet** occupation and industry information, salary data and career exploration assistance. [www.CareerInfoNet.org](http://www.CareerInfoNet.org)
- mySkills myFuture** helps career changers find new occupations to explore. [www.mySkillsmyFuture.org](http://www.mySkillsmyFuture.org)
- Veterans ReEmployment** is a one-stop website for employment, training, and financial help after military service. [www.CareerOneStop.org/ReEmployment/Veterans](http://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

# 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!

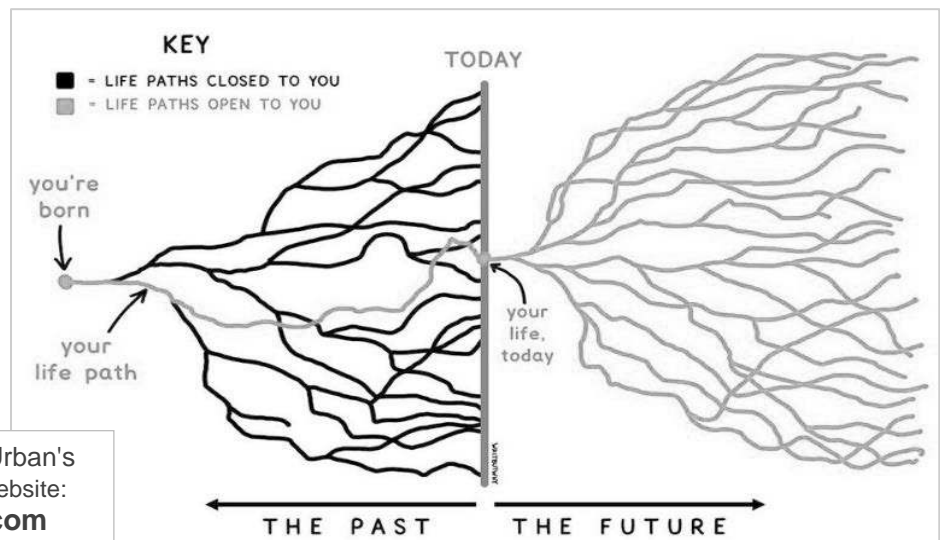


Image from Tim Urban's  
**Wait But Why** website:  
[waitbutwhy.com](http://waitbutwhy.com)

# 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](mailto: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!**



# Fair Shake's (large and growing!) webpage for you: (I hope you will help me build it and make it more effective!)

## Formerly and Currently Incarcerated People



outreach[at]fairshake(dot)net

Are you ready to get a fair shake? We exist to support your successful transition! Fair Shake is like a reentry hardware store: we have tools, resources and information to support you as you build your new life, including bridges of trust with your family, employers, property managers and the community.

Remember, many of America's most highly treasured stories are those involving redemption and pulling ourselves out of tough situations to create meaningful and fulfilling lives. This can be your story!

For those of you who are currently incarcerated and are able to email us, you can request a reentry packet, ask questions or send comments and suggestions to

### Employment



Looking for information to help you find a job? Check out our Find A Job page!  
If you're getting ready to apply or interview, check out our Prepare For Work page!

### New to Computers?

Need help with your computer skills? Learn more about using your computer on our Building Computer Skills page!



Keep your documents safe(ish) in the cloud!  
Google online storage

### Educate Yourself!



Need more math skills? Concerned about your grammar? Looking to pick up more knowledge or skills? Visit our Educate Yourself page.

List of correspondence schools that offer paper-based formats:  
Correspondence Schools

### Financial Aid

Federal Student Aid Information Center  
P.O. Box 84  
Washington, D.C. 20044  
1-800-433-3243  
<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sai/>



### Education not found in school:

The School of Life.

The School of Life explores unconventional education to assist people in the quest for a more fulfilled life.

