

FS News - IA Edition: Intentional Agency

Warm greetings, everyone!

As the temperatures plummet here in Wisconsin, I'm sending my best wishes for your good health along with my "Happy New Year!" I hope that the things you celebrate at this time of year are providing strength to bolster you through the start of 2026.

Fortunately, we start the new year in a reflective season. If we care to pay attention to it, this is a great time of year to slow down, think about the past year (or several), consider our direction and see if we should make any adjustments. I surely will. In 2025, I felt like I reacted a lot, which is exhausting. In 2026, I'm am committed to being honest with myself about how long it takes for me to do things. I am a slow writer, and I need to update the Reentry Ownership Manual, so I'm putting everything else down to get it done. It will force me to say 'no' to a lot of things, which is hard, but that will get easier the more I do it.

This edition of the FS news is called "IA" to remember that when we see the letters A and I, we can make Any Interpretation...in fact, Arranged Information is much closer to what it really is, since it is neither "artificial" nor "intelligent"...and it's wrong a lot of the time. Perhaps Arbitrary & Irrational?

Now IA, or Intentional Agency, sounds a lot more fun to me! It means "purposeful power," and that's exactly what we need to get stuff done. (incl. setting boundaries!) Intention is not a wish or a hope, it means "to have in mind as a purpose or goal." (Webster's) While Agency is "the quality of moving or exerting power." (Webster's)

Remember, attention reveals intention. If you say you plan to do A, but you're paying attention to B...then you're fooling yourself about A. Questioning ourselves (our assumptions, our beliefs, our 'follow through') as we focus our valuable attention is a hugely important skill for creating good health and a successful life.

Mark Manson (the author of The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck) has been extremely prolific and generous this year. Just recently he shared a few things that I'd like to share with you. I'm including brief notes from his articles here, but longer versions are available on request. If you're reading this newsletter in print and you'd like to receive the articles, please send a S.A.S.E. with your request.

MM1: Want to CHANGE YOUR LIFE IN 2026? Then do this:

Step 1: Write down everything you care about.

Step 2: Arrange the list from most important to least important.

Step 3: Cross out everything but the top 3 things.

Step 4: Re-organize everything you do around those three things.

Goals are a path, not the destination. Your destination is your purpose. Define your values, clarify what matters, and remove every single f*cking obstacle that saps your energy, robs your time, or muddies your purpose.

MM2: Life is a Video Game – Here are the CHEAT CODES

Cheat Code 1: Get Good at Feeling Bad: Life is a never-ending stream of challenges that must be confronted and surmounted. You will have endless problems thrown at you...which is not all bad, as problems are what give our lives meaning.

Cheat Code 2: Reset Your Mind: When you can be open to how your mind works, you'll have the power to get unstuck from old and ineffective ways of thinking and problem solving.

Cheat Code 3: Manage Your Emotions: We all have emotions, and barely any of us know what to do with them. Managing emotions can become a super-power.

Cheat Code 4: Achieve More by Doing Less: Slow down so you can focus on what's important.

Cheat Code 5: Don't Die Alone. The people you allow into your life are one of the most important determinants of how you play this often lonely game called life.

Life is complex and confusing. The most difficult things we can do include: deciding what our life is worth, building the wisdom to define what a good and meaningful life is, and then having the courage to live our lives to the fullest!

EMOTION BASICS (informed by Mark Manson and Lisa Feldman Barrett)

Emotions drive our behavior (not thoughts). We are not educated about our emotions. All aspects of the Media know this (incl. the news) and prey on us with evocative content created specifically to drive feeling. We were short-changed as children, but we can gain control now! We have a lot of power to change how we feel and how we respond. Here are a few main points from an article that I'm writing for the next Reentry Ownership Manual. If you'd like to see the full article, email or send an SASE to get your copy.

1. What we learned about emotions was mainly through tacit learning (experience), with the people in our lives...who had never studied emotions.
2. Learning about emotions can increase our power and freedom.
3. Emotions are real, but constructed. Emotions are as real as perception, but they are not universal and cannot be assumed by looking at someone's face. No one feels the same way, about anything, as you do!
4. We are active creators of our emotional lives. With improved understanding, we can manage how we move through the world....wise to the power we possess.

As a follow up to the Emotion Basics above, I found and extended and updated Feelings Wheel! Sometimes it can be very hard to specify what we are feeling. The Feelings Wheel gives us concise words to help us name - and then manage - our feelings. I can't send the image, so I put the words into groups. Would you like to receive the list?

BANK ACCOUNTS are now available for incarcerated folks!

INDUSTRIAL BANK

4812 Georgia Avenue., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20011
(202) 722-2000

Email (they will reply): beyondbanking@industrial-bank.com
Website: <https://www.industrial-bank.com>

MENTAL HEALTH CHECK IN: Reading, writing, meditation, stretching, walking, and reflection time can support mental and physical well-being.

ARE YOU ADDICTED TO COMMITTING CRIME? Academics and corrections administrators claim that you have a 'need' to commit crime; that you IDENTIFY AS A CRIMINAL, and it is this identity that keeps you from making good decisions...as if "identity" creates a 'need,' like hunger or addiction. I think this is complete BS. What do you think? If you're reading this in the BOP, check out Library 2 in the app. The third shelf contains books related to this idea. It's supposedly the most current thinking on reentry and recidivism. I think it is why their 'what works' never works. Send an email or SASE for more info.

Dan Pink's How To Read Better -

- Work your books: underline, fold the corner, flatten the spine...use them like a tool!
- Consider: What's the big idea and how does the author know? Should you act on the info?
- Harvest: write notes about what you liked to review later.
- Re-read books...YOU are not the same person who read the book the first time!
- T-shaped reader – deep and wide: search for more information if the book grips you!
- Become a quitter: let go if the book doesn't grip you in 50 pages...
- Don't Stress – reading should be enjoyable! Don't worry about reading fast.

DO YOU (STILL) TRUST THE NEWS? Just 6 companies own 90% of the media (and the same advertisers control all of them). The stories that we are being told are a very small fraction of what is happening, and even that fraction is skewed to an ideology. This limitation is to mold us, not enlighten us. For example: did any of your news outlets tell you that Steven Biko's case has been reopened? Me either. An inquest into his murder by the police has begun. I'll keep you posted as this story develops. The news confirms Biko's quote: "The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."

EMPLOYMENT UPDATE:

The labor market outlook continues to be good for formerly incarcerated people. Employers, overall, have shifted to a 'fair chance' position and many organizations are understaffed and need workers. Peter Zeihan stated "Swaths of Boomers are leaving the workforce, and Gen Z doesn't have enough people to keep up." The anti-immigration position in the White House is gutting workers, as well. Computer and AI training will be valuable!

According to a 2022 "Harris Poll", 70% of companies use social media to research applicants. Remember this when you post or comment.

Does FREE HIGHER EDUCATION interest you? Once you have access to the internet, there are many opportunities for free courses. They are all online, though, so work on your reading skills and 'study mindset' now. I'll send you links – like Freshman Year Free – when you have access to the internet.

QUOTES

"If you want peace, you don't talk to your friends - you talk to your enemies." ~ Desmond Tutu

"It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it." - Upton Sinclair

"You can't think yourself into a new way of acting, but you can act yourself into a new way of thinking." ~ Dave Gray

"The path to aliveness isn't about getting everything right. It's about getting everything real." - Tom Asacker

"Sometimes, in life, you are responsible for changing something, not because you are to blame, but because you're the only person who can. The responsibility falls to you." – Lisa Feldman Barrett

"It is beliefs, and not thinking, that steer your ship. Question your assumptions and change your destiny." ~ me

"SMART" PHONE? Smart for whom?

"Surveillance capitalism redefined the internet as a surveillance prison with no bars and no exit. Human data are instantly claimed as corporate property, destroying privacy as we have known it. The companies harness their information capabilities to the service of state power." – Shoshana Zuboff (The government cannot sell your data. Private companies can...and do. One of their best customers is the government.)

To our successful transitions! All the best to you in 2026.

Ubuntu, ~ sue

Let folks know they can access the website – incl. the Resource Directory – free from cost and free from tracking - at www.fairshake.net.