Watch the introduction video here ->

Here are some topics we thought might interest you:

Self: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw4Mb28XmpcK0vZ\\_AZJD7VM2p9-6N8v](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw4Mb28XmpcK0vZ_AZJD7VM2p9-6N8v)

Relationships: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw4Mb28XmpcK0vZ\\_AZJD7VM2p9-6N8v](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw4Mb28XmpcK0vZ_AZJD7VM2p9-6N8v)

Work + Capitalism: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw4Mb28XmpcK0vZ\\_AZJD7VM2p9-6N8v](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLw4Mb28XmpcK0vZ_AZJD7VM2p9-6N8v)

You can find more on the School of Life on the Educate Yourself page!

### Fair Shake Reentry Packet



Our Reentry Packet is loaded with reentry information including tools and materials for building bridges of transformation and trust.

Fair Shake Reentry Packet

### Choose Your Perspective

You have the right to Choose Your Perspective regardless of what you may encounter in life. For further insight and documents by other authors, view our Choose Your Perspective page at <https://www.fairshake.net/reentry-resources/choose-your-perspective/>

- Swelling
- Handling Frustration
- Working Through Depression
- Managing Anger
- Dealing with Rejection
- Resisting Influence

### Fair Shake Resource Directory

Find food, employment training, free stuff, housing, health care, family support, and nearly 15,000 resources and 400 reentry publications and links in our FREE Resource Directory!



### RZero



<http://rzero.org/>

The RZero Solution resulted by compiling hard-won wisdom from those living through the difficult and often confusing experience of incarceration. FREE Resource Database! <http://rzero.org/resource-database-2>

### 2-1-1

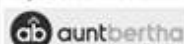
A FREE national resource service available by phone or internet to help folks in need find resources they seek. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They list resources for food, shelter, employment, education, housing, mental and physical health, specific services for veterans, special needs and reentry, a safe path out of physical and/or emotional abuse. A service of United Way. [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)



### Aunt Bertha

<https://company.auntbertha.com/>

Search for free or reduced cost services like medical care, food, job training, and more. Too many Americans are suffering, and they don't need to. We created a social care network that connects people and programs - making it easy for people to find social services in their communities, for nonprofits to coordinate their efforts, and for customers to integrate social care into their work.



### Vital Documents

#### Social Security

- Supplemental Security Income
- What Prisoners Need to Know
- More Publications

#### Social Security Card

- <https://www.ssa.gov/numbers/>
- [social-security-card-info.pdf](https://social-security-card-info.pdf)

#### This is the ss-5 form.

- <https://www.socialsecurity.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>
- [social-security-card-form-ss-5.pdf](https://social-security-card-form-ss-5.pdf)

#### Write For Vital Records - All States

Certificates of Birth, Death, Marriage, Divorce

- <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>
- [vital-records.pdf](https://vital-records.pdf)

#### DMV Request Outline:

There are many reasons you may wish to write to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to request relief. Perhaps you have very old parking tickets, or your license was suspended, et al. You may find some leniency from the DMV to help you drive again, especially to get to work. This form has been created by folks in the FCI Sandstone Career Resource Center and is meant to be used as a template or outline for you to use to create your own.

- DMV Change Request Outline

- Motivation Tips
- Culture Shock
- How To Watch TV
- Ubuntu: Building Social Fabric

- Transition Tips
- Educate Yourself
- Gratitude

### Fair Shake Peer Learning / Self Study Guides

A Self-Study/Workshop Guide for groups and individuals and we would like your input in order to create the most effective material.

Peer Learning / Self Study Guides

### Fair Shake Inside Enews

Read the newsletters here

Sign up at [outreach@fairshake.net](mailto:outreach@fairshake.net)

### Looking for Books?

Check out our Free Books Programs page!

### For Veterans

<https://www.fairshake.net/veterans-page/>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!



The veterans' page was created to assist veterans who have been incarcerated as well as their families. The programs and resources on this page can help reduce the pressures associated with reentry. Our hope is that you will find these resources helpful in providing relief as you face the challenges of finding and supporting an effective way of life after incarceration. Thank you for your service to our country.

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 considerations from your service life to your job seeking. Check in with your local TAP program to find out about jobs that are available near you. To locate your local support office, click on this link:

- <http://www.benefits.va.gov/vowtap.asp>
- Personal Appraisal & Career Exploration
- Job Search Strategies & Interviews
- Reviewing Job Offers & Support and Assistance

### Become a Fair Shake Member!

- Personal Web Page
- Data Storage
- Save your Resources
- Tutorials

Become a Member, it's FREE!



### Housing

We receive very little housing information, especially on a national scale. Recently, however, the two-part document came to us from a HUD representative. So began my attempt to connect you to HUD.

### HUD regional locations

#### Two Part Reentry HUD Housing Request

Since HUD does not offer any documents (that I could find) of their locations (the book does not even offer office locations, only links and email addresses) please ask your people outside to investigate further.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street S.W.  
Washington, DC 20410  
Telephone: (202) 708-1112

<https://portal.hud.gov/portal/hud>

#### HUD Programs

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Program
- HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) at HUD
- Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) at Benefits.gov
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)
- Public Housing Programs
- Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program
- Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities

#### PREPARING FOR PAROLE?

You might want to consider the info in these

#### Parole Board Handbooks

- Ohio Parole Board Handbook 2017
- New Parole Board member (State, Federal, and Military) handbook

### Tax FAQ's from the IRS

Get Right With Your Taxes

### For Parents

It's important to stay connected!

- Children of Incarcerated Parents - Bill of Rights
- Children of Incarcerated Parents' Library
- Biblioteca sobre niños de presos
- Prison Parenting Programs - May 2016

#### Sesame Street: On Incarceration

- Tips for Incarcerated Parents
- Little Children, Big Challenges
- Tips for Caregivers

#### Can you change your child support order?

- State by State Guide
- Changing a Child Support Order

### Improve Your Financial Outlook!

Check out the Money Management page!



Improve your Credit Score

Build a Budget Worksheet

### InCharge Debt Solutions

InCharge offers a free credit counseling service that provides help with budgeting, solutions for becoming debt free and tips to successfully manage your money. The goal of credit counseling is to provide a solution that helps you achieve debt relief and get on a financially healthy path. The service can be done over the phone or online.

You may be able to:

- Lower your interest rates
- Reduce monthly payments
- Credit scores are not a factor
- Eliminate fees and over-limit charges
- Stop harassing calls from debt collectors
- Consolidate credit bills into one monthly payment
- Build a realistic budget and financial plan you can follow

InCharge Debt Solutions

5750 Major Blvd, Suite 300

Orlando, FL 32819

### Mental and Physical Health

Visit the Swellness Page!

<https://www.fairshake.net/swellness/>

Physical Health Page (just getting started!)

Help Yourself Therapy.com

HelpYourselfTherapy.com is a website that offers free, confidential, practical advice from a therapist. The Self-Therapy model is easy to understand and self-disclosure is never needed. Everything is completely confidential. Click on the link below to view the list of topics from the website.

<http://helpyourselftherapy.com/topics/index.html>

### Voting Rights



Voting rights vary from state to state. In two states, Maine and Vermont, incarcerated people can vote in prison. In all other states people in prison lose their voting rights all together. Voting rights are automatically reinstated at various times throughout the completion of the sentence. There are no longer any states with a lifetime voting ban!

According to The Sentencing Project, felony disenfranchisement (the loss of voting and other civil rights) is an obstacle to participation in democratic life which is exacerbated by racial disparities in the criminal justice system (and creates) a disproportionate impact on communities of color.

To find out more, please visit The Sentencing Project:

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/felony-disenfranchisement/>

### NATIONAL INVENTORY OF THE COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES OF CONVICTION

Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Conviction

Collateral consequences are legal and regulatory sanctions and restrictions that limit or prohibit people with criminal records from accessing employment, occupational licensing, housing, voting, education, and other opportunities of a criminal conviction. This state / national resource is now a project of the Council of State Governments.