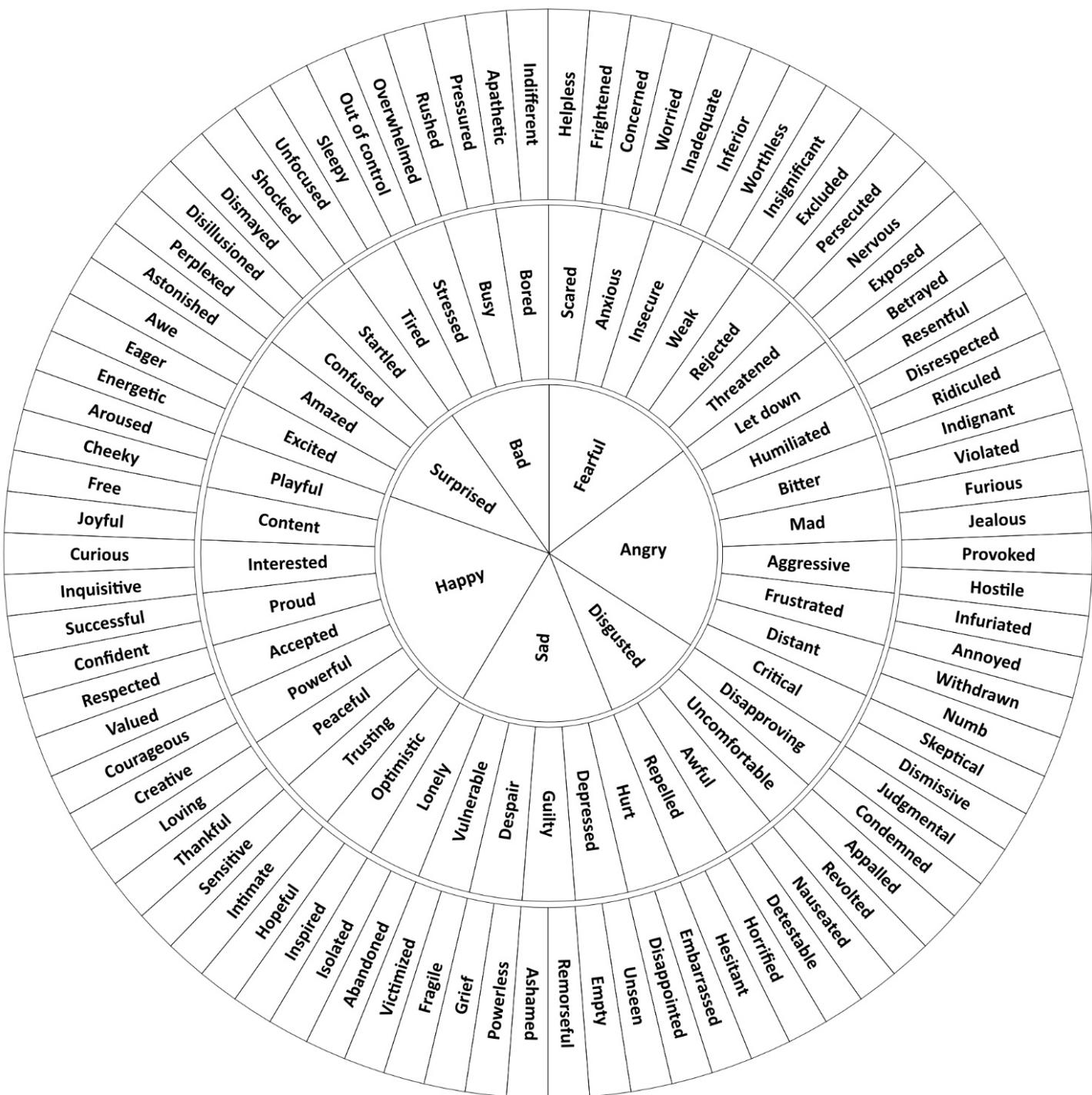
Want to make a donation? Fair Shake PO Box 63 Westby, WI 54667

And if you're releasing soon, remember:

If you're feeling down, VOLUNTEER! It's a safe anti-depressant with positive side-effects.

BE CAREFUL with your gizmo! It's very hard to recognize conditioning when it's happening. EVERYTHING that you do on your device TEACHES Big Brother how he can make you jump. That's right. YOU teach them how they can control you by how you respond to the information, the noises and the media that they give you. Big Brother never sleeps.

Dealing with Emotions & Feelings Wheel by Geoffrey Roberts



Realize that the emotions you are feeling at this very moment are a gift, a guideline, a support system, a call to action. If you suppress your emotions and try to drive them out of your life, or if you magnify them and allow them to take over everything, then you're squandering one of life's most precious resources. (Robbins, 1991)

Reduce the Emotional Intensity

By clearly identifying and articulating how you feel you can reduce the intensity of the experience. Expressing yourself with a deep emotional vocabulary helps to reengage your neocortex instead of being carried away by your emotions.

STEP ONE- Amygdala Hijack

When your brain perceives it is under threat your amygdala reacts much faster than your rational, conscious mind. In what Daniel Goleman describes as an 'amygdala hijack' you experience the classic 'freeze, flight, fight' response and the chemical rush that follows is part of what we call emotions (Golman, 1996). This heightened state of mind can be very useful if you are under an imminent physical threat but more likely it will make you less able to respond in a rational and considered way to relational challenges and complex problems.