Website: <https://nccs.csgjusticecenter.org/>

## 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	

# THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAIR SHAKE AND A PROGRAM

Fair Shake; the Un-Program		Most Programs
Build community	When I receive questions from individuals, I turn to the 4000+ incarcerated newsletter readers to share their suggestions, reflections, ideas, and experiences. Each of us holds a wealth of information! We can look to each other for solutions, critical questions and support.	Programs address one 'need'. They rarely support people outside of that one area and almost never build community between areas and among the incarcerated or formerly incarcerated.
Encourage feelings of agency and self-determination	Fair Shake provides opportunities for people to pursue their own goals. We offer support to everyone to meet their universal human needs, including the need to understand themselves as a person-in-society vs. a person alone.	Many programs are created to address 'criminogenic needs'. Many participants 'go through the motions' to get the certificate or check the box.
Build knowledge base with incarcerated and non-incarcerated alike	I ask incarcerated people what they need to properly reintegrate into society. I share their ideas with all readers...for example, we built our free books, higher education and pen-pal lists through newsletter contributions!	Programs tell people what they must do. They then provide ways to check to see if the participants are doing it. That's how they determine if it 'worked'.
Understanding and addressing complexity	Fair Shake offers a unique blend of interdisciplinary education opportunities Including: building capabilities, helping others, understanding ourselves, ways to collaborate, and leveraging community knowledge to address today's challenges.	Programs mainly focus on fixing or addressing deficits. They target single aspects of a person, not the whole, messy, integrated person-within-community.
Multi-Stakeholder Approach	Fair Shake is the only organization that offers free information for many stakeholder groups; providing a platform for us to all work together to build mutually-beneficial success.	Programs are encouraged to work collaboratively but very few do so without funding that will support it.
Educate and Leverage staff	I share 'best practices' among the state and federal institutions, who have no opportunities to learn from each other. I strongly encourage prison staff to provide tools that returning citizens need for reentry success.	Many programs rely on staff. They rarely, if ever, focus on problem-solving with corrections to improve outcomes or usefulness.
FREE benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free of cost to anyone.</li> <li>• Free software for prisons and jails</li> <li>• DIY: no need for staff or supervision</li> <li>• Free to use and explore as you like!</li> <li>• Free National Resource Directory</li> <li>• Free from data collection and algorithms</li> </ul>	"Free" of financial costs for "Clients", but often paid for by the government to address 'needs'. Many resources are offered on 'referral' basis only.



# Maurice Sprewer

414.874.1657 (list the BEST contact number you have)

[Maurice.sprewer@dwd.wisconsin.gov](mailto: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. 27<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 602 Milwaukee, WI 53216*

# Spot the Bias:

## Fundamental Attribution Error

One of the most common biases!

The fundamental attribution error (FAE) is a cognitive bias which frames positive outcomes and negative outcomes differently, depending on the actor.

It refers to our tendency to attribute our success to our character and ability, and our failures to fate, other people, technical problems - in other words, to blame something or someone else. Not only is this not true, but on the other side of the error, we perceive the problems that others face as flaws in their character, and their success as luck.

For example, if I cut someone off in traffic, it's because I was in a rush or I happened not to see the other driver. But if someone else cuts me off in traffic, it's because they're a bad or selfish driver.

The same goes for positives: if I do well on an exam, it's because I studied hard and earned it. But if someone else does well, maybe the exam was too easy or they happened to guess well.

Of course, as the name implies, this is an error, so it's something we have to be aware of in order to fix it. Since the natural tendency is to be biased, it might be best to lean in the opposite direction. If someone else does something good, we can consider that it's more likely that it is the result of their choices. And if they do something bad, we can keep in mind that it's more likely to be due to circumstances.

Similarly, if you do something well, remember how much good fortune is involved; and if you do something bad or poorly, it may be a signal to look inward, to be more conscientious or careful next time.

The FAE is a foundational bias for many Americans through the lens of meritocracy or the belief that "we can make it if we try" or, in other words, we will "get what we deserve". The thinking error is so common, that it is "at the root of any misunderstanding in which human motivations have the potential to be misinterpreted", according to Patrick Healy.

The fundamental attribution error, like confirmation bias and overconfidence, affects every day behavior.

Cognitive biases shape how an individual interacts with the world around them. Understanding these biases and becoming aware of the ways that they influence your behavior – as well as the thinking and behavior of others - is vital to your self-efficacy and to creating success. It is equally important understand biases to work with others!

Can you see this bias in yourself? In others? On TV, in newspapers (esp. by political parties) or in books?

BIASES and ASSUMPTIONS: our lazy brain relies on assumptions and limited information to make judgments.

We will never overcome our biases or our faulty logic, but if we pay attention to them, we will get much better at seeing them and stopping them....and creating better situations and opportunities by using our wisdom!

## SO WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

We can build an HONEST BIAS, where we check, repeatedly, to check our assumptions. We can also ask for feedback from people we can trust to help us see ourselves better than we could alone.



The table (below) and much of the writing is by alex petralia

Who did it?

		myself	someone else
Outcome	positive	personality	circumstances
	negative	circumstances	personality

# The 3 Conundrums & 13 Strategies That Generate Biases

No matter what we do, we can't escape these conundrums, but 13 strategies help us think within their constraints.

## 3 CONUNDRUMS

1. There's too much information (so we must filter it).
2. There's not enough meaning (so we use stories to make sense).
3. There's not enough time (so we motivate towards action).

Each of the following strategies helps us compensate for one of the 3 conundrums by overvaluing a certain kind of possibility and undervaluing everything else. Each strategy is a collection of cognitive biases, mental shortcuts, and energy savers that help us filter information, make sense of things and get stuff done.

## 13 STRATEGIES

### 1-5 HELP US FILTER INFORMATION

1. We depend on the context to figure out what to notice and remember.
2. We accept what comes to mind, and don't worry much about what doesn't come to mind.
3. We amplify bizarre things.
4. We notice novelty.
5. We seek takeaways to remember and toss the rest.

### 6-10 HELP US MAKE SENSE OF THINGS

6. We fill in the gaps with stereotypes and generalities.
7. We favor familiar things over the non-familiar.
8. We treat experience as reality.
9. We simplify mental math.
10. We are overconfident in everything we do.

### 11-13 HELP US GET THINGS DONE

11. We stick with things we've started.
12. We protect existing beliefs.
13. We will opt to do the safe things, all other things being equal.

### 13 BLIND SPOTS TO QUESTION:

1. Out of context: What have I missed because options were hidden from my particular circumstances and context in the moment?
2. Out of mind: What have I not considered because they just didn't come to mind at the time?
3. Lackluster: What have I missed because something else immediately grabs my attention when I think about this?
4. Expired: What options have I neglected because they didn't present themselves as shiny and new?
5. Irrelevant: What have I undervalued because it didn't fit my expectations as a proper take-away?
6. Untypical: What options have I not seen in their true light because I projected stereotypes and generalities onto them?
7. Unfamiliar: What have I passed over simply because it didn't feel familiar to me?

8. Unrelatable: What options have fallen to the wayside because they didn't match my own personal experiences?

9. Ambiguous: What options have I dismissed because they felt less certain or more risky in the moment?

10. Underestimated: What have I ignored or neglected because I overestimated my ability to control certain situations?

11. Costly: What options have I dismissed because they would require changing course from previous decisions?

12. Threatening: What have I dismissed because I wasn't ready to accept that I might be wrong?

13. Unpopular: What options have been pushed aside because I felt gathering consensus would put me at risk in some way?

For a lot more insight, check out Buster's book *Why Are We Yelling?*

# Culture Shock!

Most of the information Fair Shake shares is for everyone to read, because everyone plays an important role in 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.

### **Citizenship - Birth Certificate**

We work directly with hundreds of government agencies nationwide to provide consumers with the ability to securely order their vital records online. Government agencies across the nation trust VitalChek to handle your vital record orders, and you can too.

[https://www.vitalchek.com/order\\_main.aspx?eventtype=birth](https://www.vitalchek.com/order_main.aspx?eventtype=birth)

### **Citizenship - Consumer Services**

NACAs mission is to promote justice for all consumers. We provide a forum for communication, education, networking, and information-sharing among consumer advocates across the country. We also serve as a voice for consumers in the ongoing struggle to curb unfair or abusive business practices that harm consumers. The National Association of Consumer Advocates (NACA) is a nonprofit association of more than 1,500 attorneys and consumer advocates committed to representing consumers interests.