STEP TWO - Acknowledge and Appreciate Your Emotions: They Support You

You never want to make your emotions wrong. The idea that anything you feel is "wrong" is a great way to destroy honest communication with yourself as well as with others. Be thankful that there's a part of your brain that is sending you a signal of support, a call to action to make a change in either your perception of some aspect of your life or in your actions. (Robbins, 1991)

STEP THREE - Get Curious about the Message Your Emotions Are Offering You

- What would I have to believe in order to feel the way I've been feeling?
- What am I willing to do to create a solution and handle this right now?
- What do I really want to feel?
- What can I learn from this?

STEP FOUR - Get Confident

Get confident that you can handle this emotion immediately. The quickest, simplest, and most powerful way I know to handle any emotion is to remember a time when you felt a similar emotion and realize that you've successfully handled this emotion before. (Robbins, 1991)

- What strategies have I used in the past to deal with this emotion?
- Do I know someone who is great at dealing with this? What strategies do they use?

STEP FIVE - Get Certain You Can Handle This Not Only Today, But in the Future as Well

You want to feel certain that you can handle this emotion easily in the future by having a great plan to do so. One way to do this is to simply remember the ways you've handled it in the past and rehearse handling situations where this emotion would come up in the future. See, hear, and feel yourself handling the situation easily. (Robbins, 1991)

STEP SIX - Get Excited, and Take

Action Now go and do something!



References

Golman, Daniel (1996). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books. Robbins, Anthony (1991). *Awaken the Giant Within*. New York: Free Press.

RELIGIOUS, SPIRITUAL and OTHER SUPPORT (10.27.25)

Free books, study guides and more. This is just a start! More will be added ~ :)

BUDDHIST

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies 194 Lockwood Rd., Barre MA 01005 Free Theravada Buddhist tradition books.
<https://www.buddhistinquiry.org/>

Dharma Companions P.O. Box 762, Cotati, CA. 94931-0762 Free Buddhist books and mentoring correspondence for those practicing Buddhism without a teacher.
<https://dharmacompanions.wordpress.com/>

Liberation Prison Project PO Box 31527 San Francisco, CA 94131- 0527
<https://liberationprisonproject.org/> Free Buddhist books, prayer and practice materials

Prison Dharma Network PO Box 4623, Boulder CO 80306
<https://www.prisonmindfulness.org/> Buddhist books and Buddhist pen pal program.

CHRISTIAN

American Rehabilitation Ministry PO Box 1490 Joplin, MO 64802-1490
<https://www.arm.org> 417-781-9100 Bible correspondence courses.

Catholic Home Study Service PO Box 363 Perryville, MO 63775-0363 Free correspondence courses on the Catholic Church and the Bible.

Catholic Worker 36 East First Street New York, NY 10003 Free bimonthly newspaper.

International Bible Society 1820 Jet Stream Drive Colorado Springs, CO 80921 Bibles and Christian literature in English and Spanish.

Jehovah's Witnesses 1020 Red Mills Road Wallkill, NY 12589 Free Magazine: The Watchtower 845-524-3500
<https://www.jw.org/>

HUMANIST and INTERFAITH

Humanism For All 1821 Jefferson Place NW Washington, DC 20036
<https://americanhumanist.org>
202-238-9088 Email us!
CorrLinks at aha@americanhumanist.org or
JPay at enewman@americanhumanist.org.
\$2 reduced rate membership for incarcerated individuals that can be paid in unused stamps. Membership includes a one-year subscription to the *Humanist* magazine, a copy of Roy Speckhardt's *Creating Change through Humanism* and an AHA bookmarker.

Edgar Cayce's A.R.E Association for Research and Enlightenment 215 67th Street Virginia Beach, VA 23451 757-428-3588
A non-profit providing free books since 1972. Their books are about interpreting dreams, wellness, meditation, ancient Egypt, karma and self-help topics. The organization can also connect readers to a mentor to discuss the books. edgarcayce.org

Human Kindness Foundation PO Box 61619 Durham NC 27715 919-383-5160 Free resources about spirituality, mindfulness and wellness.
www.humankindness.org

ISLAM

Alavi Foundation 500 5th Ave, 23rd floor,
Suite 2320 New York, NY 10110
<https://alavifoundation.us>

Individuals in need of the Quran and Islamic Literature, send your request to the nearest location:

* *The Islamic Seminary Book Distribution Program* PO Box 2946 Huntington Station, NY 11746

* *Islamic Education Center of Texas* ATTN: Library P. O. Box 572385 Houston, TX 77257-2385

* *Islamic Education Center of Maryland* ATTN: Book Distribution 7917 Montrose Road Potomac, MD 20854

* *Shia Association of Bay Area Inc.* ATTN: Book Distribution 4415 Fortran Ct San Jose, CA 95134

Islamic Society of North America 6555 S. County Road 750E Plainfield , IN 46168 Sends Qurans and other introductory books on Islamic study.