<http://www.consumeradvocates.org/>

### **Employment - Employment Services**

America Works includes work readiness training, vocational training, career placement, career advancement, and employment retention services. Our mission is to equip each individual who comes to our offices with the right tools so that they are able to provide for themselves and their loved ones. People find employment, and employers find talent! Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, you must contact the office first before you can engage in in-person services. Click on the link above to find the location nearest to you.

<https://americaworks.com/virtual-contact-info/>

### **Employment - Staffing Agency**

Manpower is dedicated to enriching people's lives with meaningful employment and development opportunities, as we have done for more than 60 years.

<https://www.manpower.com/ManpowerUSA/home>

### **Health - Addiction Recovery**

This website brings you to a list of AA meetings through out Idaho. Just put in the city you are located in and hit "submit."

<http://www.idahoarea18aa.org/main/meetings.htm>

### **Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic**

1101 N 28th St  
#1101

Boise, ID 83702-2208

(208) 342-1898

Birthright offers free and confidential pregnancy testing. Information and referral for medical, legal or housing needs. Referrals to social agencies and professional counseling. Free baby clothing (up to 12 months) and maternity clothes. Friendship, support, encouragement to help women carry their babies to term.

<http://birthright.org/en/>

### **Health - Reduced Cost Medication**

700 W State St  
Boise, ID 83720

### **Citizenship - Consumer Services**

The Consumer Services Guide is searchable directory of resources which can help you with consumer problems and questions. This link directs you to the Categories page, where you can search topics to find national, state and local resources.

<http://www.consumerservicesguide.org/resources/national/browse/category/>

### **Employment - Employment Services**

We are dedicated to helping you find your next career! The National Urban League is a historic civil rights organization dedicated to elevating the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities. Founded in 1910, the National Urban League spearheads the effort of its local affiliates through the development of programs, public policy research and advocacy.

<http://www.nuljobsnetwork.com/>

### **Employment - Staffing Agency**

PeopleReady has re-imagined and simplified the path that connects people and work. Whether you need workers or youre looking for new job opportunities, were ready to deliver results for you today.

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

### **Family - Family Services**

Boise Rescue Mission Ministries

308 S. 24th St.

Boise, ID 83702

(208) 343-7607

Boise Rescue Mission provides food, shelter, clothing, counseling, job search assistance and recovery programs for men, women and children in need. Emergency services and recovery programs are provided at the following facilities: River of Life Rescue Mission (Boise), City Light Home for Women and Children (Boise) and The Light House Rescue Mission (Nampa). Meals are served in th 3 facilities every day of the year to anyone in need. Breakfast, lunch and dinner. Professional mental health services are available.

The New Life Program is a 12-18 month discipleship/recovery program for homeless men and women that provides substance abuse recovery services to chemically dependent/alcoholic individuals. The program is designed to help individuals develop and implement long range recovery plans toward self sufficiency with support services such as life skills training, education, employment preparedness, health care and mental health services.

The Boise Rescue Mission has taught the word of god and provided services since 1958.

24 hours daily.

<http://www.boiserm.org/>

### **Health - Free/Sliding Scale Clinic**

If you're ready to take steps towards a healthier and more prosperous life, then we are here for you. If you cannot afford the cost of medical insurance because of your financial situation, we might be able to become your medical home.

located at:

215 W 35th St

Garden City, Idaho 83714

(800) 247-4422

SHIBA is part of a network of state health insurance programs (SHIP) across the United States and its territories. In Idaho, SHIBA is funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency which administers the Medicare program, and the Idaho Department of Insurance.

SHIBA is a part of the Department of Insurance, Consumer Affairs, which:  
Investigates claims and insurance fraud  
Provides advocacy services for consumers  
Provides assistance with insurance problems or questions on life, disability, long term care, property, casualty, and health insurance  
<http://www.doi.idaho.gov/shiba/shwelcome.aspx>

### **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/>

### **Shelter - Housing Authority**

Find a HUD location near you.  
<https://www.hud.gov/states>

### **Special Considerations - Elders**

The world of job searching has changed drastically over the years. You now have more options than ever. We'll help you navigate through those choices and guide you through the process of applying and interviewing for your next job.  
<http://www.aarpworksearch.org/Pages/Default.aspx>

208-384-5200

<http://www.gardencityclinic.org/>

### **Health - Reduced Cost Medication**

3217 W Overland Rd

Boise, ID 83705

(208) 344-9737

Prescription Drug Patient Assistance Programs,  
Prescription Expense Assistance  
<http://www.svdpid.org/pages/Home.php>

### **Money - Finances/Budgeting**

GreenPath will work with you to build a personalized plan of action for regaining control of your debt. We assess your household budget, find places for you to save, and help you prioritize your payments to creditors and plan a lifestyle that you can afford. It all works toward helping you achieve your financial goals, better manage debt and avoid problems in the future. Available in Spanish.  
<http://www.greenpath.com/>

### **Shelter - Financial Counseling**

HUD sponsors housing counseling agencies throughout the country that can provide advice on buying a home, renting, defaults, foreclosures, and credit issues. This link sends you to a page that allows you to select a list of agencies for each state. You may search more specifically for a reverse mortgage counselor or if you are facing foreclosure, search for a foreclosure avoidance counselor.  
<http://hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm?weblistaction=summary>

### **Special Considerations - Elders**

800-677-1116

Welcome to the Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging connecting you to services for older adults and their families.  
<https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>

COMPANY OR  
EMPLOYER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION APPLIED FOR: \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

# Employment Application

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU LEGALLY ELIGIBLE FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE U.S.A.?

☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, verification will be required.)

I AM SEEKING A PERMANENT POSITION: ☐ Yes ☐ No

IF NECESSARY FOR THE JOB I AM ABLE TO:

Are you able to perform the essential functions  
of the position with or without accommodations?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Work (which shifts)? \_\_\_\_\_

Work overtime? \_\_\_\_\_

Provide a valid Alaska Drivers License? \_\_\_\_\_

IF NECESSARY FOR THE JOB, ARE YOU OVER (Please mark one) 14\_\_ 15\_\_ 16\_\_ 18\_\_ 19\_\_ 21\_\_

I WILL BE ABLE TO REPORT TO WORK \_\_\_\_ DAYS AFTER BEING NOTIFIED THAT I AM HIRED.

EDUCATION:	Yrs. Completed	Field of Study	Graduate or Degree
High School _____			
College/University _____			
Business/Technical _____			
Other (May include grammar school) _____			

MILITARY SERVICE: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Duty/Specialized Training: \_\_\_\_\_

REFERENCES: List two personal references who are not relatives or former supervisors.

Name	Address	Telephone	Occupation	Years known
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Name	Address	Telephone	Occupation	Years known
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

EMPLOYMENT: List last employment first. Include summer or temporary jobs. Be sure all your experience or employers related to this job are listed here, in the summary (following this section), or use an extra sheet of paper if necessary.

Employer Name and Address	Position Title/Duties Skills	Dates Employed from to
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____	Supervisor's Name: Telephone:	Reason for leaving

Employer Name and Address	Position Title/Duties Skills	Dates Employed from to
_____		
_____		
_____		
_____	Supervisor's Name: Telephone:	Reason for leaving



## EMPLOYMENT CONTINUED...

Employer Name and Address	Position Title/Duties Skills	Dates Employed from                      to
		Reason for leaving
	Supervisor's Name:                      Telephone:	

Employer Name and Address	Position Title/Duties Skills	Dates Employed from                      to
		Reason for leaving
	Supervisor's Name:                      Telephone:	

Summarize other  
employment related to this job: \_\_\_\_\_

Types of computers, other electronic or mechanical  
equipment that you are qualified to operate or repair: \_\_\_\_\_

Typing speed: \_\_\_\_\_ per minute.

Professional Licenses, Certifications or Registrations: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional skills including supervision skills, other languages, or information  
regarding the career/occupation you wish to bring to the employer's attention: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of accident or illness please contact: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

**Information to the applicant:** As part of our procedure for processing your employment application, your personal and employment references may be checked. If you have misrepresented or omitted any facts on this application, and are subsequently hired, you may be discharged from your job. You may make a written request for information derived from the checking of your references.