JUDAISM

The Aleph Institute 9540 Collins Avenue, Surfside, FL 33154 Jewish Religious Educational materials, pen pal program, religious freedom advocacy.

Jewish Prisoner Services International
PO BOX 85840, Seattle, WA 98145-1840 Religious services and materials to Jews in prison.

PAGAN

Appalachian Pagan Ministry PO Box 162 Pomeroy, OH 45769 (740) 625-3619
<https://appalachianpaganministry.com>

Coven Oldenwilde 113 Clinton Ave Asheville, NC 28806 www.oldenwilde.org Provides religious information, legal information, and legal advocacy for Pagan inmates

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Most companies will no longer accept or respond to mail. Here are a few who still do!

FREE INSURANCE:

Parks Insurance offers free insurance for returning citizens as they start to navigate the world and life after incarceration.
153 S. Oakland Ave
Rock Hill SC 29730
parksinsured.com

Social Security Administration

Office of Public Inquiries and Communications Support
1100 West High Rise
6401 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21235

InCharge

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

Proceed with Caution:

Blaming others gives them power!



Operation HOPE has a series of programs to support your path to improving your credit, reducing debt, increasing savings, buying a home or starting a business. Our programs and services, which serve youth and adults, are offered at no cost to you.

Operation HOPE

91 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 3840
Atlanta, GA 30303
888-388-HOPE (4673)

Plus a few

PERSONAL POWER TIPS:

MAKE AN INTENTION BUDGET

Pay attention to what you pay attention to so you can make more time to spend in your INTENTION!

TAKE INVENTORY OF YOUR BELIEFS

Beliefs – not thoughts – drive our behavior. Beliefs about ourselves affect our health, our capabilities, and our choices. Consider this: belief heals, belief reduces pain, and people who believe they are smarter do better on tests! Beliefs are powerful, yet we do not learn in school how to understand them, question them, or revise them...but we are free to learn about these things now to create a better tomorrow!

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

*Certainty is the killer of curiosity.
Comparison is the killer of compassion.
Comfort is the killer of creativity.*

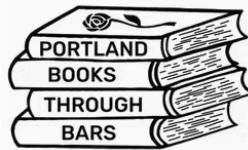
- Tom Asacker

Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook
Center for Constitutional Rights
666 Broadway, 7th Floor
New York, NY, 10009-8941
Write for your free copy!

Free Magazine Subscription

The Sun
107 N. Roberson St.
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
They offer interviews, essays, fiction, poetry, and photos and invite reader feedback.

Free Books:
PDX Books Through Bars
PO Box 11222
Portland, OR 97211
Let them know what you like to read, and including mail restrictions with your request!



Prison Activist Resource Center
National Resource Directory
PO Box 70447
Oakland, CA 94612
Write for your free copy!

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK SNAPSHOT from the U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

20 FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS through 2034 and AVERAGE WAGE

1. Wind Turbine Service Technicians - \$63,000 / year
2. Solar Photovoltaic Installers - \$52,000 / year
3. Nurse Practitioners - 130,000 / year
4. Data Scientists - \$113,000 / year
5. Information Security Analysts - \$125,000 / year
6. Medical and Health Services Managers \$118,000 / year
7. Physical Therapist Assistants - \$65,500 / year
8. Actuaries - \$ 126,000 / year
9. Operations Research Analysts - \$91,000 / year
10. Physician Assistants - \$133,000 / year
11. Psychiatric Technicians - \$42,500 / year
12. Ophthalmic Medical Technicians - \$44,000 / year
13. Computer and Information Research Scientists - \$141,00 / year
14. Occupational Therapy Assistants - \$68,000 / year
15. Financial Examiner - \$90,500 / year
16. Hearing Aid Specialists - \$61,500 / year
17. Health Specialty Instructors - 106,000 / year
18. Home and Personal Care Aides \$35,000 / year
19. Nursing Teachers - \$80,000 / year
20. Substance Abuse & Mental Health Counselors - \$59,000/year

TOP 5 OCCUPATIONS WITH THE MOST NEW JOBS and AVERAGE WAGE

1. Home Health and Personal Care Aides - \$35,000 / year
2. Software Developers - \$133,000 / year
3. Stockers and Order Fillers - \$37,000 / year
4. Fast Food and Counter Workers - \$30,500 / year
5. Cooks, Restaurant - \$37,000 / year

** Medical Industry jobs will likely come with oodles of benefits! **