If necessary for employment, you may be required to: supply your birth certificate or other proof of authorization to work in the US, have a physical examination and/or a drug test, or to sign a conflict of interest agreement and abide by its terms.

I understand and agree to the information shown above:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Equal Employment Opportunity:** While many employers are required by federal law to have an Affirmative Action Program, all employers are required to provide equal employment opportunity and may ask your national origin, race and sex for planning and reporting purposes only. This information is optional and failure to provide it will have no affect on your application for employment.

Employer Section: \_\_\_\_\_

## **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.

## **Suggested Reading**

### **The Adult Years: Mastering the Art of Self-Renewal**

Fredric M. Hudson    1999    Jossey-Bass

### **Amusing Ourselves to Death**

Neil Postman    1985    Penguin Books

### **Brave New World**

Aldous Huxley    1946    Harper Perennial

### **The Careless Society: Community And It's Counterfeits**

John McKnight    1996    Basic Books

### **Character Strengths and Virtues : A Handbook and Classification**

Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman    2004    Oxford University Press

### **Community: The Structure of Belonging**

Peter Block    2008    Berrett-Koehler Publishers

### **Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education**

John Dewey    1916    The Free Press

### **The Depression Cure: The 6-Step Program to Beat Depression Without Drugs**

Stephen S. Ilardi    2010    Da Capo Press, Incorporated

### **The Doors of Perception**

Aldous Huxley    1954    Harper Perennial

### **Dr. Seuss and Philosophy: Oh, The Thinks You Can Think!**

Edited by Jacob Held    2011    Rowman and Littlefield Publishers

### **Escape From Freedom**

Erich Fromm    1941    Henry Holt and Company

### **Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being**

Martin Seligman    2011    Free Press

### **Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television**

Jerry Mander    1977    Quill

### **Freedom to Learn**

Carl Rogers and H. Jerome Freiberg    1994    Macmillan College Publishing Company

### **The Globalization of Addiction: A Study in Poverty of the Spirit**

Bruce K. Alexander    2010    Oxford University Press

### **How The Way We Talk Can Change The Way We Work**

Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey    2001    Jossey-Bass

### **Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power and Personhood**

Nikolas Rose    1998    Cambridge University Press

### **Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life**

Martin Seligman    2006    Vintage Books

**Man's Search For Meaning**

Victor Frankl 1946 Available through Beacon Press

**Mediated: How The Media Shapes Your World And The Way You Live In It**

Thomas De Zengotta 2005 Bloomsbury Publishing

**No Contest: The Case Against Competition**

Alfie Kohn 1986 Houghton Mifflin

**Nonsense: Red Herrings, Straw Men and Sacred Cows: How we Abuse Logic in Our Everyday Language**

Robert J. Gula 2007 Axios Press

**On Personal Power: Inner Strength and It's Revolutionary Impact**

Carl Rogers 1977 Delta Books

**Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative**

Ken Robinson 2001 Capstone Publishing

**Plato, not Prozac!: Applying Eternal Wisdom to Everyday Problems**

Lou Marionoff 1999 HarperCollins

**Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing**

Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe 2010 Riverhead Books / Penguin

**The Psychology of Attitude Change and Social Influence**

Philip Zimbardo and Michael R. Leippe 1991 McGraw-Hill

**The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion**

Jonathan Haidt 2012 Pantheon Books

**Teaching as a Subversive Activity**

Neil Postman 1969 Delacorte Press

**Thinking Fast and Slow**

Daniel Kahneman 2011 Farrar, Straus and Giroux

**Understanding Human Nature**

Alfred Adler 1927 Available through One World Publications

**Various Books on Buddhism**

Authors include: Thích Nhất Hạnh, Pema Chodron, Allan Watts...

**What About Me? The Struggle for Identity in a Market-Based Society**

Paul Verhaeghe 2012 Scribe Publications

**What Does IT Mean To Be Well Educated? And More Essays on Standards, Grading and Other Follies**

Alfie Kohn 2004 Beacon Press

**Whatever it Takes: Geoffrey Canada's Quest to Change Harlem and America**

Paul Tough 2008 Houghton Mifflin Books